

About the Department for Work and Pensions

Our service
standards



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for welfare and pensions policy. We give support and advice to working-age people, employers, pensioners, families, disabled people and vulnerable groups.

This leaflet will tell you:

- what service you can expect from us
- what we expect from you
- how you can get in touch with us, and
- how long it will take for us to get back in touch with you.

Disability and Carers Service

The Disability and Carers Service is here to give financial help to disabled people and carers. We deal with claims for:

- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Carer's Credit
- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment, and
- Vaccine Damage Payments.



Contact us:

www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities

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Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is here to help get people back into work, while supporting those people who cannot work.



To make a claim:
www.gov.uk/browse/benefits



Phone: **0800 055 6688**
Textphone: **0800 023 4888**

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm



To find a job:
www.gov.uk/browse/working



Phone: **0345 606 0234**
Textphone: **0345 605 5255**

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm

The Pension Service

The Pension Service can tell you about pensions and benefits, whether you are:

- planning your retirement
- about to retire, or
- already retired.



Contacting us:
www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension



Phone: **0345 606 0265**
Textphone: **0345 606 0285**

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm



Phoning from abroad:
+44 191 218 7777

Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm

You can get much more information as well as contact details for all our businesses online at **www.gov.uk**

We're always changing to meet the needs of our customers. Although many of our services are delivered over the telephone, we are also improving ways for you to access our services on the internet. More and more we will encourage people to find information, make claims and look for jobs online.

Some of the help you get will be delivered for the Department for Work and Pensions by other organisations (such as training providers). If you're unhappy with the service you get from any provider working for us, you should contact them directly. They will have their own complaints processes.

If you have trouble using any of our services, or you have an urgent question, we can make an appointment for you to speak to someone as soon as possible.

Our responsibilities to you

We want to give you the best service we can. When you contact us, we want you to be happy with the advice we give you and the way we treat you.

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Right treatment

We are committed to treating all our customers fairly. We will:

- be friendly and helpful
- treat you with respect
- behave professionally
- make sure our offices are as safe as possible for all our customers and staff, and
- respect your privacy.

Please contact us if you have any concerns.

When we contact you

We will usually phone you. If you would like us to contact you in a different way, please tell us.

When we write to you

Anything we write to you will:

- be typed, clear and easy to read
- tell you if there is anything you need to do, and
- give you contact details, like a person's name and direct phone number.

If you would like a letter in large print, let us know. We will write to you in English. If you live in Wales, we can write to you in Welsh. We can contact you in the best way for you, if you tell us what this is.

Visiting our offices

When you visit our offices, our staff will:

- wear a name badge and greet you in a friendly, professional way
- always try to see you on time if you have an appointment
- book an appointment as soon as possible if you need one, and
- arrange a private interview room if you need privacy.

If you visit our offices without an appointment, we will try to help you straight away - mainly through our telephone services. If we can't, we will book an appointment for you.

Right result

We aim to give you accurate information and the right advice to help you:

- get the pensions or benefits you're entitled to
- understand the conditions of receiving your pension or benefit, such as attending interviews or looking for work
- find a suitable job
- understand our decisions
- decide what to do, and
- access other support you may need, such as help to develop new skills or help with childcare or travel costs.

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On time

We aim to make sure that we deliver our services as quickly as we can. This includes:

- processing your claim as quickly as possible
- changing any of your details when you tell us to, and letting you know if the change affects your pension or benefit
- calling you back or taking your call at the time we have agreed with you, and
- being on time for an appointment we have made with you.

When you phone us

Our staff will give you their name and the name of the office or section you have called.

We will ring you back if you are concerned about the cost of the call, or if we can't answer your question right away. If we can't help you, we will try to direct you to the right place to get help.

When you write to us

When you write to us, we aim to give you a full reply:

- within **10 working days** of getting your letter, or
- within **15 working days** if you are complaining about our service, or
- within **15 working days** to Members of Parliament (MPs) who write to our Director General on your behalf.

If we can't give you a reply within this time, we will say why and tell you:

- who is dealing with your letter
- when you can expect a full reply, and
- what we have done so far.

When we visit you at home

If we need to visit you at home we will:

- try hard to visit you at a time you agree to, and
- tell you if there are any papers you need to have ready.

Our member of staff will:

- always show you an identity card, and
- tell you their name.

If you want, you can tell us a password for our member of staff to use when they come to your home.

Easy access

We want to make sure you can access our services easily.

We will:

- give you the service you need, taking account of any disability or language needs you have
- offer you different ways to access our services, such as telephone, the internet or home visits, and
- try to direct you to the right place if we can't help.

If you have a disability

We're committed to meeting our responsibilities under the Equality 2010 Act. Our offices have:

- induction loops and textphones for people who have difficulty hearing or speaking, and
- easy access for people who have a health condition or find it hard to walk.

We can also get a British Sign Language interpreter, to communicate in the way that's best for you. If you ask for an interpreter, we will aim to arrange one within **ten working days**. We will arrange your appointment for as soon as possible after this.

If you have a disability or health condition that affects how you use our service, please tell us so that we can give you the right support. This might be helping you to fill in forms, or visiting you at home.

If you don't speak English

If you phone us, or have an appointment at one of our offices, you can use your own interpreter. We will provide an interpreter for you in certain circumstances.

We can usually arrange for you to speak to an interpreter over the phone straight away.

If you have an appointment, or need to talk to us face-to-face, we will try to arrange an interpreter within **three working days**. We can also help you fill in any forms.

What we expect from you

We've explained our responsibilities to you, but there are also things we expect from you in return.

Reasonable behaviour

You can help by:

- treating our staff with respect, and
- being considerate and polite.

Giving us information and being on time

You can also help by:

- giving full and correct details
- giving more details if asked to
- being on time for appointments
- making sure you can take phone calls at agreed times
- telling us if you need to communicate with us in a different way, such as Braille, large print or through an interpreter, and
- telling us if you need to access our services in a different way, such as telephone, email or face-to-face.

Telling us when something changes

When you're getting pensions or benefits and your circumstances change, you must tell us straight away. For example, tell us if you:

- move home (or other people move in or leave your home)
- change the account we pay your pension or benefits into

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- start work or change the number of hours you work
- become ill or go into hospital, or
- get more or less money coming in, such as benefits.

If you are not sure whether to tell us about a change, do it anyway. If you don't, you could lose out on money you should get. Or you could be paid too much, and have to pay it back.

Telling us what you think

At the Department for Work and Pensions we always aim to provide a high level of customer service.

We welcome all your comments, complaints, or ideas for things we could improve. Your feedback helps us to look at what we do and how we could do it better.

When things go right

If you think we've done something well, please tell us. Knowing that we got it right for you may help us to get it right for others.

We're always looking for new ways to improve our services. If you have an idea that could help us do this, please let us know. We will reply to your comments within 10 working days of getting them.

If things go wrong

If you think we've got something wrong, or that we're not dealing with you in the right way, please let us know as soon as possible. If you are still unhappy after you have contacted us, we will explain what you can do next. There are different options, depending on what the problem is:

- **Complaining.** You can complain if you are unhappy with the service you have had from us. Page 14 tells you how to complain and what happens next.
- **Challenging a decision** we have made about your benefit. This isn't the same as complaining. See below for what you can do if you think a benefit decision is wrong.

If you think a decision is wrong

If you think our decision is wrong you can appeal but only after you have requested a reconsideration of the decision. This is called a Mandatory Reconsideration. You must do this within one month of the date of the decision.

You can first ask for a written statement of reasons for the decision if you are unclear as to why the decision was made. Again, you must do this within one month.

If you ask for a Mandatory Reconsideration we will ask you if you have additional relevant evidence that should be considered. You will be sent a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice which will explain our decision. If you do not agree with this, you will then be able to appeal against the decision.

The appeal is to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service. The appeal will be heard by an independent tribunal.

The benefit decision notification will tell you how to apply for a Mandatory Reconsideration. The Mandatory Reconsideration Notice will tell you how to appeal.

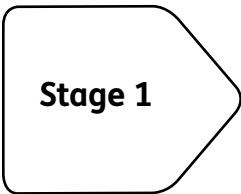
How to complain

If you are unhappy with the service we have given and the person you have been dealing with cannot sort the matter, you can complain. The information below tells you what you should do.

If your complaint is about an incident in one of our Jobcentres and you would like the CCTV footage as evidence, you need to ask us for it within seven days of the incident happening. Not all of our Jobcentres are able to keep footage for more than seven days, but if we know, we can keep the footage for longer.

We try to make it easy for you to tell us about your complaint. You can complain to us in writing, by telephone and in person. We'll deal with it as quickly as possible and put right anything we have got wrong.

Your complaint will go to **Stage 1** for a Complaint Resolution Manager to look at it.



A Complaint Resolution Manager will look again at your complaint. They will contact you, usually by phone, to talk about your complaint and agree how they will investigate it. They will contact you again when they have finished their investigation to let you know what they have done. We aim to deal with your complaint within **15 working days**. If it will take longer, we will let you know why and when you can expect to hear back from us.

If you are still unhappy after the Complaint Resolution Manager has looked at your complaint, you will be asked if you want your complaint to go to **Stage 2**.



Stage 2

Your complaint will be passed on to the Director General, DWP Operations, who will arrange for your complaint to be looked at. The Director General can only look at complaints that have gone through Stage 1. You will hear back from us within **15 working days** of the Director General getting your complaint.

Independent Case Examiner

If you have been through all of our complaints stages and are still unhappy, you can ask the Independent Case Examiner to look at your complaint. You must contact them within six months of getting our final reply, sending them a copy of it.

The Independent Case Examiner can look at complaints about our service. They cannot look at matters of law (for example, they will not look at benefit or maintenance decisions, because you can appeal against these) or government policy. If they accept your complaint, they will look at what happened and what we did about it. If they think we should have done more, they will ask us to put matters right. Their service is free and impartial. To find out more, please contact:



www.gov.uk/ice



Phone: **0345 606 0777**

Independent Case Examiner
PO Box 209
Bootle
L20 7WA

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

You can also, at any time, contact your MP. They may be able to send your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. However, the Ombudsman will usually expect you to tell us first that you are unhappy. They will not usually become involved in a complaint until we, and the Independent Case Examiner, have had a chance to reply.

The Ombudsman looks at complaints where government organisations have not acted properly or fairly or have given a poor service.

To find out more about the Ombudsman, please contact:



www.ombudsman.org.uk



Phone: **0345 015 4033**

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

Other organisations that provide services for the Department for Work and Pensions should give the same standard of service as us. If you have any complaints, talk to your provider about them. Your provider will have their own complaints procedures that they'll explain at your first meeting.

Independent help

If you want independent help when you're dealing with us or when you want to complain, you could ask:

- a local advice centre like a Citizens Advice Bureau, or
- your Member of Parliament (MP).

Your adviser should be able to tell you about local sources of independent advice.

Putting things right

If we get things wrong, we should act quickly to put them right. The action we take to put things right is called 'redress'. Redress might include any of the following:

- a sincere and meaningful apology
- an explanation of what happened and what went wrong
- putting things right, or
- a special payment.

We can consider a special payment if something we have done (or not done) has caused injustice or hardship.

Call charges

You can use the **0845** code to call any of our **0345** numbers. Check with your phone company which code is cheaper for you.

Calls to **0800** numbers are free from BT land lines but you may have to pay if you use another phone company, a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

Calls from mobile phones can cost up to 40p per minute, so check the cost of calls with your service provider. You can ask us to call you back if you're concerned about the cost of the call.

Textphones

Our textphone numbers are for people who cannot speak or hear clearly. If you don't have a textphone, you could check if your local library or citizens advice bureau has one. Our textphones don't receive text messages from mobile phones.

Important information about this leaflet

This leaflet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct as of November 2014. It is possible that some of the information is oversimplified, or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

You can find more information about benefits and pensions online.



For benefits information go to:
www.gov.uk/browse/benefits



For pensions information go to:
www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension