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<p><b>Employment and Support Allowance</b></p>	
<p><b>Summary</b></p>	<p>Employment and Support Allowance is the new benefit paid to people whose ability to work is limited by ill health or disability.</p> <p>From 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008 it replaces both incapacity benefit and income support paid on the grounds of incapacity.</p> <p>Those currently receiving incapacity benefit or income support will continue to receive them until they are reassessed under the 'work capability assessment' and migrated to ESA.</p> <p>What is new about ESA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a single benefit</li> <li>• ESA is paid when claimants are found to have a 'limited capability to work'. There are two groups, 'the support group' and 'the work-related activity group'. The group claimants are placed in will determine the amount of ESA they receive and the responsibilities they will have to meet in order to keep receiving the benefit.</li> <li>• Contributory ESA is linked to national insurance contributions</li> <li>• Income-related ESA is the means tested element of ESA. It replaces income support.</li> <li>• The Assessment Phase – claimants will enter a 13 week assessment phase (with the exception of those who are terminally ill) and will undertake a 'work capability assessment'.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action points</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will be of interest to groups where volunteers/trustees, staff and service users are currently claiming benefits.</li> <li>• Organisations may need to consider policies on payments e.g. payment for service users contributing to training events etc</li> <li>• It will be important to ensure that policies do not discriminate against people on ESA</li> <li>• Need to consider what possible impact this will have if service users need additional support, and whether or not this will be short, medium or long term. Managers need to consider what training staff may need</li> <li>• What are the likely financial and time implications?</li> </ul>

- Is there funding for additional support?
- Is there an opportunity to enhance service user access to work?
- Should this be included with any outcome measures for service users or the organisation?
- Will what the Department for Works and Pensions (dwp) offer in terms of support meet the needs of service users?

**Sources of information**

[www.dwp.gov.uk/esa](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/esa) - Look up the Disability Rights Handbook which can be downloaded and gives clear advice and information

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