

The Positive East Advice Line is open Monday to Friday

Our opening hours are 10.30am to 5pm

Please phone: 020 7791 2855 - Option 2

Please know that we are here to help you during this time of uncertainty, whether you need information about what benefits to apply for; or if you have received a form that needs to be completed; or if you want to challenge a benefit decision that you think is wrong; or if you have questions about anything else

DWP Benefits & Appointments

The DWP has recently announced that all face to face assessments for sickness and disability benefits (ESA, DLA, PIP) have been suspended for the next three months, and that people will continue to receive their benefits as normal.

Further details are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/face-to-face-health-assessments-for-benefits-suspended-amid-coronavirus-outbreak>

The DWP has also recently advised that all face to face appointments at the Jobcentre have been suspended for three months and that people will continue to receive their benefits as normal.

People in receipt of Universal Credit should check their online claim Journal for updates from the work coach.

DWP Benefit Forms

Please note that if you receive a Universal Credit or ESA 'Capability for Work Questionnaire' form, or a PIP claim form / PIP Review form, you are still expected to complete and return the form. Failure to do so could result in your benefit payments being suspended.

Coronavirus support for employees, benefit claimants and businesses

The Government has recently announced a range of extra support and measures will be in place to help workers, benefit claimants and businesses affected by coronavirus

Further details are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-support-for-employees-benefit-claimants-and-businesses>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/face-to-face-health-assessments-for-benefits-suspended-amid-coronavirus-outbreak>

I am working but not able to go into work because of ill health

It is advisable that you seek advice before applying for any benefits, to ensure that you apply for the right benefit and details of how much you might be entitled to - The Positive East Advice Line is open Monday to Friday

If you cannot go to work because of sickness or ill health, check first with your employer if you are entitled to 'Contractual Sick Pay' or 'Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)', how much you are entitled to, and for how long

If you are advised by your employer that your are not entitled to contractual sick pay or Statutory Sick Pay then you might be entitled to a new benefit called 'New-Style Employment & Support Allowance' also called 'New-Style ESA', but this will depend upon how much 'National Insurance Contributions' you have paid in the last two tax years

If you have been getting 'Contractual Sick Pay' and / or 'Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)', and your employer has told you that your entitlement is ending, you may be entitled to New-Style ESA

Further details about New-Style ESA and how to apply are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-style-employment-and-support-allowance>

If you do not meet the criteria for 'New-Style ESA' then you will need to apply for a new benefit called 'Universal Credit'

Further details about Universal Credit and how to apply are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

Get an advance on your first Universal Credit payment

If you need help to pay your bills or cover other costs while you wait for your first Universal Credit payment, you can apply to get an advance

The most you can get as an advance is the amount of your first estimated payment

Further details and how to apply are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/get-an-advance-first-payment>

I am not working and well enough to look for work

It is advisable that you seek advice before applying for any benefits, to ensure that you apply for the right benefit and details of how much you might be entitled to - The Positive East Advice Line is open Monday to Friday

Whilst you are looking for paid work, you might be entitled to a new benefit called 'Universal Credit'

Further details about Universal Credit and how to apply are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

I want to apply for financial help to pay my rent

It is advisable that you seek advice before applying for any benefits, to ensure that you apply for the right benefit and details of how much you might be entitled to - The Positive East Advice Line is open Monday to Friday

Most people will have to apply for the 'Housing Costs' element of a new benefit called Universal Credit

Further details are available, including a link to check if you can get Universal Credit, from the Citizens Advice website:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/renting-privately/private-renting/get-help-with-renting-costs/>

Further details about Universal Credit and how to apply are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

In certain circumstances, some people might still be able to apply for an older benefit called Housing Benefit

Further details about Housing Benefit and how to apply are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit>

I want to apply for financial help to pay my Council Tax bill

It is advisable that you seek advice before applying for any benefits, to ensure that you apply for the right benefit and details of how much you might be entitled to - The Positive East Advice Line is open Monday to Friday

Further details about Council Tax and any discounts that you might be entitled to are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/council-tax>

Further details about applying for financial help to pay your Council Tax bill, called 'Council Tax Reduction' are available from the Gov.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction>

Housing

During this period of instability when rules are changing quickly, more than ever it is important to get the right advice about what your options and rights are.

Whether this is because you are homeless and have nowhere to stay tonight, or if your landlord has given you notice that you have to move out (also called 'Notice To Quit'), or if you just want to apply for social housing

The Positive East Advice Line can provide you with useful information.

Information about your options, including what to do if you are street homeless is also available from the national housing advice charity Shelter. They have a dedicated helpline and a 'chat online' service. Further information can be found at the Shelter website:

https://england.shelter.org.uk/get_help

If you are street homeless (sleeping rough), or if you see somebody who is, the organisation 'Street Link' can provide information about available support, including details of hostel accommodation. Further details can be found at their website:

https://www.streetlink.london/Streetlink_London_HomePage

Further details about your options, including how to apply for assistance from the council if you are homeless or will be soon, and how to challenge a decision that you think is wrong, can be found at the Citizens Advice website:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/homelessness/>