



APS: employment and benefits

Antiphospholipid syndrome usually affects people of working age and while most people can lead relatively normal lives, others find it to be a debilitating condition.

Its unpredictable nature can cause serious clotting events with long-term health implications such as strokes and heart attacks, while low-grade symptoms such as memory loss, arthralgia (joint pain) and fatigue can, at times, make working life very challenging.

Where possible, it is best to try to remain in work – it is as important psychologically as it is financially – so try talking things over with your manager or colleagues to see if you could have more flexibility within your job, whether in the hours you do or the type of work. To assist with this, the government has set up the Access to Work scheme – www.gov.uk/access-to-work which aims to give you and your employer practical advice and support about any extra costs arising from your health needs.

Deciding whether to keep working is not an easy decision, and you will need to consider the implications on your physical and mental well-being as well as your finances. If you are unable to work due to sickness or disability there are a number of benefits you may be able to claim:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Please note that from 10th June 2013, it is no longer possible for adults aged 16 or over to make a fresh claim for DLA. Instead, you will need to make a claim for Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (for people under 65 years of age)
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Statutory Sick Pay
- Attendance Allowance (for people over 65 years of age)

Universal Credit has or will replace the following benefits:

- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Working Tax Credits

This list is by no means exhaustive and focuses on the most common type of support. For further information please visit GOV.UK: www.direct.gov.uk, or the very useful Benefits and Work guide: www.benefitsandwork.co.uk and Advice UK: www.adviceuk.org.uk/looking-for-advice/other-sources-of-advice/benefits-advice/



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Appealing decisions

You will have to apply for these benefits and the government guidelines are very stringent at the moment but, if you are unhappy with any aspects regarding your benefits, you are entitled to appeal against the decision.

You can appeal a decision about your entitlement to benefits, for example Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Universal Credit.

The following websites can help guide you through this procedure:

Benefits and Work guide:
www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/

GOV.UK – appeal a benefit decision:
www.gov.uk/appeal-benefit-decision

Citizens Advice Bureau:
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

Disability Rights UK:
www.disabilityrightsuk.org/

It is advisable to seek legal help from your local Citizens Advice Bureau and ask your GP or specialists to provide medical advice focusing on the activities listed in your appeal. If the appeal goes to a hearing, an independent tribunal will hear your case and make a final decision.