

MP Sheila Gilmore welcomes review of benefits

Edinburgh East MP and Work and Pensions Select Committee member Sheila Gilmore today welcomed the publication of an independent review of the test for the main sickness and disability benefit, but called on the Government to do more to address its failings.

The Work Capability Assessment (WCA) is used to determine whether people can get Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Since this replaced the old-fashioned Incapacity Benefit in 2008, many claimants have been incorrectly assessed as fit for work and refused the benefit.

The legislation that enacted ESA required the Government to conduct five annual independent reviews of the WCA, and the fourth review – written by Dr Paul Litchfield – was published earlier today. You can read it [here](#).

Sheila Gilmore said: 'While I believe that if people can work then they should work, I also believe that where people simply cannot work due to illness or disability, they should receive an adequate level of support. Unfortunately in too many instances, this is not happening just now.'

'Since the introduction of the Work Capability Assessment, 4 in 10 people found fit for work have appealed their decision – costing the taxpayer £50 million per year – and four in ten of those appeals have been successful.'

'I welcome the publication of Paul Litchfield's review, but I believe the Government must go further to fix the flaws in the Work Capability Assessment. For a start they should improve the training of assessors, drop targets that require a certain proportion of applicants to be found fit for work, and ensure medical evidence from doctors is taken into account.'