

# Benefits

## AN UNRELENTING FOCUS ON WORK

National is committed to a benefit system that is a genuine safety net in times of need.

We recognise that many people on a benefit will never be able to work because of their illness or disability. But we believe that returning to paid work is the route to independence and well-being for most people, and is the best way to reduce child poverty.

Long-term welfare dependency locks people into a life of limited income and limited choices. Our benefits policy is about helping people to help themselves into work.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

- Genuine support for people in need.
- An unrelenting focus on work.
- An active, not a passive, welfare system.

## OUR PLAN

### 1. Extending Work Obligations

Extend part-time work obligations to:

- People receiving a domestic purposes benefit, once their youngest child is aged six or over.
- People receiving a sickness or invalids benefit, if they have been assessed as able to work.

These beneficiaries will be required to spend at least 15 hours per week in employment, training, or job-seeking activities.

### 2. Focusing on the Long-term Unemployed

Require all people who have been receiving an unemployment benefit for 12 months or more to reapply for their benefit and undergo a comprehensive work assessment.

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### 3. Improving Assessments for Sickness Beneficiaries

Introduce more frequent reassessment during the first few months a person is on a sickness benefit. Anyone on a sickness benefit continuously for 12 months will automatically be sent to a 'designated doctor' for a second opinion on their work prospects.

### 4. Providing Certainty

Enshrine CPI adjustments to benefit payments in legislation so they increase each year in line with inflation.

### 5. Making Work Pay

Allow beneficiaries to earn up to \$100 a week before their benefit is abated, to encourage them to take on part-time work.

### 6. Having More Graduated Sanctions

Introduce graduated benefit reductions for beneficiaries who don't meet their work obligations. This will give Work & Income case managers more flexibility to encourage beneficiaries back to work.

### 7. Providing Beneficiaries with Budgeting Advice

Require the most frequent applicants for benefit advances to attend a budget advisory service at the Government's expense. Those not attending will not be eligible for further benefit advances.

### 8. Being Honest About the Benefit System

Reject Labour's planned new benefit terminology which will make government workers use the term "income support" rather than talk about particular benefit types.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**READ** › John Key's [Benefits Policy Speech](#)

**READ** › National's [Benefits Policy Backgrounder](#)

**SEE** › Our [Web Page on Social Services](#)