

# In work progression randomised control trial

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## Introduction

The In Work Progression Randomised Control Trial (IWP) is a core change for Universal Credit. For the first time, claimants on low incomes or who live in low income households are being actively supported through the IWP Trial to increase their earnings and move towards financial independence.

The IWP Trial began in April 2015 on a small scale in the 10 original Universal Credit Live Service offices. Since December 2015 the IWP Trial has been gradually expanding and by late summer 2016 it will have been introduced into almost all sites. A minimum of 15,000 people are expected to participate in the trial. At the end of the recruitment period, the trial will continue to run for a further year.

## Eligibility to join the In Work Progression Randomised Control Trial

Claimants in the Light Touch regime will take part in the IWP Trial unless they fall into an exclusion category (see Excluded from IWP Trial section).

Eligible claimants are randomly allocated to one of three Trial groups. Claimants participating in the IWP Trial have a fully tailored Claimant Commitment detailing their actions to progress their earnings, prepare for more work, better paid work or a career. For Groups 1 and 2 the actions are mandatory and for Group 3 the actions are voluntary. The aim is to give them the best chance of becoming financially independent from Universal Credit.

The support offer is different for each group as detailed below.

IWP Group	Working claimant in Light Touch regime	Non-Working Partner (see IWP non-working partners section)
Group 1	60 minute face to face appointment (if new claim).  40 minute face to face appointment (if change of circumstances)  10 minute face to face appointment every <b>eight</b> weeks thereafter (Work Focused Reviews) Plus on-going flexible Coach support tailored to individual circumstances and need (on average 60% of out of work support time) Face to Face preference for all appointments	60 minutes telephone appointment (if new claim)  40 minute telephone appointment (if change of circumstances)  Follow up 30 minute telephone appointment at week eight
Group 2	60 minute face to face appointment (if new claim)  40 minute face to face appointment (if change of circumstances)  First Work Focused Review 10 minute face to face appointment at 8 weeks and thereafter every <b>two</b> weeks.	60 minutes telephone appointment (if new claim)  40 minute telephone appointment (if change of circumstances)

	<p>Plus on-going flexible Coach support tailored to individual circumstances and need (on average 60% of out of work support time)</p> <p>Face to Face preference for all interviews.</p>	<p>Follow up 30 minute telephone appointment at week eight.</p>
Group 3	<p>60 minutes telephone appointment (if new claim)</p> <p>40 minute telephone appointment (if change of circumstances)</p> <p>Follow up 30 minute telephone appointment at week eight.</p> <p>No further appointments or additional support unless the claimant asks for it.</p>	<p>60 minutes telephone appointment (if new claim)</p> <p>40 minute telephone appointment (if change of circumstances)</p> <p>Follow up 30 minute telephone appointment at week eight.</p>

## **Claimants allocated to In Work Progression Randomised Control Trial Group 1 or Group 2**

### **Initial appointment**

IWP Trial claimants allocated to Group 1 or Group 2 are required to attend a face to face initial appointment (60 minutes if new claim and 40 minutes if change of circumstances). The appointment introduces Universal Credit for new claimants, and for both new claimants and those with a change of circumstances, they will discuss the advantages of work and earnings progression. The conversation will focus on the support and expectations of being in the IWP Trial and claimants will then need to accept their Commitments in their online account. The Trial Data Gather Tool is completed and the IWP Trial notification is automatically uploaded to their journal.

Claimants in the IWP Trial Group 1 or Group 2:

- must take reasonable steps to increase their earnings
- undertake specific activities in order to provide them with the skills to meaningfully look for and undertake work that they are able to do

If the claimant fails without good reason to attend or participate in an appointment or any required activities recorded in their Claimant Commitment a sanction will be considered. This means that their Universal Credit payments may be reduced. See conditionality and sanctions section.

The appointments in Group 1 or Group 2 will focus on increasing earnings which can include:

- identifying sectors and careers with realistic opportunities for advancement in the local Labour Market
- work search around a variety of vacancies including long and short term
- engagement with the National Careers Service and other local provision to identify and address skills and motivation
- exploring funding options that may be available
- signposting to the Money Advice Service if needed
- highlighting the advantages of earning more and becoming financially independent
- explaining that it is not just about increasing hours worked

These are examples and not a full list.

## **Voluntary reduction of earnings**

During the initial appointment the member of staff may suspect that the claimant has voluntarily reduced their earnings to receive more Universal Credit. They should refer their reasons for identifying this failure and any supporting information to the Decision Maker. The Decision Maker will decide whether a sanction should be applied as a consequence. A sanction reduces the claimant's Universal Credit payments for a period of time.

## **Subsequent appointments**

The face to face 10 minute appointments begin eight weeks after the initial appointment. For claimants in Group 1, their appointments will take place every eight weeks thereafter. For claimants in Group 2, their appointments will take place every two weeks thereafter.

Face to Face is the preference but there is the option of a telephone interview if it is unreasonable or inappropriate for the claimant to attend the office.

## **Flexible support**

On-going flexible support is also provided for claimants in Groups 1 and 2 (excluding non-working claimants). It is tailored to individual need and circumstances in supporting claimants in:

- their earnings progression
- setting relevant goals
- defining actions
- addressing concerns
- providing encouragement

These are examples and not a full list.

It is equivalent to around 60% of the time allocated to out of work claimants.

When deciding if a telephone interview is appropriate for the claimant, consider:

- location of work
- hours of work
- journey time to and from work
- consistency of hours worked

Flexible Support Fund (FSF) can also be used to address any specific barriers to work these claimants might have.

## **Non-working partners allocated to Group 1 or Group 2**

In the Trial each member of a couple is treated individually. This means claimants who are non-working partners, may be allocated to the IWP Trial as part of a low income household unless they fall into an exclusion category

If a non-working partner has been allocated to IWP Trial Group 1 or Group 2, they are required to participate in two on-going work focused interviews (by telephone) at day one and week eight. There are no further mandatory requirements. Claimants are not required to attend further work focused reviews and all other work-related activity is agreed as part of a voluntary action plan.

The specific section of the Data Gather Tool for the non-working claimant is completed and the IWP Trial Notification is automatically uploaded to their journal.

## **Claimant allocated to In Work Progression Randomised Control Trial Group 3 (including non-working partners)**

Claimants allocated to Group 3 follow current business as usual Light Touch requirements. See [Light Touch](#). They have an initial telephone appointment (60 minutes if new claim and 40 minutes if Change of Circumstances) and then receive a follow-up 30 minute telephone appointment eight weeks later. Although the Data Gather Tool is completed and the Trial notification issued as part of their first interview, they will not be asked to participate in any further appointments or activities.

If a claimant in Group 3 (or a non-working partner) fails without good reason to attend their two mandatory appointments, a sanction will be considered. This means that their Universal Credit may be reduced. See conditionality and sanctions section.

## **Conditionality & sanctions**

Conditionality is an important element in driving greater independence and ensuring that claimants take greater accountability to earn and work more. Part of the IWP Trial is to understand what impact conditionality and sanctions have in supporting and encouraging progression and what impact that has on a person's earnings.

Trial claimants can be sanctioned if they are not taking reasonable steps to increase their earnings.

For claimants in Groups 1 and 2, the requirements set in their claimant commitment are mandatory and therefore failure to comply without good reason may result in a sanction.

Attending appointments is also mandatory and therefore failure to attend without good reason may result in a sanction. For Groups 1 and 2 this refers to all appointments. For Group 3 and non-working partners this refers to their two mandatory appointments.

Appropriate fail to attend action is taken to make sure that correct doubt referral and Decision Maker decisions taken correctly.

## **Claimants excluded from the In Work Progression Randomised Control Trial**

If the claimant falls into any of the following categories they are excluded from the IWP Trial:

- No Work Related Requirements group
- Work Focussed Interview group
- Work Preparation group
- All Work Related Requirements Group – Intensive Work Search regime
- Work Programme
- [Gainfully self-employed](#) and [self-employed start up](#) groups
- Claimants who have a fit note pending a Work Capability Assessment and are not able to take up work
- prisoners
- Claimants who are absent from GB for medical treatment
- Claimants with caring responsibilities, health conditions or disabilities
- other (for recently bereaved, undergoing treatment for drug or alcohol addiction, recent victim of domestic violence)

Although the claimant may be excluded from the IWP Trial, they may remain in the Light Touch regime. For example; if a claimant in the light touch regime is recently bereaved, they would be excluded from the trial, but would remain in the Light Touch regime.

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