

Intensive work search regime

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Aim

For claimants who are able to work our aim is to encourage them to undertake as much work (and earn) as they reasonably can do as quickly as possible.

Characteristics

For those not working and those who are working but earning very low amounts that can work and are expected to take intensive action to secure work or more work.

This includes:

- a single claimant not working
- a single claimant with earnings below the individual admin earnings threshold
- a claimant with earnings below the individual admin earnings threshold and in a household with earnings below the couple admin earnings threshold
- a non-working claimant in a household with earnings below the couple admin earnings threshold
- a claimant who is the responsible carer for a child/children aged 5 years and over, either not working or earning below the Administrative Earnings Threshold
- found fit for work following a WCA decision, for example, are not treated as having LCW, but awaiting a reconsideration or appealing the decision outcome
- not fit for work or sick and have a fit note pre-WCA

- self-employed and the minimum income floor does not apply

Requirements

Within this regime, all work-related requirements can be legally applied. Within these limits, the actual requirements imposed and the support available to claimants must be flexible and focused on the claimant. Therefore, discretion can be applied in setting what a claimant must do, in light of each individual claimant's capability and circumstances. It provides safeguards to limit or switch-off requirements in circumstances when they would not be reasonable. This may be temporary or long-term.

The table below sets out the four main types of work-related requirements that can be imposed on claimants within this regime:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Work focused interview requirements are for any or a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing prospects for remaining in or finding paid work • coaching claimants to remain in or find work • identifying training or educational opportunities • determining whether a claimant is in gainful self-employment | <p>Work availability requirements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure the claimant is available for work • able and willing to immediately take up paid work, more work or better paid |
| <p>Work search requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carrying out work searches • making job applications • creating and maintaining online job profiles • registering with employment agencies • obtaining references | <p>Work preparation requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending a skills assessment • improving personal presentation • participating in an employment programme • developing a business plan |

This list is not exhaustive.

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Framework

The claimant is supported in this regime by the following interventions:

[Claimant's Commitment meeting](#)
[On-going contact requirements](#)

Claimant's Commitment meeting

The aim of the claimant's Commitment meeting is to ensure that claimants fully understand the responsibilities and requirements they have to meet and what they are expected to achieve.

The claimant attends a face to face meeting which covers four core elements to form a set of requirements to be recorded in a Commitment. These are:

- diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance
- identifying the work a claimant is expected to look for and be available for
- establishing which work search, preparation and availability requirements should apply
- establishing on-going contact requirements

Diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance

Determine the claimant's capability and personal circumstances (including exploring work history, qualifications, health and caring responsibilities).

Coaches need to establish the claimant as an effective jobseeker. For example, ensuring the claimant can tailor their CV; make job applications, and being interviewed. Ensure requirements and on-going actions are designed to achieve this.

Skills screening – claimants must be assessed for basic skills gaps and in particular English Language skills screening and mandated to basic skills training including English for Speakers of Other Languages where appropriate.

English language requirement – all claimants will be screened to identify those with English speaking and listening skills below entry level 2 at the claimant's Commitment meeting. Identified claimants will be mandated to a full assessment completed by a provider and where appropriate, mandated to attend English language training to improve their language skills, with the intention of improving their prospects of finding employment. This will be introduced in Scotland and Wales at a later date.

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Identifying the work a claimant is expected to look for and be available for

Identify a job requirement that sets out the work a claimant is expected to look for and accept if offered. The coach will establish the type, location, hours and pattern of work a claimant will be expected to look and be available for.

Claimants will normally be expected to look for any suitable employment, paying the relevant national minimum wage within 1.5 hours travelling distance from their home. Claimants are generally expected to look for full time work.

In most circumstances, claimants are expected to be available to attend an interview and take up a job immediately. In certain circumstances, claimants may be given longer to start work or attending an interview.

Claimants who:

- have caring responsibilities (are a responsible or relevant carer), and need to arrange care, are given up to 48 hours to attend an interview. They are given one month to take up a job provided they are willing to comply within those periods of notice
- are volunteers are given up to 48 hours to attend an interview and a week to take up work
- have a contract of employment are given 48 hours to attend an interview. They are not required to be available until they have served their notice period
- have a statement of fitness for work from a doctor will not be required to take up a new job until their fit note expires
- have recently left prison are not required to take up work within the first seven calendar days of release

In order for a claimant to meet this requirement, they will have to demonstrate, through their behaviours and actions; they are both willing and able to take up work within the required time.

If a claimant has strong work history the claimant can be allowed to restrict their jobsearch for up to 3 months to looking for work relating to a particular type of job and location and associated salary they have recent experience in. This is known as a 'permitted period'. After this period, they are generally expected to look for full time work at the national minimum wage.

Consider caring responsibilities and any health issues. There are specific rules around:

- a parent (responsible carer) of a child aged under 13 years old will be expected to look for work in line with their caring responsibilities. Their

expected hours must be limited to the child's normal school hours and the time taken for the child to travel to and from school. This is individually assessed, but the assumption is that expected hours will be around 25

- caring responsibilities, including carers who are not entitled to the Carer's Element but have regular caring responsibilities for a severely disabled person. These claimants may have their hours of availability adjusted in line with their caring responsibilities. They will have to satisfy the adviser that the restricted hours offer reasonable prospects of finding paid employment. Those with at least 35 hours a week of caring responsibilities (for an adult) are exempt from all requirements
- a claimant has a physical or mental impairment the requirement will be limited to what is considered reasonable in light of the impairment. Detailed guidance can be found in the [Health Conditions and Disabilities Hub](#)

In deciding if a claimant has reasonable prospects of obtaining paid work; ensure any limitations do not prevent the claimant from taking up a job. Take into account the jobs available in the local labour market; ensuring the claimant is not restricting their available hours so no jobs are available.

Establishing if work search and availability requirements should apply

When a claimant is expected to look for work, identify the requirements to increase their chances of finding work. These remain in place and the claimant will be expected to show how they have been meeting them on a regular basis. The requirements will be kept under review to check that they are still appropriate and likely to get the claimant into work.

There will also be some circumstances, where requirements won't be applied, for short periods of time. There are particular circumstances where this may be appropriate and on some occasions discretion can be applied.

For more information please see the [Claimant Commitment hub](#).

On-going contact requirements

From the 3rd of October 2016, claimants are required to attend weekly work search reviews (WWSR) for the first 13 weeks, for all new claims.

WWSR increase claimant contact frequency allowing any barriers to work, more work or more pay to be quickly identified. WWSR allow for frequent checking claimants are meeting their commitments Steps for claimants to progress are set at weekly intervals.

After the first 13 weeks, decide on an on-going basis, how to continue supporting the claimant, checking they are meeting their commitments. Tailor a level of

contact by digital, telephone or face to face to check claimant's progress and they are meeting their requirements.

However, this does not apply to a claimant who has a [current Statement of Fitness for Work \(also known as a Fit Note\)](#) and is awaiting their [Work Capability Assessment](#). Detailed guidance can be found in the [Health Conditions and Disabilities Hub](#)

Claimants are required to:

- provide evidence of their work search and work preparation activities. In the digital service a claimant will interact digitally via a Universal Credit account providing on-going progress details, seeking advice and being given tailored "To Do's"
- as well as checking compliance these reviews should be used to ensure that the claimant has in place a robust plan to meet their requirements over the coming period. If there is concern about this a further longer intervention could be scheduled with a view to ensuring the claimant has the support they need to comply with their requirements

Ensure that claimants comply with their requirements; if they fail to meet requirements without good reason, [sanctions](#) are imposed.

Work programme

Mandatory referrals to the work programme must take place at set points. For most claimants this is at month 12 but will vary according to claimant characteristics. Please see [Work Programme](#)

Claimant not fit for work/sick and has a fit note

This includes short-term sickness and longer term awaiting a WCA. Please see the [Health Conditions and Disabilities Hub](#)