

Light Touch regime

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Aim

This is to support individuals and/or households to identify ways of earning more and become independent from Universal Credit.

Characteristics

Claimants with individual or household earnings above the Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET) but not above the individual or household Conditionality Earnings Threshold (CET)

This includes:

- a single claimant with earnings below their individual CET but above the AET for a single person
- a claimant with earnings below the individual AET but in a household with earnings above the household AET
- a claimant with no earnings and in a household with earnings above the household AET
- claimants can enter the Light Touch regime at new claim stage or following a change in circumstance

Claimants will always be in the regime with the lowest conditionality. See [Labour market regimes](#).

Requirements

Claimants are required to participate in interviews, which will motivate and support them to increase their earnings over their CET and give them the best chance of becoming financially independent from Universal Credit. All changes of circumstance must be reported, including loss of work and earnings.

Framework

The claimant is supported in this regime by the following interviews and reviews:

[Initial light touch interview](#)

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Initial light touch interview

An initial interview is conducted with the claimant focusing on full diagnostic and skills screening to determine how best Universal Credit can support the claimant into work, more work or better paid work, whichever is appropriate to their circumstance.

This initial interview for those entering the Light Touch regime is a 30 minute phone interview.

The conversation must be tailored to the individual and awareness of how they entered the Light Touch regime is essential. The claimant may have entered the regime for the following reasons:

- they have found work and increased their earnings
- they aren't working or are earning very little (under their individual AET) but their partner's earnings have increased over the household AET
- they have reduced their earnings
- they have made a claim to Universal Credit but have had previously claimed Tax Credits
- they have made a new claim to Universal Credit with no previous benefit or Tax Credit claims

The conversation should focus on how the claimant can increase and sustain their earnings above their CET and what steps are required to achieve this, which will be recorded in their claimant's Commitment.

Currently, all these requirements are voluntary for claimants in the Light Touch regime but the claimant should still be encouraged and supported to achieve those requirements and understand the importance of increasing their earnings and securing sustainable work.

Suggested areas for discussion are:

- increase in earnings rather than increase in hours – the claimant's CET is set at an earnings rate rather than a specific number of hours to achieve
- developing skills and relevant experience in current or new sectors, which offer realistic prospects for securing sustainable work and increased earnings
- career planning
- identifying sectors and careers with realistic opportunities for progression in the local labour market
- considering wider sectors available within the local labour market
- engagement with National Careers Service and other local provision
- consideration of financial status – for example signposting to the Money Advice Service
- highlighting the attractiveness of earning more and becoming financially independent – identifying with the claimant what they could do with the extra stable income
- exploration of funding options when applicable

At all times the individual circumstances of the claimant must be taken into account and any requirements agreed are tailored and applicable to that individual.

Follow-up interview

Claimants in the Light Touch regime will have their Commitment reviewed in a follow up telephone interview eight weeks following the initial interview. The aim of this call is to:

- reinforce the expectation for the claimant to increase their earnings
- discuss the ideas and plans the claimant has formed in the past 8 weeks to increase their earnings
- review and agree a new Commitment and explain the on-going expectations and the need to report any change of circumstances

For all claimants in the Light Touch regime the follow up interview will be a 30 minute phone interview.

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