

Voluntary Work

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Introduction

Voluntary work can be useful for a person who is looking to develop skills and experience in order to increase their employability. It's particularly useful for someone who has been out of the labour market for some time and is looking to build up their confidence and their CV at the same time.

Therefore, a claimants expected work search hours can be reduced by a maximum of 50% in order to accommodate voluntary work. However, they are not restricted to the number of hours they want to actually do.

Illustrative Example of voluntary work

Will's Claimant Commitment states he has to undertake work search and work preparation activity for 35 hours per week, he works in Oxfam for 25 hours per week. 17.5 hours (50% of 35) can be deducted from his available total hours. Will can continue to do the extra 7.5 hours at Oxfam. However, this will not

count as work search or preparation and he must still provide evidence that he has undertaken quality job search activities for 17.5 hours per week.

Notional earnings

If a claimant deprives themselves of earned income, or their employer has arranged for them to be so deprived, the claimant may be treated as having notional earnings.

Notional earnings means that a person is treated as receiving the pay that is reasonable for the service they have provided.

When assessing notional earnings, an amount should also be considered for notional tax and National Insurance deductions.

Illustrative Example of notional earnings

Petra finds an employer that has a cleaning vacancy. After successfully completing an interview she starts work later that day cleaning the employer's office. Felix works with Petra doing the same job but he gets paid an hourly rate unlike Petra who is working voluntarily.

The employer says Petra is gaining skills to put on their CV. As the job Felix does is a paid job, Petra should also be paid. The hourly rate that is paid to Felix will be included as notional income for Petra's Universal Credit.

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