

Voluntary work

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Introduction

Claimants may undertake voluntary work to develop skills and gain experience, particularly for someone who has been unemployed for some time and is looking to build their confidence and their CV at the same time.

Volunteers

A volunteer is engaged in voluntary work for a charity, voluntary organisation or someone who is not a relative and any payment due or received is for reasonable expenses incurred.

When the work is remunerative and the claimant declares no payment, or a payment that is less than would normally be paid for the work, a Decision Maker (DM) will consider notional earnings.

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Notional earnings

Notional earnings are earnings that a claimant is treated as receiving for the work they have provided. The DM determines if:

- the claimant has deprived themselves of earnings; or
- an employer has arranged for them to be deprived of earned income for the purpose of receiving Universal Credit or increasing the amount of Universal Credit. The DM determines the amount taken into account as earned income.

If the claimant works as a cleaner voluntarily, but someone else is doing the same job for the same employer and receiving the national minimum wage, notional earnings may be applicable.

Voluntary work

Voluntary work agreed under the claimant commitment can count towards the claimants work search requirement. The time agreed for the voluntary work must not exceed 50% of the claimant's expected number of hours per week for work search.

If the claimant volunteers for a charity organisation for 20 hours a week and their commitment states they have to undertake 30 hours per week for work search and work preparation, 15 hours (50% of 30) will count towards their work search requirement.

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