

DWP Employees as Claimants

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Introduction

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment that replaces existing benefits including working tax credits. With the introduction and national rollout of Universal Credit, a number of DWP employees could become Universal Credit claimants. Also, as new employees are recruited into DWP, some may be claiming Universal Credit.

DWP already has employees who are claiming benefits and defined procedures are in place for this. The procedures apply equally to employees who are claiming or have been claiming Universal Credit, but there are areas, such as in-work conditionality that are new to the Department.

This guidance provides information about the general principles regarding DWP employees claiming Universal Credit.

Principles

DWP employees, who are claimants or members of a household claiming Universal Credit, are treated the same as other Universal Credit claimants by the department. Equally the Department treats employees claiming Universal Credit exactly the same as any other employees.

The individual employee decides if they wish to identify that they are a Universal Credit claimant. Line managers do not need to know which of their employees claim Universal Credit and there is no marker or other indication on the Universal Credit record that identifies them as a DWP employee.

An employee has the flexibility to choose which office they attend for a face to face interview as do all claimants, within reason. The appointment booking system allocates the Jobcentre based on a claimant's postcode but this can be changed to an alternative Universal Credit Full Service Jobcentre. At any time a DWP employee can request an alternative agent to administer their claim and

ask to be seen in a discrete area of the office. Requesting any changes remains the responsibility of the claimant.

Employees are subject to the same travel expenses rules as other claimants. A claimant who requests to attend a different office to the one allocated to them for Universal Credit will not be eligible to make a claim for expenses.

If a DWP employee claiming Universal Credit asks for an increase or decrease in working hours, this is considered in the same way as requests from any other employee. Universal Credit claimants will not be treated more or less favourably than other employees.

Policies for employees to take up additional or secondary employment are in place and are sufficiently flexible to support arrangements for employees who claim Universal Credit.

Employees claiming Universal Credit are subject to the same sanctions as any other claimant. Any issues resulting from non-compliance are dealt with through the reconsideration, appeal and complaints process.

A DWP employee not complying with the Universal Credit regime is dealt with in the same way as any other claimant would be. Disciplinary and grievance procedures cannot be considered.

Any employees found guilty of committing Universal Credit benefit fraud will be handled under current standards of behaviour guidance.

Accessing DWP records

The following applies to all DWP staff and is taken from the existing [DWP Standards of Behaviour Procedures](#)

“You must not under any circumstances access, or attempt to access, your own DWP records or the records of friends, family members or ex-partners on any Departmental computer, paper file or benefit system, irrespective of your motivation.

“You must not access the records of other customers including celebrities, even to find an address or birthday without authorisation and a legitimate reason.

“Access without authorisation or legitimate reason is a disciplinary offence. Failure to comply is extremely serious. It will result in disciplinary action and can lead to dismissal. Employees can access their own employee record on the department’s RM computer system as part of the self-service function.”

DWP employees using departmental IT systems to access their online Universal Credit claim

The standard process to make and maintain a Universal Credit claim is via online self-service. If DWP employees wish to access their online accounts using the department's IT systems, they must refer to the [DWP acceptable use policy](#) which sets out the conditions for official and [Personal use of DWP information technology](#)

Service Centre staff

If an employee working in a Service Centre receives any information or a 'to do' relating to their own Universal Credit claim or that of a colleague, they must inform their line manager and arrange for it to be redirected.

If the employee is a Universal Credit claimant and does not want their line manager to know this, they can say that they have received information or a 'to do' about someone they know.

If they accidentally access their own record or the record of someone they know, they must inform their line manager immediately.

Existing Universal Credit claimants who start working for the DWP

All the principles, guidance and procedures above apply to new and existing DWP employees and it remains up to the individual to decide whether or not to inform their line manager that they are a Universal Credit claimant.

If an employee is in a labour market regime that requires them to work with a Work Coach, this will continue.

For more information about DWP employees as claimants see [FAQs](#)

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