

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 lead carer with age of youngest child/ren aged 3 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 • researching childcare provision and costs

This list is not exhaustive.

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Framework

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

[Claimant's commitments meeting](#)

[On-going contact requirements](#)

Claimant's commitments initial meeting

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

The claimant attends a face to face meeting covering four core elements, forming 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 commitments 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.

Agents must consider caring responsibilities when setting expected hours of work preparation, work search and work availability:

- a parent (lead carer) of a child aged 5 to 12 years old will be expected to look for work in line with their caring responsibilities. Their expected hours is a maximum of 25 hours per week.
- a parent (lead carer) whose youngest child is aged 3 year will be expected to look for work in line with their caring responsibilities. This is individually assessed, the maximum expected hours for a lead carer of a child aged 3 or 4 is 16 hours per week.
- 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. See guidance 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.

Tailoring the expected hours

Consider tailoring the expected hours of lead carers. The Expected hours of a lead carer can be reduced where one or more of the following are relevant:

- difficult travel time to a childcare provider, for example poor public transport links to taking and picking up the child from childcare provision
- a health condition and the claimant is awaiting the health assessment
- part-time or temporary caring responsibilities for someone
- lack of childcare availability in the claimant's area that is suitable for the needs of the child

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

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. After 13 weeks 50% of the caseload should be seen weekly and 50% fortnightly. Whilst this should normally be face to face, the method of contact can be tailored if doing so meets a claimant's individual circumstances.

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-dos.

In addition to checking compliance, reviews are used to ensure that the claimant has in place a robust plan to meet their requirements over the coming period. Any concerns about this are addressed by scheduling a longer intervention view to ensure the claimant has the support they need to comply with their requirements.

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

Claimant not fit for work or 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](#)

Skills and Vocational training for lead carers with a youngest child aged 2-4

Lead carers of children aged 2 to 4 years old, can be further from the job market and have lower skills than parents with older children. Therefore, greater acceptance and encouragement is required for them to participate in training that is longer than the normal period of up to 8 weeks.

Using tailoring, work coaches can consider 'switching off' or adjusting requirements (work search and availability) for up to one year, but only where the work coach believes that the course / training will ensure the lead carer is in work by the time the youngest child reaches five. This is by exception rather than normal practice, ensuring the lead carer moves into work before the youngest child turns five. Contact with the lead carer is maintained via all available channels to ensure the course / training is being completed. There must remain a good chance the lead carer will move into work before the youngest child is five.

This is 'tailoring' and is recorded in the Claimant Commitment. It does not impact CET / Expected Hours. This type of tailoring is restricting / removing / switching off requirements.

Travel to work ratio for lead carers with youngest child below compulsory school age

Travel to Work for lead carers of children aged 3 – 4 should be proportionate to their expected hours of 16 hours per week. This is not a reduction in the CET. Lead Carers of 2 year olds are not subject to availability or work search.

The work coach should consider the following travel to work ratios:

- 10 to 16 hours weekly work search requirements - capped at 60 minutes
- Up to 10 hours weekly work search requirements - capped at 30 minutes.

Both these caps can be varied further to take into account individual circumstances. The work coach should ensure there is a reasonable prospect of the lead carer gaining employment when reducing the travel to work time.