

Youth Obligation

First published: 26 April 2017 (version 1)

Last updated: 04 May 2017 (version 2)

Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Youth Obligation - mandatory participation](#)

[Youth Obligation – voluntary participation](#)

[Work search reviews](#)

[Stocktake assessment](#)

[Month 6](#)

[Scenarios](#)

[Re-claims](#)

[Special arrangements to allow participation](#)

[Easements](#)

[Couple claims](#)

[Flexible Support Fund](#)

[Sanctions](#)

[Completing the Youth Obligation](#)

Introduction

Youth Obligation (YO) supports the government's objective that all 18-21 year olds should be either earning or learning.

From 26 April 2017 all new UC claimants aged 18 to 21 allocated to either the [Intensive Work Search Regime](#) or the [Light Touch Regime](#) will enter YO from day one of the claim. YO claimants will receive intensive support to help find employment or apprenticeship quickly.

Under 18s

YO applies to claimants aged [under18](#) if they are eligible for Universal Credit and are in the IWSR or LT regime

Claimants aged 22

Claimants who turn 22 years old while on the YO may complete the provision they are on and will then move into the relevant Labour Market regime. DN: add link to the claimant journey product.

Transfers and relocation

Where a claimant moves from a UCFS jobcentre to a UCLS Jobcentre at any point in the YO journey, they will remain on YO.

Where a claimant moves from a UCLS jobcentre to a UCFS jobcentre, if they are not making a new claim to benefit in UCFS (including natural migration claims) then they are not eligible for YO.

Northern Ireland

YO does not currently apply to UC claimants in Northern Ireland.

[Back to contents](#)

Youth Obligation – mandatory activities

Under the YO programme there is a curriculum of activity for the claimant to complete within 6 months from the date they accept their [Commitments](#), (usually at the first Commitments meeting). If the claimant [does not accept a reasonable Commitment](#) they are not entitled to receive Universal Credit.

All claimants should be encouraged and supported to take up employment or an Apprenticeship as quickly as possible.

For the first 3 weeks of their claim, 18-21 year olds will participate in an [Intensive Activity Programme](#) (IAP).

Between weeks 4 and 26, claimants will receive tailored [work search reviews](#) to motivate them into work or training and can also be referred to appropriate provision/additional support drawn from a menu of options.

Claimants who are still in the IWSR, who have not taken up an apprenticeship and are still not in employment at the 6 month point must be referred to one of the following:

- [traineeship](#) (or equivalent in Scotland and Wales),
- [sector based work academy](#) (or equivalent in Scotland and Wales),
- 3 month guaranteed work experience to give them the skills they need to move into sustainable employment.

If the claimant fails to undertake any of the mandatory elements above, a [sanction](#) might apply. Also see additional guidance on the specific parts of the journey below.

Youth Obligation – Jobcentres in the test control group

All claimants must participate in:

- IAP
- weekly work search reviews (and may be referred to additional support from a menu of options),
- the 24 week assessment.

If the claimant fails to undertake any of these mandatory elements, a sanction may apply.

Claimants who reach the 6 month point in their claim in a small number of specified jobcentres will voluntarily participate in a

- [traineeship](#) (or equivalent in Scotland and Wales),
- [sector based work academy](#) (or equivalent in Scotland and Wales),
- 3 month guaranteed work experience to give them the skills they need to move into sustainable employment.

This is to help to test the YO programme.

If a claimant moves jobcentre whilst on the Youth Obligation, they remain on the Youth Obligation. [See transfers and relocation](#). Similarly if a jobcentre is delivering the mandatory arm at 6 month point in the claim and the claimant moves from that jobcentre to a site that is delivering the voluntary arm at 6 months, the claimant remains on the mandatory arm of the trial.

If any claimant chooses not to take up this provision (or they drop out) and if they are not doing enough to gain employment or apprenticeship they will be given specific activities to do to improve their employment prospects. A [sanction](#) may be applied if the claimant fails without good reason to participate in this specific alternative activity.

Also see additional guidance on the specific parts of the journey below.

Work search reviews

Weeks 4 to 17 – weekly work search reviews

The normal active [work search activities](#) apply and should not be used to just check compliance with requirements.

The reviews are to:

- encourage the claimant to build on the learning in IAP and ongoing
- motivate them to take up an Apprenticeship or employment quickly
- refer claimants to additional support/provision to address barriers to work including:
 - budget support
 - mandatory [basic skills provision](#) where required (English, maths, ESOL, IT)
 - referral to the National Career Service in England (and to equivalent in Scotland and Wales)
 - referral to relevant high quality work focussed skills training for example, a [traineeship](#) in England)
 - other job goal specific vocational training
 - [Pre-employment Training](#)
 - referral to a [sector-based work academy](#)
 - [work experience for 2-8 weeks](#)
 - [Movement to Work](#)
 - appropriate modules from Skills to Succeed
 - self-employment support from New Enterprise Allowance
 - Princes Trust programmes: Get started for those with multiple barriers to employment; Team (employability programme to increase confidence which includes work experience) Get Into (work experience and vocational skills)
 - other appropriate local provision from the District Provision Tool
 - additional training purchased from the Flexible Support Fund (low value provision)

Week 18 onwards – weekly or fortnightly work search reviews

Claimants continue to receive regular work search reviews of progress and prompt referral to tailored interventions as further support to motivate them into work or an Apprenticeship.

Whether these work search reviews take place on a weekly or fortnightly basis is at the local jobcentre's discretion depending on the support required to move the individual claimant quickly into work or an Apprenticeship.

[Back to contents](#)

Stocktake assessment

The stocktake assessment must be booked in month 4 of YO to ensure it takes place during the first week of month 5. The assessment must always take place in the first week of month 5. It cannot take place later than that week.

The stocktake assessment is a longer more in-depth assessment and review to determine why the claimant has not found work or training and motivate them to do so, with the emphasis on earning or learning.

The assessment could include:

- assessment of steps taken to achieving a work or an Apprenticeship outcome
- claimant's learning from provision and work coaching to date and why this has not yet produced a successful outcome
- barriers to work
- employability skills
- discussing whether the claimant's job goals are realistic to the local labour market and what may be more realistic
- discussing willingness to move to areas where vacancies are available to achieve their goal
- discussing first job goal as a step to ultimately achieving their goals from a position of being in work or an Apprenticeship

These are examples, not a full list.

At the stocktake assessment, the claimant must be referred to provision/support that may lead to a job or an Apprenticeship over the next month, for example:

- a sector-based work academy
- traineeship
- work experience

The claimant should not be referred to provision that would last beyond month 6 unless it would support the claimant to address new barriers to work that require addressing quickly through local provision, for example mental health support to address an anxiety related condition.

Month 6

YO claimants in the IWSR who are still not in employment or on an Apprenticeship at the 6 month point in their claim must immediately be referred to and be expected to start on one of the following:

- a [sector-based work academy](#)

- a [traineeship](#) (or equivalent provision in Scotland/Wales)
- 3 month guaranteed work experience in a public sector organisation or a registered charity

Exceptions are where the claimant:

- is waiting for their Work Capability Assessment – see [easements](#)
- has evidence that they are starting a job within the next 2-3 weeks
- is completing provision they started before the 6 month point in the claim. They will be referred to one of the 3 options immediately afterwards completing the provision.

Every effort must be made to offer the claimant a guaranteed work experience for a period of 3 consecutive months which can give them skills that are relevant to their desired job goals. All provision will enable claimants to gain valuable transferable employment related skills.

Where guaranteed work experience for a full 3 month spell is not available or suitable for the claimant, more than one role (with the same or different organisations) can be used to make up a portfolio of experience to meet the required period 3 months of guaranteed work experience. Each role must start as soon as the other ends.

Claimants continue to be subject to the IWSR job search requirements and must receive regular contact throughout their intervention to check they are still actively seeking work.

Where a claimant is already on an intervention at the 6 month stage, for example a sector-based work academy, wherever possible they will be allowed to complete the provision before being mandated to alternative options.

Claimants who have reached the 6 month stage can only go on one of the interventions, for example they cannot go on a traineeship and then a sector based work academy or a sector based work academy and then a guaranteed 3 month work experience. However, claimants who have gone on a training programme in the first 6 months can go on another training course at 6 months.

[Back to contents](#)

Scenarios

Scenario	Action
----------	--------

Claimant is on YO and moves from the IWSR to the LT regime.	Complete the YO provision they are on, for example a 3 guaranteed work experience, if this can be done alongside the hours they are in paid work. They will receive the normal light touch support while they remain in the LT regime.
Claimant is on YO and moves from the LT regime to the IWSR for the first time.	They will start the YO IWSR journey with the IAP.
Claimant is on YO, they started in the LT regime, moved into the IWSR and then moved back again to the LT regime	They will re-start the YO journey for claimants in the IWSR where they left off.
Claimant is aged 22 years or older on the day they move into the IWSR from the LT regime while still on YO.	They go onto the Universal Credit standard IWSR support rather than YO.
Claimant is on YO and moves out of the IWSR and moves into another Labour Market regime, that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work preparation • Work-focused interviews • no work related requirements • working enough. 	Complete the YO provision they are on if they can do so within their new circumstances. For example, the claimant is on a sector-based work academy. The work capability assessment decision states the claimant has limited capability for work and so they move into the work preparation regime. They may complete the sector-based work academy if their health condition allows it.
Claimant on YO moves out of the IWSR into another Labour Market regime but then move back into IWSR.	They will re-start the YO intensive regime journey where they left off, for example, if they left YO at week 6 they would re-join the journey at week 6.
Claimant on YO moves out of the IWSR into another Labour Market regime but then move back into LT regime.	They are reminded that they are on the YO. The Commitment is updated to reflect that they are still on the YO and must meet YO requirements for the regime.
Claimant moves into IWSR from	Those that were not on the YO at the

another Labour Market regime.	time of their Commitment interview are not entitled to be on the YO.
-------------------------------	--

Re-claims

Where a claimant on YO (after 26 April 2017) ends their claim then re-claims within 6 months, they would re-join YO at the point in their journey at which they left off.

Where a claimant on Universal Credit before 26 April 2017 ends their claim, then makes a re-claim after 26 April 2017 (rather than a new claim) they are not eligible for the YO.

Special arrangements to allow participation

There are no exemptions for claimants in the IWSR or LT regime but special arrangements may need to be made for certain claimants to allow them to participate in the full range of YO activities:

- [Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements \(MAPPA\)](#) - the Commitment must take into account any individual restrictions the claimant has but claimants with MAPPA should not be excluded from participation in any YO activity including the mandatory elements.
- [Unacceptable Customer Behaviour \(UCB\)](#) - the Staff Protection List control measures that have been put in place to make it a safe environment must be applied in all circumstances but claimants should not be excluded from participation in any YO activity, including the mandatory elements.
- [Prison leavers](#) – the Commitment will take into account any individual restrictions the claimant has but claimants should not be excluded from participation in any other YO activity including the mandatory elements.

Easements

In some circumstances a claimant's work-related requirements may need to be [switched off](#) for a period of time. This applies to YO requirements too.

See [switching off work availability and work related activities](#) for details of circumstances where an easement may apply.

Easements to YO participation must be reflected in the claimant's Commitment. When the period of easement has ceased, the claimant re-starts the YO journey at the point they had reached when the easement was first applied.

If the claimant is 22 years or older at the time the easement ends they go onto the UCFS standard claimant journey rather than the YO.

Illustrative example:

A claimant on YO at week 7 becomes homeless and has 7 day easement to find accommodation. They are temporarily suspended from the YO requirements for these 7 days and re-starts the Youth Obligation at the 7 week point in the journey.

Couple claims

Each member of a couple is required to accept an individual claimant Commitment. One member of the couple may be on YO and the other one not.

Flexible Support Fund

Claimants on YO will have access to the Flexible Support Fund for travel and/or childcare expenses to the opportunities throughout the YO journey.

[Back to contents](#)

Completing the Youth Obligation

Once the claimant has been referred to and completed the provision at 6 months, they will be allocated into the [Labour Market regime](#) relevant to their individual circumstances.

[Back to contents](#)