

Work and Health Programme

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Work and Health Programme

The Work and Health Programme (WHP) is a targeted contracted employment provision offering tailored support to help eligible claimants to find sustained work.

It is voluntary unless the claimant reaches 24 months Long Term Unemployment (LTU) and is not already participating in the programme, in which case it is mandatory.

If a participant is already on the programme as a volunteer and have disengaged and they reach the 24 month Long Term Unemployed (LTU) trigger point they must be mandated back on to the programme at this point and must complete the balance of time left on the programme.

A notification will be issued to the claimant informing them that they are now mandated to WHP.

The contracts have been awarded and are split into Contract Package Areas across England and Wales. The WHP will not be rolled out in Scotland. The Scottish government will use newly devolved powers to deliver employability support in Scotland. See Fair Start Scotland programme.

Eligibility

To be eligible to join WHP claimants must meet the following criteria:

- in England they must be aged 18 or over
- in Wales young people who leave school on the last Friday in June, and are aged 16 or over by the end of that school year's summer holidays
- have the right to work in UK (non-benefit customer)
- have the right to live in the UK and is resident in England or Wales
- not already be participating on other contracted provision

- not have completed WHP previously

If they fulfil the above they are eligible for WHP if one of the following criteria apply:

- have a disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010
- are Long term unemployed claimants (24 months +) and will join on a mandatory basis (will be eligible for WHP from April 2018)

Or be in one of the following disadvantaged groups who need extra tailored support to find employment:

- ex-offenders (someone who has completed a custodial sentence or a community sentence)
- offenders (someone who is serving a community sentence)
- carers
- ex-carers
- homeless people
- former members of Her Majesty's (HM) Armed Forces
- members of the HM Armed Forces reserves
- partners of current or former Armed Forces personnel
- people for whom a drug/alcohol dependency presents a significant barrier to employment (including a history of)
- care leavers
- refugees
- victims of domestic abuse
- young people in gangs

Claimants referred as LTU (claimants in the Intensive Work Search Regime, who have not moved into employment within 24 months of their claim) will be mandatory participants throughout their allotted time on the programme.

LTU 24 month claimants will remain mandatory whilst they remain in the Intensive support regime. If they move to another non mandatory regime, they will become voluntary on the WHP and will require another letter to say they are moving from mandatory to voluntary.

Exemptions for Long Term Unemployed

Temporary Exemptions

- victims of domestic abuse are exempt from WHP for the period the circumstances remain relevant, this will be kept under review by setting a review for 13 weeks in line with current processes
- claimants who are homeless; this will be kept under review in line with the relevant conditionality guidance

- claimants with a drug or alcohol dependency while they engage in a structured treatment programme, for up to 6 months, depending on their circumstances
- claimants serving community sentences may not be able to participate in the WHP as required; the exemption should be reviewed in line with current practice

Claimants with basic skills needs should not be referred until the basic skills need has been met.

Open Ended Exemptions

claimants who are pregnant and within 3 months of their expected date of confinement, although these could still volunteer for the WHP

claimants for whom Specialist Employment Service (SES) is identified as a more suitable option – these claimants would have greater support needs/barriers than can be catered for in WHP. In these cases WHP would not be offered, the claimant would be steered towards SES

Long Term Unemployed exclusion reasons

- the potential participant is in paid employment
- the potential participants is on or has previously completed the WHP
- the potential participant is in the Random Control Group for WHP

Note: If the participant is on the WHP on a voluntary basis, identify whether they have disengaged from the programme.

Deferral criteria

The proposed deferral reasons below are intended to ensure WHP LTU continues to meet the policy and value for money intentions of not sending claimants with short-term barriers to participating on WHP, or for whom the Jobcentre Plus offer remains appropriate.

- where potential participants have moved between conditionality groups and whose circumstances have changed- For example have had a break in claim due to work or sickness
- claimants who are close to employment and could move into work within 3 months with further support from Jobcentre Plus
- claimants who are engaged in other support and provision, including Work Choice, which is likely to lead to a job outcome- For example a claimant who is being supported through alternative ESF provision or training
- claimants, whose circumstances mean that they will not be able to participate in WHP as required, for example those with long periods of hospitalisation confirmed for the near future
- claimants who have known circumstances and changing conditionality groups

- other - To be used when none of the other deferral reasons apply but there is confidence the claimant will flow off benefit or will meet the exemption criteria within the 90 days deferral period

Work and Health Programme support

The WHP tackles barriers to work by linking up with health and social care providers and other local services aimed at getting people into work. It offers more intensive, tailored support than can be provided by the standard Jobcentre Plus offer, or through other available services and provision.

Potential participants may be referred by third party organisations and the person may or may not be in receipt of Universal Credit.

Providers will:

- provide the specialism and capability to offer personalised and tailored support
- address both work and health barriers
- provide support via a range of delivery channels, including digital support
- effectively link with other services, including transition between support offers
- achieve a high level of quality employment outcomes that support the claimant and are in line with Universal Credit
- create an action plan outlining the manageable steps to take to help them

Participation on Work and Health Programme

Claimants on WHP must continue to attend their work focused interviews. If they fail to attend, a sanction may apply.

Once a participant starts on WHP, they are on the programme for 456 calendar days, to help them into sustained employment. If they are not in sustained employment at the end of the programme they will leave the programme.

Participants who are in sustained employment while on WHP can receive in work support whilst on the programme for any period of time. Once a participant reaches the 456 day end point, in work support can be extended for a further 182 days. This may extend the period on programme up to a maximum of 639 days.

If a participant changes address to one outside their Contract Package Area they will remain the responsibility of their original provider.

Potential participants moving to Scotland will remain with their original provider. If the participant has been mandated to the WHP and moves to Scotland, they will become a voluntary participant. The new Jobcentre Plus office must send a UC78 form to the original provider.

Voluntary referrals

If participation is voluntary, referrals will be made when it is identified a claimant would benefit from early access to the programme or if they receive a WHPSO1 form a signposting organisation for a claimant. A voluntary referral should only be made if the claimant:

- is not in paid employment
- Is not a participant on another DWP employment programme (e.g. Specialist Employability Support)
- can be supported by a WHP referral
- has already been assisted by the jobcentre with their core jobsearch activity (i.e. basic job search skills/tasks such as CV writing)
- needs more support than can be provided by the standard jobcentre offer (or through other available services and provisions); and
- has committed to the goal of finding employment within one year

The WHPSO1 will not be shared with the WHP provider and must be destroyed once all action has been completed.

Voluntary participants can disengage from the programme, although they should be encouraged to return to the programme. Their allotted time on the programme will continue to count towards the 456 calendar days. They can re-engage with the provider at any point within their allotted time on the programme.

Suitability

Places on WHP are limited, therefore only suitable claimants are considered if they:

- are not in paid employment
- can be helped by the offer
- need more support than can be provided within the standard Jobcentre Plus offer or through other available services and provisions
- have committed to the goal of finding employment within one year
- have already been helped with their core jobsearch activity, for example:
 - basic jobsearch skills
 - CV writing
 - use of email
 - support with Universal Jobmatch

Random Control Group

A small percentage of claimants who are eligible and suitable for WHP will be randomly allocated to a control group (RCG). They will be excluded from joining WHP for 24 months but will receive the standard Jobcentre Plus support. These claimants can be referred to other suitable provision. The random control group will support the evaluation of WHP

Claimants are not informed they have been allocated to the control group as this can change behaviour and could undermine the evaluation. If a claimant is informed that

they were allocated to the RCG, either by asking directly or as part of a Subject Access Request, and are unhappy about the decision they can follow the usual complaints process.

If at the end of this, the individual does not want to be part of the evaluation they can be offered the option to ask for their data to be removed from the analysis. This request is then emailed to the evaluation email inbox.

After 24 months has elapsed the customer can be referred again to WHP, however, they cannot be randomly selected again to go into the Random Control Group.

Public Sector Comparator

As part of the evaluation of the WHP some districts will operate a similar service called Public Sector Comparator (PSC). This is to establish whether given similar resources, jobcentres can deliver similar or better performance in terms of outcomes and costs. This programme will roll-out in January 2018 and run alongside WHP in 4 districts:

- Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland
- Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and Isle of Wight
- Leicestershire and Northamptonshire
- Devon and Cornwall

Claimants will be supported closely and frequently with more tailored support to tackle barriers to employment.

Completing the Work and Health Programme

A participant will end the programme if:

- the claimant has reached the 456 day end point and are not in sustained employment they will leave the programme
- a final outcome payment in respect of the participant has been made by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to the provider
- the participant has moved abroad
- the participant has died, or
- the participant has reported a terminal illness, however, the terminally ill participant has the option to continue