

Youth Obligation

First published: 26 April 2017 (version 1)

Last updated: 17 July 2017 (version 3)

[Eligibility](#)

[Easements](#)

[Special arrangements to allow participation](#)

[Youth Obligation claimant journey](#)

[Weeks 1 to 3 - Intensive Activity Programme](#)

[Weeks 4 to 17 - weekly work search reviews](#)

[Week 18 onwards – weekly or fortnightly work search reviews](#)

[Stocktake assessment](#)

[Month 6](#)

[Flexible Support Fund](#)

[Completing the Youth Obligation](#)

Eligibility

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

Whilst on YO, claimants receive intensive support to help find employment or an apprenticeship place quickly.

Claimants enter YO from day one of a new claim (made after 26 April 2017) if they are aged 18 to 21 and in either the Intensive Work Search Regime (IWSR) or the Light Touch regime (LTR).

If the claimant makes a new claim after 26 April 2017 but they had a previous claim prior to 26 April 2017 they are not eligible for YO. This is regardless of the status of the previous claim.

Example: Claimant is 20 years old and makes a new claim on 01 August 2017. They had previously made a new claim on 3 February 2017, which was closed

because they failed to attend their Initial Evidence Interview. Although they were never paid Universal Credit, they are not eligible for YO because of the claim they made in February 2017.

If the claimant is in the LTR an [easement](#) is applied whilst they remain in the regime. Other easements that may also apply to claimants in certain circumstances.

Under 18s

YO applies to claimants aged under 18 if they are eligible for Universal Credit and are in the IWSR or LTR. If the claimant is allocated to the LTR an easement will apply.

Claimants aged 22

Claimants who turn 22 years old while on YO may complete the provision they are on at the point they turn 22, but must then exit YO.

Moving in and out of the Intensive Work Search regime (IWSR)

Claimants on YO that move from the IWSR into another Labour Market regime must complete the YO provision they are on at the time they move, if they can do so within their new circumstances.

Claimants who are on YO, move out of the IWSR into another Labour Market regime (including the Light Touch regime) but then move back into IWSR and are aged 18-21, must re-start the YO journey where they left off.

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.

UCLS or legacy benefit claimants are not considered to have made a **new claim** to UC Full Service and are not eligible for Youth Obligation.

See transfers and relocation.

Re-claims

Where a claimant on YO ends their claim then re-claims within 6 months, they re-join YO at the point in their journey at which they left it.

Northern Ireland

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

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.

Easements may be applied if the claimant:

- is in the Light Touch regime
- has a health condition or disability and has a fit note
- is gainfully self-employed
- is undertaking public duty
- is homeless
- is experiencing or has experienced domestic violence
- is experiencing drug or alcohol problem
- has recently suffered a bereavement
- temporary emergency

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 cannot remain on 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.

Youth Obligation claimant journey

Under the YO programme for claimants in the IWSR there is a curriculum of activity for the claimant to complete from the date they accept their Commitments. 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.

There are 5 stages to YO journey once the claimant is in the IWSR. A sanction may apply if the claimant fails to participate in the required activity during any of these stages:

- **Weeks 1 to 3** – the Intensive Activity Programme is a package of around 71 hours intensive support designed to accelerate the claimant's return to work.
- **Weeks 4 to 17** - claimants attend tailored weekly work search reviews for intensive support.
- **Weeks 18 onwards** – claimant attends weekly or fortnightly work search reviews for continued intensive support.
- **Month 5** – An in-depth stocktake assessment to discuss why the claimant has not found employment or training and next steps.
- **Month 6** - Claimants who are on YO but still not in employment or on an apprenticeship must attend a referral interview **to encourage them to take up** one of the 3 offers of provision. See month 6.

Weeks 1 to 3 - Intensive Activity Programme

The Intensive Activity Programme (IAP) is part of the YO. IAP is a package of intensive support designed to accelerate the claimant's return to work by helping them to become effective, full-time job seekers from the earliest point in their claim.

All YO participants must participate in and complete the IAP. If they fail to attend, or fail to complete the exercises without good reason, a sanction may apply.

The IAP curriculum is estimated to take up to 71 hours over the first 3 weeks of the claim

Weeks 4 to 17 – weekly work search reviews

The normal active work search activities apply. This review should not be used to just check compliance with requirements and should last at least 20 minutes.

Claimants must attend each weekly work search reviews. If they fail to attend, without good reason, a sanction may apply.

The reviews are to:

- encourage claimants to build on the learning in IAP
- 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 (sbwa) (or equivalent in Scotland / Wales)
 - 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)

Standard conditionality applies to the provision listed above.

Week 18 onwards – weekly or fortnightly work search reviews

Claimants continue to receive regular work search reviews of progress and prompt referral to the additional support/provision listed above to enable them to

address their barriers to work quickly and move into work or take up an Apprenticeship place.

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. The claimant must attend each work search review. If they fail to attend, without good reason, a sanction may apply.

Stocktake assessment

The stocktake assessment must be booked in month 4 of YO to make sure that it takes place in the first week of month 5 of the claimant's YO journey.

The stocktake assessment is an in-depth assessment to determine why the claimant has not found work or training and motivate them to do so, identifying any additional activities to achieve an earning or learning outcome swiftly.

Participation in the stocktake assessment is required. If they fail to attend or participate, without good reason, a sanction may apply.

A quality assessment includes:

- exploring steps taken to achieve a work or an Apprenticeship outcome and their learning from this.
- listening to and exploring the claimant's personal concerns and issues which may extend beyond getting a job and using this insight to help motivate them to make changes.
- exploring in detail why the claimant's personal journey so far has not yet produced a successful work related outcome, deciding on best next steps.
- critically reviewing of employability skills against claimant job goals; helping the claimant understand other routes to achieve their ambitions and dealing with setbacks.
- broadening the claimant's perspective and understanding of sectors and labour markets locally and nationally.
- exploring short term outcomes versus long term goals
- re-enforcing the expectation that they should be earning or learning and identifying concrete next steps and commitment for action over the next month to gain an employment outcome before the 6 month point.
- re-iterating the expectation that at 6 months they must be earning or learning.
- explaining that there will be a further interview at [6 months](#).

At the stocktake assessment, the claimant should be referred to most suitable provision or support that addresses their individual barriers to work over the following month.

Claimants can be referred to provision that would last beyond month 6 if it would:

- address any new barriers that have previously not been identified; and
- support the claimant to achieve their job goal; or
- lead to an Apprenticeship

The information gathered at the stocktake assessment is used to begin preparatory work to source the most suitable provision referral at 6 months.

It is imperative that this should reflect the claimant's agreed job goal. This will be reviewed with the claimant at the 6 month intervention to ensure that it is the most appropriate referral to make if the claimant is still in the IWSR.

Month 6

Claimants who are still unemployed and in the IWSR will receive a referral interview at 6 months to discuss and agree which of the 3 options of provision for claimants on YO is most the suitable option for them to achieve their job goal swiftly.

Attendance at the 6 month referral appointment is required. If they fail to attend, without good reason, a sanction may apply.

Claimants will be **encouraged to take up** one of the following 3 options:

- a Youth Obligation [traineeship](#)
- a Youth Obligation [sector-based work academy](#) (sbwa)
- a guaranteed 3 month work experience opportunity (one single opportunity, or consecutive opportunities lasting 3 months)

Referrals to any of these options are voluntary. Claimants opt in to the opportunity they agree will provide the support they need.

There will not be specific traineeships or sbwas for YO claimants. They will join existing provision, which could contain a mixture of YO claimants pre-6 month stage, post 6 month stage and non-YO claimants.

The YO traineeship consists of training and a work experience opportunity. Once a referral is agreed with the claimant, the claimant is mandated to attend and participation is required. A sanction can be applied for failure to comply with a mandatory work-preparation requirement. A claimant can be sanctioned if they

do not attend the training part of the traineeship or are asked to leave due to misconduct. If the claimant fails to attend or participate in a work experience opportunity a sanction will not apply. However, if they are asked to leave a work experience placement due to misconduct, a sanction may apply.

The YO sbwa consists of 3 parts:

- pre-employment training
- a work experience placement with an employer in that sector
- a guaranteed interview for a job (including an Apprenticeship) or other support to help participants through the employer's application process.

If a claimant who has been on Youth Obligation for 6 months agrees to a sbwa, they are required to participate in the pre-employment training part. If they fail to do so without good reason or are asked to leave due to misconduct, a sanction may apply. If the claimant fails to attend or participate in the work experience placement, a sanction **will not** apply. However, they may be sanctioned if they are asked to leave the placement due to misconduct. If a claimant fails to attend a guaranteed interview (if one is offered) or are asked to leave the interview due to misconduct, a sanction may apply.

The 3 month guaranteed work experience opportunity is voluntary therefore if they fail to attend, participate or are asked to leave due to misconduct a sanction **will not** apply.

Claimants who do not take up one of the YO options will leave the YO programme and return to the intensive work search regime.

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.

Completing the Youth Obligation

YO completes once the claimant has been referred to and completed the provision at 6 months.