

DWP Staff as Landlords

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Introduction

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment that replaces a number of existing benefits, including Housing Benefit. With the introduction and national rollout of Universal Credit more DWP staff, who are landlords of privately rented properties, may come into contact with a claimant who is also their tenant.

DWP has defined Standards of Behaviours procedures that DWP staff should adhere to in such cases.

Outside interests of DWP staff

DWP staff are responsible for ensuring that there is no conflict of interest between their interests outside of work and their role at the Department. Outside Interests of employees guidance provides information about the general principles regarding DWP staff who have interests outside of work

Conflict of Interest

If a DWP member of staff is involved in setting up or managing a board and lodging establishment this could cause a conflict of interest. DWP staff must therefore speak to their manager who may grant permission depending upon their role.

All DWP staffs have to comply with the [Civil Service Code](#) failure to do so may result in disciplinary actions.

Accessing DWP records

DWP staff must not under any circumstances access or attempt to access any records of a Universal Credit claimant staying in any establishment they may be connected with outside work.

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.

Claimant’s entitlement to privacy

A Universal Credit claimant is entitled to privacy when they attend a face to face interview. If an agent is known to them, in any capacity, they can ask for an alternative agent to administer their claim. They can also request to be seen in a discrete area of the office or choose to attend a different office to the one allocated to them for Universal Credit.

Case Management approach for Service Centres

Staff who are landlords must never work on any aspect of a case where the claimant is their tenant even if the case has been allocated to them under Case Management principles. The line manager must be informed immediately and the case reallocated.

DWP staff are not obliged to inform their line manager of their connection to the claimant but must request the case be reallocated. They can simply say that they have received information about someone they know.

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

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