

Switching off requirements (Easements) for Labour Market regime interventions

In some circumstances claimants may need additional support if their ability to undertake work-related requirements is disrupted for a temporary period of time due to their personal circumstances.

See Switching off work availability and work related activities for more details.

Unless there is reason to change it, the claimant remains in the same Labour Market regime during the period of their work-related switching off requirements (Easements). Contact is maintained with the claimant to periodically review the situation and see how the claimant is doing.

Compulsory switching off requirements (Easements)

Switching off requirements	Duration	Information
Unfit for work	Work search and availability requirements must be switched off for up to the first 14 days of a period of sickness, when it is the first or second episode of sickness in a rolling 12 month period	<p>WFI and work preparation requirements may be set at any point, if this is reasonable based on the claimant's health condition. Currently, while claimants have a valid fit note, they are not expected to take up a new job, so have no availability requirements.</p> <p>If the claimant reports a third episode of sickness in a rolling 12 month period or the sickness continues beyond 14 days this does not warrant an automatic switching off of work search requirements. Discretion should be used to decide whether to switch off or tailor work related requirements to reflect the claimant's health condition and capabilities.</p>
<p>Treated as Limited capability for work</p> <p>Treated as Limited Capability for work and work-related activities (including terminally ill)</p>	Until outcome of Work Capability Assessment (WCA)	<p>For claimants treated as LCW, work search and work availability requirements must be switched off pending outcome of their WCA. WFI and work preparation activities may still be set if reasonable based on the claimant's health condition.</p> <p>For claimants treated as LCW/WRA, all work-related requirements must be switched off pending outcome of work capability assessment.</p>
Temporary absence to	Up to 6 months	Switch off requirements if receiving medically approved

receive medical treatment abroad		treatment abroad or accompanying partner or child.
Bereavement of partner or child	6 months	<p>Mandatory work related requirements must be switched off for all claimants subject to them and sanctions must not be applied.</p> <p>Claimants should be exempt from conditionality for the first 3 payment periods following the loss of a partner or child. After the initial 3 months, optional support, such as re-introduction of Work Focused Interviews (WFI) may apply for a further 3 months without sanctions.</p>
Domestic violence or abuse	3 months, extended to 6 if the claimant is the main carer of a child	<p>Where claimants meet the criteria, the requirements must be switched off.</p> <p>Those in the Intensive Work Search and Light Touch regimes will be offered voluntary WFIs after the first 13 weeks (where they have children and are eligible for the 26 week switching off requirements (Easements)).</p> <p>If the claimant remains in the same household as the person who inflicted or threatened the domestic violence they are not eligible for the Domestic Violence switching off requirements (Easements) In this circumstance, if the claimant has provided relevant evidence of the domestic violence or abuse the Domestic Emergency switching</p>

		off requirements (Easements) can be used where it is appropriate to switch off all requirements for a period of time.
Responsible carer for a child in considerable distress	Up to one month in any 6 month period for a maximum of 2 years	<p>Must switch off requirements if there is a need to provide additional support to a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • following the death of a parent, sibling, previous responsible carer or a person living in the same household as the child (excluding lodgers) • if the child witnessed or experienced violence or abuse. Switching off requirements (Easements) can be applied once every six months for a total period of 2 years.
Drug/alcohol dependent	Up to 6 months but needs to be review regularly to encourage engagement and confirm attendance.	Work related requirements must be switched off so long as the claimant remains in structured recovery orientated treatment for drug or alcohol dependency. A claimant may only have one such period in any rolling 12 month period, calculated from the last day of any previous drug or alcohol related switch off.
Carrying out public duty	Period covered by the circumstances	<p>Examples of public duty include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volunteer fire fighter • lifeboat crew member • volunteer coastguard • councillor • Armed Forces reservist

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attending Jury service • core participants in a public inquiry (see “Switching off work availability and work search” for more information”)
Witness protection	Up to 3 months	For claimants for whom arrangements have been made under section 82 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005.

Discretionary switching off requirements (Easements)

Switching off requirements	Duration	Information
Domestic Emergency	<p>No defined duration but normally up to one month.</p> <p>Cases need to be reviewed monthly to consider whether to extend the switching off period or offer alternative support.</p>	<p>Covers a wide range of circumstances not defined in legislation allowing us to respond appropriately on a case by case basis, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • temporary child care responsibilities • a domestic emergency, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ when a claimant becomes homeless or is at risk of homelessness ○ when a claimant has suffered domestic violence but is still living with the abuser • funeral arrangements to make • is undertaking an agreed work preparation requirement or voluntary work preparation requirement, and it would

		<p>be unreasonable to impose work search/availability requirements (this is likely to apply only in exceptional circumstances)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other temporary circumstances
Homeless (classed as a domestic emergency)	Normally up to one month	Need to determine if it's unreasonable to impose work related requirements. If so, requirements are switched off temporarily but reviewed regularly to check that the claimant is resolving their accommodation issues.
Temporary childcare responsibilities	Period covered by the duration of the circumstances	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usual carer is unavailable • paternity leave • legal order to provide care for child. <p>Switching off is reviewed monthly to establish that claimant is taking steps to resolve issues.</p>