

Non-digital relationships

[Introduction](#)

[Reasons for not using the digital service](#)

[Communicating with non-digital claimants](#)

[Tailoring support for non-digital claimants](#)

[Labour market flexibilities](#)

[Examples of dealing with non-digital claimants](#)

[Useful links and products](#)

Introduction

The majority of claimants will be able to make and maintain their claim for Universal Credit online. For more information on the support available for claimants who need help to do this, see assisted digital guidance.

However, not everyone will be able to make and maintain their claim online, for a variety of good reasons.

As a claimant may not have family or friends they can trust to help them manage their claim, Universal Credit staff may be the only help they have.

Reasons for not using the digital service

There are a number of reasons why a claimant may not be able to make and maintain their claim online including:

- Physical or mental ill health or disability
- visual impairments
- lack of basic literacy
- lack of skills and training
- legal limitations such as MAPPA - Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements or TPIM - Terrorism Prevention Investigation Measures

The claims by phone process is in place to enable non-digital claimants to make and maintain their claim, and to ensure they receive the right support while claiming Universal Credit. For more information, see the spotlight on claims by phone

Communicating with non-digital claimants

Claimants who have made their claim by phone do not have an online account, so will not have access to important information, such as:

- appointment dates and times
- requests for further information, for example Statements of Fitness for Work/Fit Notes
- suspensions
- sanctions
- requests for further information
- payment details/statement

This information needs to be communicated to claimants by alternative forms of contact

For claimants who are not able to access their Journal, methods of contact could include:

- SMS messaging to prompt the claimant to make contact (ensure claimant has a mobile, and that the preference is set to SMS instead of e-mail)
- via mobile or landline:
 - do they have credit on their phone?
 - do they need us to call them back?
 - if a call back is required ensure they can access their phone
 - is there a good time to call them?
- face to face contact
- home visit – in exceptional circumstances and after all other options have been considered

Alternatively consider if an appointee or corporate appointee is appropriate.

It is important to remember that if a claimant cannot interact online, a call back must be offered anytime they call us.

When claimants do agree to a call back Universal Credit staff must be proactive in returning those calls.

Method of contact should be reviewed with the claimant regularly to ensure it remains the most appropriate option.

Tailoring support for non-digital claimants

Staff flexibilities

Staff flexibilities could include:

- attempting to contact the claimant if they miss a face to face appointment before referring for a decision
- offering an alternative to the online channel

- accepting that telephony contact could take longer
- allowing the claimant to use the jobcentre as a care of address if they are unable to provide an alternative (agreed locally and reviewed regularly)
- more than one attempt may be needed when making outbound calls to the claimant

Labour Market Flexibilities

Labour Market flexibilities could include:

- **Conditionality**

If a claimant has characteristics that means they could fall into more than one regime, the lowest conditionality intensity should be applied.

- **Alternative Work Search Activities**

Universal Credit staff should identify any restrictions a claimant may have and record these in a profile note in the claimant history. For claimants who can't use computers don't make online job search part of the claimant commitment. Alternative work search activities can be agreed such as searching in the newspapers, contacting employers directly, registering with agencies who will search for vacancies on their behalf, use computers under supervision from Jobcentre/probation staff, obtain support from support agencies (Local Authority, charities etc.).

- **Remote Management**

Staff can remotely manage those who live in remote areas and have difficulty attending appointments. The way this is undertaken will be agreed with the claimant and can include contact via telephone interventions.

- **Accepting Claimant Commitment**

For claimants who can't access the to-do on their journal they are able to accept their claimant commitment clerically either during face to face or telephone interventions.

- **Providing Work Related Evidence**

Regulations provide flexibility in regards to how claimants can provide evidence of meeting their work related requirements. Alternative options include providing evidence face to face via clerical records or through telephony channels.

Examples of dealing with non-digital claimants

A claimant, who cannot read or write English and so cannot use a computer to make a claim on-line, wishes to make a claim for Universal Credit.

The claimant should phone Universal Credit and ask to make their claim by phone. Their suitability will be assessed, the first part of their claim will be completed and an appointment booked for them to be contacted for completion of the gather.

Once the claim has been completed, an appointment will be booked for them at the jobcentre for their Initial Evidence Interview.

As the claimant cannot access their journal, they will need to be contacted by phone about any important messages.

When the claimant attends appointments, future appointments will need to be made at this time so that the claimant is aware of when they next need to attend.

The claimant should also be placed in a regime according to their circumstances. Any restrictions to employment and training should be taken into account when setting requirements on the claimant's tailored commitment.

The claimant's ability to read and write in English and digital capability should be reviewed regularly as part of their ongoing interaction with DWP. If their language and digital skills reach an appropriate standard, their account should be converted from a phone claim to an online claim.

Useful links

You can find more information by visiting the Complex Needs section

View for further information:

- [Assisted Digital](#)
- [Complex Needs Overview](#)
- [Spotlight on Complex Needs](#)
- [Consent and Disclosure](#)
- [Health and Disabilities](#)
- [Home Visits](#)
- [Appointees](#)
- [MAPPA](#)
- [Spotlight on claims by phone](#)