

## Work preparation regime

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### **Aim**

To keep the claimant motivated, preparing them to return to work as soon as they are able, while taking their capability into account. There is a stepped increase in support to return to work as the youngest child reaches 3 years old.

### **Characteristics**

This regime includes:

- claimants who are a lead carer of a child aged 2
- Who have Limited Capability for Work (LCW) following the outcome of a work capability assessment (WCA)

### **Requirements**

Claimants in this regime are required to prepare for work, to attend Work focused Interviews (WFIs) and report any changes of circumstances.

Claimants determined as having LCW following the outcome of their WCA agree set requirements. These help the claimant's motivation preparing them to return to work as soon as they are able, taking into account their capability.

A lead carer with a youngest child aged 2 is to be offered a stepped increase in support to enable them to be ready to return to work. This is important for lead carers in the year before they move to the Intensive Work Search regime when their youngest child turns 3.

Lead carers are not expected to be available for or to look for work, they can do so voluntarily.

The table below sets out the 2 main types of work-related requirements that can be mandatory for claimants in this regime:

<p><b>Work focused interview requirements are for any or a combination of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assessing prospects for remaining in or finding paid work</li><li>• coaching claimants to remain in or find work</li><li>• identifying training or educational opportunities</li></ul>	<p><b>Work preparation requirements include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• attending a skills assessment</li><li>• preparing a CV</li><li>• improving personal presentation</li><li>• participating in an employment programme</li><li>• developing a business plan</li><li>• research childcare costs and provision</li></ul>
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### **Recording Requirements**

Claimants in this regime must have an agreed, fully tailored Commitment, documenting their plan of how they will prepare for work, setting out their mandatory and voluntary work preparation activities.

Claimants should be encouraged to accept their Commitments during their First Commitments meeting, using their own device or on a customer computer. If they are unable to do this, remind them to do this within 7 days to avoid delaying their payment and/or their claim being closed down. See the, 'At a glance Claimant Commitment' for further information.

### **Framework for lead carers with child aged 2**

The claimant is supported in this regime by the following:

[The First Commitments Meeting](#)

[Regular coaching reviews](#)

### **First Commitments Meeting for lead carers with child aged 2**

The aim of the First Commitments Meeting is to ensure that the claimant fully understands their responsibilities, the requirements they have to meet and what they are expected to achieve.

For information and assistance in communicating with claimants whose first or preferred language is not English refer to the: Interpreter and Translation Services or Welsh language line.

The claimant attends a face to face meeting. The meeting covers 3 core parts, leading to a set of requirements to be recorded in the claimant's Commitment. These are:

[Diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance](#)

[Establishing which work preparations should apply](#)

[Establishing on-going contact requirements](#)

### **Diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance**

Determine a claimant's capability and personal circumstances (including exploring work history, qualifications, health and caring responsibilities).

Encourage claimants to view a move into work positively, for example, by explaining the benefits of the earnings taper under Universal Credit. Determine if the claimant would like to undertake other work-related requirements on a voluntary basis.

Assess claimants for basic skills gaps and especially English Language using skills screening with subsequent mandating to basic skills training including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) where appropriate.

### **Establishing which work preparations should apply**

Establish clear work preparation activities, reflecting the claimant's capability and circumstances; and for carers, to address skills gaps or confidence issues providing they are reasonable and take into account caring responsibilities

Ensure the claimant understands the steps they must take to prepare for a return to work and the consequences leading to potential sanction action if they fail to comply with work preparation mandatory requirements.

Ensure the claimant is motivated and positively commits to complying with the actions and expectations.

### **Establishing on-going contact requirements**

This consists of a tailored level of contact - by digital, telephone or face to face - to check progress and that a claimant is meeting their requirements. Assist the claimant in meeting their requirements through coaching and support and encouraging the claimant to commit and comply with their requirements.

Develop a relationship where claimants feel they can discuss issues as they emerge, helping to ensure requirements remain reasonable and appropriate.

In addition to on-going contact and discretionary ad-hoc support, the following mandatory interventions must be applied (unless requirements have been switched off).

### **Regular coaching reviews**

Claimants must be interviewed flexibly, but with a minimum of at least one interview every 3 months. Claimants must be able to request discussions and interviews.

Interviews are typically mandatory but flexibility exists. Where interviews are mandatory the requirement to attend is clearly communicated, together with a clear summary of failure to attend, for example, the sanction action.

Coaching reviews must be accommodated around childcare availability as far as possible and mandatory work preparation activity should normally be restricted to the hours when the claimant's child is in the care of a responsible adult.

Claimants must feel supported to comply with their requirements with timely interventions providing help and direction. They are given access to help them overcome issues, as and when they are identified. For more information when supporting claimants with health conditions see 'Health and Work Conversation Techniques' under Health.

Undertake claimant activity monitoring to determine if they are complying with their accepted Commitments and the conditions of their regime.

Claimants are required to keep an update of work preparation activity to allow their activity to be monitored. Their progress against mandatory requirements must be checked to support coaching interventions and conversations.

### **Framework for claimants with limited capability for work**

The claimant is supported in this regime by the following:

- [The First Commitments Meeting](#)
- [Regular coaching review](#)
- [Enhanced Support Offer](#)

### **First Commitments Meeting for claimants with limited capability for work**

The aim of the meeting is to ensure the claimant fully understands their responsibilities, the requirements they have to meet to prepare for work and what they are expected to achieve.

The claimant will usually attend a face to face meeting. However, it is important for claimants who are assessed as having Limited Capability for Work (LCW) that

facilities and reasonable adjustments are offered to accommodate health needs, including home and telephone interviews as appropriate.

The meeting covers a set of requirements which are to be recorded in the Claimant Commitment.

These are:

[Diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance](#)

[Establishing which work preparations should apply](#)

[Work and Health Programme](#)

[Work Programme](#)

### **Diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance**

Determine a claimant's capability and personal circumstances, exploring their work history, qualifications, health and caring responsibilities.

Encourage claimants to view a move into work positively for example, by explaining the benefits of the taper under Universal Credit. Coaches must establish if the claimant would like to undertake other work-related requirements on a voluntary basis.

Assess claimants for basic skills gaps and especially English Language using skills screening with subsequent mandating to basic skills training including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) where appropriate.

### **Establishing which work preparations should apply**

Establish clear work preparation requirements, which must be appropriate to the claimant's physical and mental capability as well as personal circumstances.

Ensure the claimant understands the steps they must take to prepare to return to work and the potential for a sanction to be applied if there is any failure to comply with mandatory work preparation requirements.

Ensure the claimant is motivated and positively commits to complying with the actions and expectations.

Health conditions must be considered in determining what the claimant can do to prepare for work as well as understanding what their experience, knowledge and skills are. Understanding of every type of health condition is not required, it is more important to listen to the claimant's needs and abilities as that will help tailor the Claimant Commitments appropriately.

## **Work and Health Programme**

The Work and Health Programme (WHP) is DWP's new contracted employment provision that will help eligible claimants to find sustained work. WHP is available from November 2017 for claimants who have a disability or have early access priority. Referral to WHP is voluntary.

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

See the Work Health Programme, in Examples of Support for people with health conditions and Work and Health Programme for eligibility, suitability and what the programme offers.

## **Work Programme**

The last referral to the Work Programme was on 31 March 2017. Some claimants with a LCW prognosis of three, six, and 12 months may be taking part in work programme and can continue for up to 104 weeks. More information can be found in the Work Programme.

## **Regular coaching review**

There is a large amount of flexibility to best use review time to drive results for claimants in this regime.

Claimants can request reviews and interviews. Interviews are usually mandatory but there is flexibility over this. Where interviews are mandatory the requirement to attend should always be clearly communicated together with a clear summary of the consequences of failure to attend, for example the sanction that applies.

Claimants must feel supported to comply with their requirements through timely interventions to provide encouragement and direction. They are given access to support to help them overcome issues as and when they are identified.

Monitoring of claimant activity must take place to determine whether they are complying with their accepted Claimant Commitment and the conditions of their regime, for example, if the claimant has attended a training course.

Claimants will be required and encouraged to keep an update of work preparation activity for: monitoring the level of claimant activity, in particular their progress against mandatory requirements and to support coaching interventions and conversations.

Claimants must be able to engage with Universal Credit through a variety of communications channels for variable durations and frequencies.

It is important for claimants who are assessed as LCW are offered ~~that~~ facilities and reasonable adjustments to accommodate health needs, including home and telephone interviews as appropriate. Any work preparation requirements must also be appropriate to their physical and mental capability and personal circumstances.

The next WCA is at 18 and 24 months.

### **Enhanced Support Offer**

The Enhanced Support Offer (ESO) provides access to a range of additional support to help eligible claimants prepare for and move into work. Participation in the ESO is voluntary. Claimants eligible for the ESO initiatives are those:

- who make a claim on or after 3 April 2017 and are part of the Work Preparation group, because of their limited capability for work
- whose Work Capability Assessment (WCA) outcome places them in the Universal Credit Work Preparation group from 3 April 2017, because of their limited capability for work

The date to be used for eligibility in these cases is the date of the WCA outcome decision.

This includes anyone who:

- after appealing a previous Fit for Work decision is placed in the Work Preparation group, because of their LCW
- at their WCA they are moved from the LCW and Work Related Activity group (LCWRA) to the Work Preparation group, because of their limited capability for work
- is already in the Work Preparation group, because of their LCW, and their WCA keep them in the Work Preparation group because of their LCW

Additional places have been funded for claimants eligible for the Enhanced Support Offer for the following existing national provision:

- Specialist Employability Support
- Access to Work Mental Health Support Services

There is new provision being rolled out nationally as part of the Enhanced Support Offer:

- Small Employer Offer
- Community Partners
- Journey to Employment

## **Flexible Support Fund**

The Flexible Support Fund (FSF) is a locally managed budget to supplement existing services and tailor support to the needs of individuals in the local area. FSF awards are discretionary and aimed at improving a claimant's job prospects, subject to eligibility.

Claimants are eligible for FSF from and including the first assessment period if they have:

- proved ID verification, including Habitual Residency Test where relevant
- attended their First Commitments Meeting
- accepted their claimant commitment.

Claimants can be considered for a FSF payment if allocated to any of the following Labour Market regimes:

- Intensive work search
- Work preparation
- Work-focused interview
- No work related requirements

The most commonly used awards are:

- training and education
- barriers to work
- travel expenses