

Claimant suicide or self-harm – DWP Six Point Plan Framework

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Introduction

A claimant might declare that they intend to harm or kill themselves. This can be distressing for those concerned, but there are some important points a member of staff should know that can help resolution. Being prepared and having well managed processes in place help to reduce distress and achieve an outcome where everyone is safe. Staff should be alert to claimants who may directly declare, or whose behaviour indicates, an intention to attempt suicide or self-harm.

Whilst some claimants may declare they intend to kill or harm themselves as a threat or a tactic to persuade; others will mean it. Procedures and actions must be organised around the assumption that it is a real possibility that the claimant will take action on their declaration.

DWP staff are not counsellors, but it is important that systems, procedures and responses are in place and that members of staff know what to do if a claimant declares they intend to harm themselves.

When dealing with this type of incident, the safety of the member of staff must always come first. Staff members have a responsibility for their own safety and must ensure that they do not put themselves at risk when attempting to help or advise the claimant.

It is not possible or desirable within this guidance to fully identify the range of ways in which claimants might declare they intend to kill or harm themselves and to specify the action to take in every situation. Staff must be aware of the principles of DWP's Six Point Plan and should use these as a basis to enable them to effectively manage situations that may arise.

The DWP six point plan can be found below. The DWP guidance provides more detail.

1	Take the statement seriously – remain calm
2	Summon a colleague - to act as a support partner
3	Gather information - to gauge level of risk
4	Provide referral advice – if situation is non-urgent, e.g. general distress but no immediate plans or means to attempt suicide or self harm
5	Summon Emergency help – if customer is distressed, at serious risk or in immediate danger
6	Review – discuss incident with line manager and record

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