

Drug and alcohol dependency

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Background

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) drug strategy is for all claimants on any benefit with a dependence on any drug or alcohol within Great Britain.

The way in which DWP supports claimants, who are dependent on drugs or alcohol, is through partnership working with service providers.

DWP's policy to support claimants with drug and/or alcohol dependency is to engage with structured treatment and recovery services as part of an active route into work.

Switching-off work availability and work-related activities

Whilst claimants are having structured treatment, the work availability and work search requirements must be switched-off for up to 6 months from the start date of their treatment to enable the claimant to recover.

A claimant can only have one period in any rolling 12 month period, calculated from the last day of any previous drug and alcohol related switch-off.

Structured treatment

This is treatment in the community (with attendance at regular sessions undertaken as part of a care plan; prescribing) prescribing structured day programmes and structured psychosocial interventions (for example - counseling, therapy etc.).

Referring for a Work Capability Assessment

The Medical Services Referral System (MSRS) mental health flag is set for claimants with drug and alcohol dependency when referring for the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). This allows for good cause if the WCA form is not returned on time.

Treated as having Limited Capability for Work

Once referred for a WCA, claimants can be treated as having Limited Capability for Work (LCW) if evidence is provided that they are undergoing or recovering from medical or other treatment as a patient in a hospital or similar institution (for 24 hours or more). This includes residential programmes of rehabilitation for the treatment of drug or alcohol dependency.