

Work Preparation regime

Aim

Characteristics

Requirements

Framework for lead carers with a child aged 2

- First Commitments Meeting for lead carers with a child aged 2

- Diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance

- Regular coaching reviews

Framework for claimants with limited capability for work

- First Commitments Meeting for claimants with limited capability for work

- Diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance

- Work and Health Programme

- Work Programme

- Regular coaching reviews

Enhanced Support Offer

Flexible Support Fund

Aim

This regime aims 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.

Characteristics

This regime includes claimants who:

- are the lead carer of a child aged 2
- have limited capability for work following the outcome of a Work Capability Assessment

Requirements

A claimant in this regime is required to prepare for work, attend Work focused Interviews and report any changes of circumstances.

A claimant determined as having limited capability for work following the outcome of their Work Capability Assessment agree set requirements. These help the claimant's motivation, preparing them to return to work as soon as they are able and taking into account their capabilities.

A lead carer with a youngest child aged 2 will 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, but 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>Work Focused Interview requirements are for any or a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assessing prospects for remaining in or finding paid work• coaching claimants to remain in or find work• identifying training or educational opportunities	<p>Work Preparation requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• attending a skills assessment• preparing a CV• improving personal presentation• participating in an employment programme• developing a business plan• researching childcare costs and provision
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Recording requirements

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

The claimant must 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 or to prevent their claim being closed down. See Claimant Commitment overview for further information.

Framework for lead carers with a child aged 2

The claimant is supported in this regime by the following:

The First Commitments Meeting for lead carers with a child aged 2
Regular coaching reviews

First Commitments Meeting for lead carers with a 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 must attend 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 the claimant's capability and personal circumstances – this includes exploring work history, qualifications, health and caring responsibilities.

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

Assess the claimant for basic skills gaps - especially English Language using skills screening with subsequent mandating to basic skills training, including English for Speakers of Other Languages, where appropriate.

Establishing which work preparations should apply

Establish clear work preparation activities. These must reflect a claimant's capability and circumstances – and in the case of 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 a potential sanction,) if they fail to comply with mandatory work preparation requirements.

Ensure the claimant is motivated and positively commits to complying with all 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 to confirm that a claimant is meeting their requirements. Assist the claimant in meeting their requirements through coaching and support and encourage them to commit to and comply with their requirements.

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

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

Regular coaching reviews

A claimant must be interviewed flexibly but with a minimum of at least one interview every 3 months. They must also be able to request discussions and interviews themselves.

Interviews are typically mandatory but flexibility exists. If the interview is mandatory, the requirement to attend must be clearly communicated together with a clear summary of the consequences of failure to attend - for example, a potential sanction.

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.

The claimant must feel supported to comply with their requirements and given timely interventions for help and direction. These provide ready access to support to help them overcome issues as and when they are identified. For more information for supporting claimants with health conditions, see 'Health and Work Conversation Techniques' under Health.

Monitor the claimant's activities to determine if they are complying with their accepted Commitments and the conditions of their regime.

A claimant will be required and encouraged to keep an update of work preparation activity to allow this 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:

- 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 that facilities and reasonable adjustments are offered to accommodate health needs. This includes home and telephone interviews where 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, this includes exploring their work history, qualifications and health and caring responsibilities.

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

Assess the claimant for basic skills gaps - especially English Language using skills screening with subsequent mandating to basic skills training, including English for Speakers of Other Languages, 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 their personal circumstances.

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

Ensure the claimant is motivated and positively commits to complying with all 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. The understanding of every type of health condition is not required and it is more important to listen to the claimant's needs and abilities as that will help tailor the Claimant Commitment appropriately.

Work and Health Programme

The Work and Health Programme 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 Work Health Programme is voluntary.

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

See Work and 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 limited capability for work prognosis of 3, 6 and 12 months may be taking part in the Work Programme and can continue for up to 104 weeks. More information can be found in Work Programme.

Regular coaching reviews

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

A claimant can request reviews and interviews. Interviews are usually mandatory but there is flexibility over this. If an interview is mandatory the requirement to attend must always be clearly communicated together with a clear summary of the consequences of failure to attend - for example, a potential sanction.

The claimant must feel supported to comply with their requirements and given timely interventions to provide encouragement and direction. These provide ready access to support help them overcome issues as and when they are identified.

Monitor the claimant's activities 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.

A claimant will be required and encouraged to keep an update of work preparation activity to allow this to be monitored, 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 communication channels for variable durations and frequencies.

It is important that claimants who are assessed as having limited capability for work are offered facilities and reasonable adjustments to accommodate health needs, including home and telephone interviews as appropriate. All 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.

The Universal Credit appointment list will assist with the type of appointment to book.

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.

Those eligible for the ESO initiatives are claimants:

- 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 (LCW)
- whose Work Capability Assessment (WCA) outcome places them in the Work Preparation group from 3 April 2017 because of their LCW

In these cases, the date to be used for eligibility 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 limited capability for work and work related activity (LCWRA) to the Work Preparation group because of their LCW
- 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 on 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 is a locally managed budget to supplement existing services and tailor support to the needs of individuals in the local area. Awards from the Flexible Support Fund are discretionary and aimed at improving a claimant's job prospects subject to eligibility.

A claimant is eligible for Flexible Support Fund from and including the first assessment period if they have:

- proved identity verification including the Habitual Residence Test, where relevant
- attended their First Commitments Meeting
- accepted their Claimant Commitment

A claimant can be considered for a Flexible Support Fund payment if allocated to any of the following Labour Market regimes:

- Intensive Work Search
- Work Preparation
- Work Focused Interview only
- No Work Related Requirements

The most commonly used awards are:

- training and education
- barriers to work
- travel expenses