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Eligibility

Youth Obligation Support Programme (YOSP) offers intensive support from day one of a new Universal Credit claim for claimants aged 18-21 in England, Scotland and Wales who are in the intensive work search regime. Claimants who live in Northern Ireland cannot take part in YOSP.

The YOSP applies to young people who have made a new claim to Universal Credit as a result of:

- a change of circumstances, which has caused them to move to Universal Credit from a legacy benefit
- the move to Universal Credit pilot where there has been no change of circumstances and DWP are supporting them to claim Universal Credit instead of their legacy benefit
- moving from Universal Credit Live Service to Full Service (switchers)

See Moving onto Universal Credit.

The YOSP helps young people to move into work or an apprenticeship quickly. YOSP is an additional programme to complement the claimant's customer journey.

Participation in YOSP may be affected where a switching off requirements (Easements) applies.

YOSP is a work preparation requirement. Therefore, claimants with medical evidence can be required to participate, if this is reasonable based on their health condition and if their work preparation requirements have not been switched off.

Some claimants may have both work preparation and work search activities switched off after they have started on the YOSP journey. In these cases, the claimants could re-join YOSP (if appropriate) once work preparation requirements are re-applied.

Youth Obligation Support Programme exemptions

Claimants who meet the criteria below are exempted from participating on YOSP, for those:

- aged 22 or over at the first commitments meeting
- who have previously completed YOSP in full
- who will be within 11 weeks of the expected week of childbirth during the Intensive Activity Programme (IAP) part of YOSP
- who declare they are pregnant whilst participating on YOSP. Such claimants are exempt at the point they reach 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth. They will not return to the programme when they return to Intensive regime and are under the age of 22, unless they choose to re-join on a voluntary basis
- who are assessed as being in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) pre-entry levels 1 and 2
- considered to be gainfully self-employed for Universal Credit purposes. These claimants do not return to the programme if their circumstances change

Youth Obligation Support Programme easements

If a switching off requirements (Easements) does not apply to the claimant, they may still be eligible for a YOSP easement in certain circumstances.

A YOSP easement applies to claimants with a health condition and in receipt of current medical evidence for the entire easement period. Although most commonly a Fit Note, the department also accepts a wide range of other medical evidence. The claimant must currently not be capable of undertaking any work preparation activities and they are not listed as mandatory requirements on their claimant commitment. A review must be completed for every Fit note period to establish if the claimant's capabilities have changed.

Claimants assessed at ESOL pre entry level 3 (equivalent to literacy levels at age 9 to 11) can be given a YOSP easement until they reach ESOL level 1. The

minimum requirement needed to participate effectively in YOSP is ESOL level 1.

Claimant is 22 years old while on the Youth Obligation Support Programme

Claimants who turn 22 years old while participating on YOSP must complete their journey. This includes claimants who have been on an easement that ends before their twenty second birthday as they will re-join at the point they left.

Claimants that have a current YOSP easement or a switch off of requirements (Easements) on their twenty second birthday end their YOSP journey. This also applies to those who have an easement applied after they turn 22.

Moving in and out of the Intensive Work Search regime

Claimants on YOSP who move from the Intensive Work Search regime (IWSR) into another Labour Market regime may continue to participate on a voluntary basis, if it is still appropriate to their new regime.

Claimants who are on YOSP and, who move out of the IWSR into another Labour Market regime (including the Light Touch regime), but then move back into IWSR and are aged 18-21, must re-join the YOSP journey where they left off. This does not apply to claimants with a switching off requirements (Easements) or YOSP easement, who will not re-join YOSP.

Re-claims

Where a claimant on YOSP ends their claim then re-claims within 6 months, they re-join YOSP at the point in their journey at which they left it.

If a claimant makes a new claim to Universal Credit after the 6 months, is in the IWSR and meets the eligibility criteria, they re-start the YOSP journey from the beginning.

Special arrangements to allow participation

Special arrangements may need to be made for certain claimants to allow them to participate in the full range of YOSP activities:

- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) - the claimant commitment must take into account any individual restrictions the claimant has - but claimants with MAPPA should not be excluded from participation in any YOSP activity including the mandatory elements
- Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB) - the Staff Protection List control measures that have been put in place to make it a safe environment must be applied in all circumstances, but claimants should not be excluded from participation in any YOSP activity, including the mandatory elements

- Prison leavers – the claimant commitment will take into account any individual restrictions the claimant has, but claimants should not be excluded from participation in any other YOSP activity including the mandatory elements

Youth Obligation Support Programme claimant journey

Day one of the YOSP journey starts from the date a claimant accepts their claimant commitment.

The programme contains a curriculum of activity to help young people move closer to employment. All claimants should be encouraged and supported to take up employment or an apprenticeship as quickly as possible.

There are 5 stages to the individual claimant's YOSP journey:

- **first commitment meeting** - the initial assessment of eligibility requirements which includes conducting a diagnostic skills interview, to consider and apply if appropriate, YOSP exemptions and YOSP easements and/or Switching off requirements (Easements)
- **weeks 1 to 3** – the mandatory Intensive Activity Programme (IAP) is a package of intensive support designed to accelerate the claimant's return to work, including 2 group workshops and 2 follow-up coaching conversations. It is recognised that it may not be possible to deliver the IAP workshops within the first 3 weeks see Weeks 1 to 3 - IAP
- **week 4 onwards** - claimants participate in their normal claimant journey see Intensive work search regime and Labour Market journey for health
- **month 5** – a mandatory in-depth stocktake assessment to discuss and review progression, challenge and motivate claimants to consider and explore their next steps
- **month 6** - claimants who are on YOSP but still not in employment or on an apprenticeship must attend a mandatory referral interview to encourage them to take up one of the 3 offers of provision (See month 6)

Please note: the above interviews and assessments should be face to face unless a claimant has a health condition, in which case the face to face process may need modifying to suit their circumstances.

Weeks 1 to 3 - Intensive Activity Programme

The Intensive Activity Programme (IAP) is a mandatory part of the YOSP. IAP is a package of intensive support designed to accelerate the claimant's return or

entry to work by helping them to become effective, full-time job seekers from the earliest point in their claim.

All YOSP participants must participate in and complete the IAP. If they fail to attend or fail to complete the exercises without good reason, a sanction may apply.

The IAP includes 2 DWP facilitator led group workshops to help claimants to think about their skills, what sort of jobs they can do and how they can prepare for work. Claimants are given a Getting Started Leaflet with activities to complete before attending the first IAP workshop.

The IAP workshops should take 90 minutes each to deliver. Workshop one should normally take place within one week of the claimant commitment being signed and workshop 2 within one week of the first workshop.

After each workshop a follow up coaching conversation takes place for 20 minutes to agree and update the claimant commitment with activities identified during the IAP workshops.

In some circumstances it may take longer than 3 weeks to complete the IAP, for example where:

- the number of YOSP claimants in the jobcentre restricts how often the IAP group sessions can be delivered
- the claimant needs more time to complete the self-learning due to ability or failure to participate
- the claimant failed to attend a scheduled IAP group session for a good reason and it had to be rescheduled

When the IAP **cannot** be delivered, including using an alternative channel, within the first 3 weeks the jobcentre must consider commencing weekly work search reviews. Weekly work search reviews must be tailored if the claimant is on the health journey, which may mean that the claimant does not complete the IAP within the 3 week timeframe. If the claimant starts the 13 weeks of weekly work search reviews early (before the end of the IAP), the remaining balance is completed after the IAP.

The IAP must be fully completed before the claimant can move onto the next stage of the YOSP journey.

Week 4 onwards

The normal mandatory work search activities or work preparation activities (health journey) apply. The reviews should encourage claimants to build on the learning in the IAP and include appropriate referrals to Contracted and Non-

Contracted provision and for additional support requirements, where a need is identified. Information on all the provision is available locally is detailed on the District Provision Tool.

Please note: Following weekly work search activities the frequency of ongoing reviews is at the discretion of the local jobcentre, and is dependent upon the level of support required by the claimant.

Month 5 - Stocktake assessment - review progress

Participation in the stocktake assessment is mandatory. The assessment should include:

- exploring steps taken to achieve a work or an apprenticeship outcome and the claimant's learning from this
- listening to and exploring the claimant's personal concerns and issues (which may extend beyond getting a job) and using this insight to help motivate them to make changes
- exploring in detail why the claimant's personal journey so far has not yet produced a successful work-related outcome, and deciding on best next steps
- critically reviewing employability skills against claimant job goals, helping the claimant understand other routes to achieve their ambitions and dealing with setbacks
- broadening the claimant's perspective and understanding of sectors and Labour Markets locally and nationally
- exploring short-term outcomes versus long term goals
- re-enforcing the expectation that they should be earning or learning and identifying concrete next steps and commitment for action over the next month to gain an employment outcome before the 6-month point
- re-iterating the expectation that at 6 months they should be earning or learning
- explaining that there will be a further interview at 6 months

At the stocktake assessment, the claimant should be referred to the most suitable provision or support that addresses their individual barriers to work over the following month.

Claimants can be referred to provision that would last beyond month 6 if it would:

- address any new barriers that have previously not been identified
- support the claimant to achieve their job goal
- lead to an apprenticeship

The information gathered at the stocktake assessment is used to begin preparatory work to source the most suitable provision referral at 6 months.

It is important that this should reflect the claimant's agreed job goal. This will be reviewed with the claimant at the 6-month intervention to ensure that it is the most appropriate referral to make if the claimant is still in the Intensive Work Search regime.

Month 6

Claimants who are still unemployed and in the Intensive Work Search regime will receive a referral interview after 6 months of intensive support. Attendance at the 6-month referral appointment is mandatory.

At the interview they will discuss and be encouraged to take up one of the following 3 voluntary options, which will help them to achieve their job goal swiftly:

- a traineeship
- a sector based work academy programme
- a 3-month work experience opportunity (one single opportunity, or consecutive opportunities lasting 3 months)

The 3-month work experience and traineeship opportunities are voluntary. If the claimant starts a work experience or traineeship opportunity, but decides not to continue, they should inform their work coach immediately, so that other work-related requirements can be discussed.

Claimants who do not take up one of these 3 options will leave the YOSP. They will continue on the standard journey for Universal Credit claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime, receive additional support and referral to local provision on the District Provision Tool, where appropriate.

Sanctions

A sanction may apply if a claimant fails to comply for no good reason to the following mandatory parts of YOSP:

- Intensive Activity Programme – attending or completing the IAP activities
- attending the stocktake assessment
- attending the month 6 referral interview
- to participate in the mandatory elements of a sector-based work academy programme, once the claimant has agreed to take part

When the claimant meets the compliance requirement they resume their YOSP journey from the point at which they failed to comply.

Flexible Support Fund

Claimants on YOSP will have access to the Flexible Support Fund throughout the YOSP journey.

Completing the Youth Obligation Support Programme

YOSP is completed if:

- the claimant reaches the age of 22 and has a YOSP easement or a switching off requirements (Easements) applied
- the claimant has completed the relevant provision agreed at the 6-month stage
- the claimant reaches the 6 month stage of the journey but does not take up a referral to one of the options mentioned above at the 6-month stage