

Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for Universal Credit

It is the DWP's priority to protect colleagues and provide help and support to those claimants who need it the most.

In response to new Regulation 3 Coronavirus 2020, DWP has in place an enhanced response to claims for Universal Credit and New Style ESA only benefit being made in the following circumstances:

- claimants who have a diagnosis of Coronavirus
- claimants who are following government advice to self-isolate, for example after returning from abroad, being in contact with someone subsequently diagnosed or experiencing symptoms of Coronavirus; and
- those who have a child of qualifying young person who they are responsible for that meets the criteria above

At the time of publishing, the key changes when supporting effected claimants are:

- an increased need to generate biographical questions for claimants unable to attend the jobcentre
- where a claimant is unable to attend a Jobcentre with evidence we will trust the information they have declared
- creating and accepting a claimant commitment on the claimant's behalf by telephone
- treating claimants as having Limited Capability for Work (LCW) based on the information they have provided, without the need for a Statement of Fitness for Work (SoFFW)
- removal of the need to attend an appointment when applying for an advance

Labour Market considerations

Claimants must tell us that they have been diagnosed or that they are self-isolating as soon as this happens so we can tailor their conditionality to their new circumstances and avoid being sanctioned. [Link to GOV.UK content for claimants. \(link is external\)](#) The claimant's work search and work availability must be switched off and they will not be sanctioned for not undertaking work search activity or for not being available for work.

The claimant commitment will then be reviewed to ensure that any work related requirements continue to be reasonable taking into account the claimant's health and circumstances. Medical related requirements must not be placed on the claimant commitment.

Work coaches can continue to use their discretion to agree work preparation activities that can be done from home if this is reasonable. They can continue to conduct work focused interviews over the telephone or have contact via the claimant Journal where this is reasonable.