

National provision

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Introduction

There is a wide range of provision available to claimants, both national and local to help them obtain the skills and experience they need to get work, more work or better paid work.

Any work related provision which will support the claimant is identified and can be a single activity or several activities which address problems like debt, health or basic skills.

There are broadly 3 types of support to address barriers to work:

- provision delivered as part of the Jobcentre Plus Offer arranged by local Employer and Partnerships Teams, for example, Work Experience, sector-based work academy programme and provision locally procured through the Flexible Support Fund
- contracted employment programmes for claimants run by providers on behalf of DWP, arranged by district or national contracts

- non contracted provision, that is non-DWP programmes that are also open to claimants, for example:
 - those run by (or contracted to) Department for Education such as traineeships
 - Local Authorities
 - Charities, for example The Prince's Trust
 - the Scottish government or the Welsh government
 - private-sector schemes such as Movement to Work.

Specific local provision opportunities are shown on the District Provision Tool.

Provision to address barriers to work

Addressing barriers to work, the work experience and skills needs of the claimant should be considered from the first Commitments meeting and throughout their ongoing Labour Market regime.

Claimants will receive support to:

- develop realistic job goals
- develop an up to date CV at the start of their claim, updating it throughout their claim
- apply for jobs and Apprenticeships
- apply for other work related training or work experience opportunities.

National organisations also provide additional advice and guidance that may support claimants, such as:

- the National Careers Service in England, (with many careers advisors co-located in Jobcentres)
- Careers Wales
- Skills Development Scotland

Skills

Having the correct skills is essential for claimants when they are looking for work or progressing in their current employment. It is therefore vital that claimants are screened for essential:

- basic skills
- maths
- English (spoken and written)
- digital capability/information and communications technology (ICT)

Identifying skills gaps (sometimes called skills screenings) is an integral part of the meetings with claimants. This includes observing the claimants and having discussions to gather evidence on skills, qualifications, previous training and

work history. The information gathered will help determine whether the claimant has any potential skills gaps and/ or whether they need to reconsider their job goals.

Where further investigation of basic literacy and numeracy skills is needed claimants can be asked to complete the 'Fast Track Screening Tool' in England and Wales or the 'Literacy and Numeracy Alerting Questions' in Scotland.

A claimant may also be referred or signposted to one or more of the following:

- in depth diagnostic skills assessment – giving a specific breakdown of claimant's skills need and identifying claimants' skill levels to make appropriate decisions about training courses for claimants
- basic skills training
- English Speakers of Foreign Languages (ESOL) training
- Information & communication technology (ICT) training
- employability training
- vocational training
- sector based work academy programme placements
- training funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- training funded by the Scottish and Welsh governments
- training courses offered by organisations locally that are on the District Provision Tool

These are examples, not a full list.

In England, benefit claimants are eligible for training fully-funded by the Department for Education through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). All adults are eligible for English and Maths training up to Level 2. Young people aged up to 23 can get fully-funded training up to a first Level 3. From April 2021, older learners in England can also get fully funded training up to level 3 in technical and vocational subjects. Unemployed people receiving Universal Credit, Jobseekers Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance are eligible for fully-funded training up to Level 2 where this will help them find work. Claimants of other benefits may also get this support at the discretion of the training provider.

Department for Education rules for England also allow training providers the discretion to fully fund training to learners who are in work, including those in receipt of Universal Credit, if their gross annual salary is less than £17,004.00 in the academic year 2020/21.

Further education and skills policy and delivery in Scotland and Wales is the responsibility of the Scottish and Welsh Governments.

Periods of education and training are generally expected to be of a fairly short duration. This is usually up to 8 weeks, except in specific circumstances for example where claimants have very low skills, such as:

- maths
- English
- ESOL
- ICT

There may be some variations to this in Scotland and in Wales.

From 26 April 2021 to 31 October 2021, there is a temporary increase to the number of weeks claimants on the Intensive Work Search Regime can participate in training. This is:

- up to 12 weeks for full-time work related training throughout Great Britain
- up to 16 weeks for Skills Bootcamps in England

This increase does not apply to claimants in other regimes.

The increase allows claimants to access any full time work related training up to Level 3. This includes sector-specific training, provided as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, such as Skills Bootcamps and the Level 3 adult offer.

Where a skills gap is identified as the main barrier to moving into work, claimants are required to undertake that activity and their claimant commitment is updated accordingly.

All other referrals or learning activity are voluntary.

In exceptional circumstances claimants who have completed a longer level 3 training course for a particular job sector, may take up an opportunity in a different sector. This can only happen if it is the best route to support them to obtain the skills required in their local labour market.

From 1 November 2021, the allowed number of weeks training will revert back to up to 8 weeks.

When considering referrals to training, especially for in-work claimants, providers need to confirm that skills funding is available.

Universal Credit is not intended to be a substitute for education maintenance or other educational grants. See Students.

Pre-employment training (PET)

Skills training/Pre-employment Training (PET) is any training to help claimants move closer to progress in the labour market. It can be full or part-time depending on the claimant's needs and could include:

- literacy & numeracy skills training
- ESOL
- ICT training
- general or specific vocational skills for a sector or job
- employability skills

These are examples, not a full list.

PET is also one of the parts of a sector-based work academy programme or Traineeship.

Traineeships

A Traineeship is an education and training programme to give 16-24 year olds the skills and experience needed to progress to an Apprenticeship or other job. It is targeted at those qualified below [level 3](#) who have minimal experience in work but are focused on the prospect of getting a job and are likely to be ready for employment within 6 months, with appropriate training. See Traineeships.

Sector-based work academy programme

The sector-based work academy programme helps people who are ready to start a job, and need support to learn the skills and behaviours that employers in particular industries look for. The scheme runs in England and Scotland and offers training and work experience for up to 6 weeks in a particular industry or area of work. See Sector-based work academy programme.

Work Experience

Work Experience placements cover a range of sectors including retail, construction, administration, hospitality industry and IT. It provides claimants who have little or no work related skills the opportunity to gain valuable experience within a work place. It fosters the work habit in unemployed people, particularly young people, whilst boosting their confidence and creating opportunities for them to get on the job ladder. It also provides them with a potential route onto a traineeship or apprenticeship.

Work Experience gives claimants the opportunity to show they have both job role specific skills and core employability skills such as:

- time management
- organisational skills
- communication skills
- team working skills

There are a number of DWP funded schemes and programmes that incorporate work experience opportunities, and organisations such as the Prince's Trust, Barclays also offer employment support programmes that incorporate work experience. Opportunities available locally will be on the District Provision Tool

A number of organisations and websites also advertise internships and work experience opportunities, for example:

- Success at School has job courses at <https://successatschool.org/jobscourses>
- Go Think Big has opportunities at <https://gothinkbig.co.uk/opportunities>
- Student Ladder has work experience at <http://www.studentladder.co.uk/Work-Experience/work-experience.html>
- Indeed has work experience at <https://www.indeed.co.uk/Work-Experience-Placement-jobs>
- Target Jobs has work experience and internships at <https://targetjobs.co.uk/work-experience-and-internship-vacancies>
- Movement to Work opportunities with external employers at <http://www.movementtowork.com/> (see separate entry below).

These are examples, not a full list.

Work Experience lasts for 2 to 8 weeks and claimants are expected to do 25 to 30 hours a week (unless there are agreed limitations on their availability). Claimants are subject to all existing requirements for their Labour Market regime while on Work Experience and must be actively looking for work and available for work.

Acceptance on a Work Experience opportunity may involve an application / interview process.

Participation on Work Experience is voluntary, therefore a sanction cannot be applied if the claimant fails to attend or participate or if the claimant is asked to leave because of misconduct.

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. Claimants eligible for the ESO initiatives are those:

- 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)
- whose Work Capability Assessment (WCA) outcome places them in the Universal Credit Work Preparation group (because of their limited capability for work) from 3 April 2017

The date to be used for eligibility in these cases is the date of the WCA outcome decision.

This includes anyone who:

- is placed in the Work Preparation group (because of their limited capability for work) after appealing a previous Fit for Work decision.
- at their WCA they are moved from the Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity group (LCWRA) to the Work Preparation group (because of their limited capability for work)
- is already in the Work Preparation group (because of their limited capability for work) and their WCA keeps them in the Work Preparation group (because of their limited capability for work)

Additional places have been funded for claimants eligible for the ESO for the following existing national provision:

- Work Choice
- Specialist Employability Support
- Access to Work Mental Health Support Services

See Enhanced Support Offer.

Work and Health Programme

The Work and Health Programme (WHP) is DWP's new contracted employment provision that will help eligible claimants to find sustained work. WHP is voluntary unless the claimant reaches 24 months as long term unemployed (and is not already participating in the programme) in which case it is mandatory.

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

See the Work and Health Programme for further information.

Fair Start Scotland Programme

Fair Start Scotland (FSS) programme is a targeted provision offering tailored support to help eligible claimants to find sustained paid work.

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

Participation on FSS is voluntary, therefore claimants cannot be sanctioned for non-attendance, failure to engage or if they leave the programme early. However, normal conditionality and mandatory work-related activity sanctions still apply.

See the Fair Start Scotland Programme for eligibility, suitability and what the programme offers.

Skills to Succeed Academy

The Skills to Succeed Academy (SSA) is an online employability skills training site specifically designed to help claimants choose the right career as well as build the key employability skills they need to find and keep a job. The training has been designed specifically for younger claimants but can be used with older claimants to support their skills development requirements.

SSA focuses on teaching claimants how to do things for themselves, building skills and confidence, empowering them to take ownership of their own career development and job search. It's easy to use, offering flexible training and relevant advice, guidance and feedback. It's also engaging and fun with videos, quizzes and activities.

There are 3 training courses to choose from:

- **You and Your Career** - 6 modules to help build the skills to make the right career choices for them, including:
 - learning more about careers
 - thinking about what influences your career choices
 - understanding what makes you tick and how to get experience
- **Getting a Job** - 20 modules to help build skills including:
 - finding and successfully apply for a job
 - identifying existing skills
 - knowing how to make good impression
 - researching and applying for the right jobs

- creating and tailoring CVs
- preparing for and succeeding at interview
- **Success in Work** - 10 modules to people build the skills they need to succeed in work, including:
 - preparing for a new job
 - clarifying what to expect when you start a job
 - maintaining motivation and managing your career
 - understanding relationships and attitudes at work

[See Skills to Succeed Academy presentation to use with Universal Credit claimants.](#)

Movement to Work

Movement to Work (MtW) is a partnership between the Civil Service and other large employers across the country to bring unemployed young people into work. It is an employer-led approach helping young people aged 18 to 30 who are not in education, employment or training. A MtW programme aims to move claimants closer to the world of work, into a job or be a stepping stone to a traineeship or apprenticeship. DWP is one of the employers that hosts placement on the provision.

Each MtW programme is different as participating employers design the content that is relevant to their business or sector.

Participation in MtW is voluntary and placements are between a minimum of 25 hours and a maximum of 30 hours a week.

The content of the MtW is flexible but generally the programme is 2 to 6 weeks long, but can be extended to 8 weeks in certain circumstances. It consists of vocational training and/or work experience.

What the claimant wants to achieve must be discussed, as well as:

- their work aspirations
- their current skills
- any skills gap

This information is used to match claimants to suitable placements.

The activities the claimant undertakes are aimed at helping them develop the skills and experience needed to find permanent employment. For some, the experience of a working environment and the opportunity to build their confidence is as important as the activities they undertake.

The activities will vary depending where the placement takes place but could include:

- project work including research
- CV writing and interview preparation
- learning about marketing materials and visual displays
- developing and delivering presentations
- answering internal telephone calls and taking messages
- shadowing other team members
- organising, attending or taking notes at meetings

This is not an exhaustive list of activities and each Movement to Work experience should be tailored to the needs of the individual through discussion with them.

On successful completion of the MtW programme the employer will issue a certificate of achievement. Some MtW programmes may result in participants gaining formal qualifications.

Movement to Work opportunities will be on the District Provision Tool.

Intensive Personalised Employment Support

Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) is a new voluntary provision covering England and Wales, for people with disabilities and complex barriers to employment. These people would be considered to be more than 12 months from the labour market without the support of this programme.

See Intensive Personalised Employment Support.

Mentoring Circles

The Mentoring Circle initiative is to support young people aged 16-24 giving them an opportunity to build on their employability skills through interaction with employers. Work coaches will identify suitable participants interested in the programme, and participation is voluntary.

The main aim of Mentoring Circles is to increase the confidence, motivation and job search skills of the young people to help them move closer to employment by raising their aspirations and fostering a can do approach.

Mentoring Circle allows young people to bring issues or challenges to the group and work and learn together, take action and reflect on outcomes with a focus on personal development. Many young people do not have access to social capital, role models or inspiring employer mentors, so this initiative bridges this gap bringing employers and young people together.

The Mentoring Circle comprises of three meetings where employers lead and share insight and information with the young people. The sessions are two hours, spread over three weeks and the employers will work with the same group.

District Provision Tool

The District Provision Tool (DPT) provides access to the full range of support delivered by Jobcentre Plus, Education Skills Funding Agency, Skills Development Scotland, Careers Wales other national and local providers, local authorities, independent and volunteer / charity organisations, for example the Princes Trust programmes.

It hosts all the available provision and support in a district and nationally. It helps work coaches explore the full flexible menu of support and maximise provision in developing claimant's skills to enable them to obtain and retain a job and progress within their employment. It covers contracted, non-contracted, community and local groups as well as national support organisations.

It also includes specialist and local support information and signposting details including for those disadvantaged or at risk.

Find and refer

Find & Refer is used to make the referrals for Universal Credit claimants to national Contracted Provision ie WHP, NEA, SES, ESF, RPC and Fairstart Scotland.

Access to Work

Access to Work offers financial help towards the extra cost of employing a disabled person and practical support to overcome work related obstacles resulting from disability. In some cases the employer will share the cost. AtW does not replace or subsidise an employer's legal duty to make reasonable adjustments. AtW is available in England, Scotland and Wales.

Specialist advisers work with the claimant and their employer to give the correct support. AtW can be paid to cover:

- the costs of employing an interpreter or communicator to accompany an applicant attending a job interview
- short or long term financial assistance to disabled people who incur additional costs in travelling to and from work or during working hours because of their disability
- the cost of providing a Support Worker (SW) in the workplace and can also be used to pay for a SW driver to help the applicant get to and from work

- the additional costs of modifications to an employer's or self-employed person's premises or equipment, to enable them to employ or retain a disabled employee
- special aids and equipment to help provide people with an in-work disability need with specialised aids and equipment for employment purposes.

These are examples, not a full list.

AtW assists people with a recognised disability who are:

- self employed
- in paid employment
- due to start a job
- 16 or over with no upper age limit for support as long as the employment is likely to continue
- in need of help at a job interview with an employer
- about to start employment
- about to start self-arranged work experience
- living in Great Britain. Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are not included for AtW support

AtW support is not available to claimants on the Specialist Employability Support programme.

Access to Work Mental Health Support Services (AtW MHSS)

Mental Health Support Service (MHSS) in Access to Work (AtW) is designed to support those in work who are at risk of falling out of work as well as those with a potential job offer transitioning into work. Additional places have been funded to support claimants who are eligible for the Enhanced Support Offer.

AtW MHSS is a 6 month support provision and ESO claimants who have a potential start date with an employer, but are unsure of their ability to sustain employment without support can apply for AtW MHSS.

New Enterprise Allowance

See New Enterprise Allowance.

Help to Claim Universal Credit

Help to Claim is a service provided by Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland for claimants making a new Universal Credit claim or moving from a legacy benefit to Universal Credit because of a change of circumstances. This service includes the following support:

- **Multi- channel ‘no wrong door’ access**
The service will be available, face-to-face, over the phone and online through web-chat and online advice content. This allows claimants to access support in the way that’s right for them. They can be signposted or referred (post initial application) by the DWP, signposted from third parties or self refer.
- **Help to Claim check**
Help to Claim will check that Universal Credit is the right benefit for a claimant to claim.
- **Individual needs assessment**
However claimants access the service their individual needs will be assessed to make sure they can get access to the right level of support in the way that’s right for them.
- **Support to start a Universal Credit claim**
Depending on their level of need this might include help to:
 - Set up an email address or a Universal Credit account
 - Work through claim to-dos
 - Access Universal Credit phone claim service
 - Access DWP home visit support
- **Completing a claim and getting ready for first payment**
Depending on their level of need this might include help to:
 - Verify their identity
 - Provide additional evidence
 - Prepare for the practicalities of their first monthly payment
 - Access adaptations such as direct payments to landlords and conditionality easements
 - Apply for Advance Payments and access additional financial support
- **Access to longer term support**
Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland can support claimants with other issues in their lives by signposting or referring them to other services, either within Citizens Advice or through other organisations.

Who is eligible for support through Help to Claim

Anyone who requires support to make a new Universal Credit claim or moving from a legacy benefit to Universal Credit following a change of circumstances can access Help to Claim.

Help to Claim can be accessed any time until the first full correct payment of Universal Credit is made.

There are no specific eligibility criteria for the type of people who can access support, instead this is focused on the types of help people need.

Accessing Help to Claim is voluntary.

Help to Claim offers must be recorded as a profile note in the claimant history.

Money guidance/Debt advice

Universal Credit prepares claimants for the world of work in which most employees are paid monthly. It also encourages claimants to take responsibility for their own financial affairs. It is important that claimants are able to make the same sort of decisions as those in work and develop the financial capability to do so.

Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA) are available for those claimants who can't manage the single monthly payment and there is a risk of financial harm to the claimant and/or their family. Claimant's receiving APA's should be offered money guidance/debt advice to help them become financially independent, and ultimately move back to the standard monthly payment. The following options are available:

- Managed Payment to Landlord
- more frequent payments
- split payments

Claimants who are struggling to budget or who are in debt should be referred for money guidance/debt advice.

It is important to encourage claimants to seek help for their money problems as soon as possible to avoid the risk of going into debt or stop existing debts from getting worse.

It may help to reassure claimants that thousands of people seek help with their money every week. This can be anything from tips on better budgeting or saving money on bills to urgent advice for crisis debt.

For help making the most of their money claimants can visit the [Money Helper](#) website to:

- get a personalised plan for managing money while specifically on Universal Credit using the [Money Manager Tool](#)
- find general money management content and budgeting tools
- open a Web chat

Claimants can also get expert direct support from the Money Advice Service by live chat.

If the claimant is showing signs of having problem debt, they should be encouraged to seek free debt advice as soon as possible. Signs of problem debt include, for example:

- missing two bills
- struggling to sleep due to money worries
- worried how they will pay at the till

Claimants can use the Debt Advice Locator tool on the Money Advice Service website which signposts to free, confidential, non-judgemental and impartial debt advice online, by phone or face to face in their local area.

Note: When delivering Help to Claim Citizens Advice or Citizens Advice Scotland may refer the claimant on to suitable money guidance or debt advice provided by themselves, or other partners.

Recording provision on the Commitment

Once a claimant has discussed and agreed their activities for provision, with the exception of personal budgeting support they must accept them as part of their Commitment. See Claimant Commitment hub.