

Work Capability Assessments

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What are Work Capability Assessments?

A Work Capability Assessment (WCA) is a functional assessment of what a claimant can and cannot do. Refer to Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA) for more information.

The Work Capability Assessment Report provides advice on whether the claimant has limited capability for work (LCW), limited capability for work and work-related activity (LCWRA) or does not have LCW - is fit for work.

When are claimants referred for a Work Capability Assessment

In most cases, claimants are referred to the CHDA at day 29 of their health condition related claim.

An immediate WCA referral must be made when a claimant provides sufficient information to confirm they have certain specified conditions or are undergoing certain specified treatments so they can be treated as having:

- limited capability for work and work related activity
- limited capability for work

This is known as a Day 1 referral.

If a valid DS1500 has been provided to confirm the claimant has a terminal illness, the claimant can be determined as having LCW without referring to the CHDA. If we are unsure, a day 1 WCA referral is made. For all cases of terminal illness, refer to terminal illness.

Reviewing the Work Capability Assessment

The CHDA recommend a WCA review period as part of its advice on a claimant's capability for work. The review period will be between 3 and 36 months depending on the nature of the claimant's health condition. The Service will automatically generate a notification to refer for a WCA when the review period has expired.

Claimant consent

DWP and CHDA may require additional medical evidence to support the WCA process. The claimant must give their consent so that we can gather this.

The claimant is asked to give consent on the UC50 and when they report a health condition. The consent given by the claimant allows their doctor or medical practitioner to share information with DWP. If needed, this allows CHDA to gather further medical evidence from other sources such as the claimant's doctor.

The claimant is given the choice to give or to not give their consent.

If the claimant does not give consent, the WCA action continues. This means the WCA decision can only be based on the information provided.

In these cases, the WCA referral is still made through the Medical Services Referral System (MSRS).

The WCA55 is printed off, completed and sent clerically to CHDA. The form is marked to show that consent has not been given and the claimant's GP cannot share information with the CHDA.

The CHDA will assume a claimant has given consent unless they receive the marked WCA55.

A claimant can change their mind at any time to give, or not give consent. If a claimant withdraws their consent, this only relates to the release of information from the doctor or other medical practitioners dealing with their health condition. It doesn't affect the way in which DWP uses the information already held.

If a claimant withdraws or gives consent for their doctor or medical practitioner to be contacted following the WCA referral, but before the decision is made, the CHDA must be informed immediately. The claimant's details (including the date the consent was withdrawn or allowed) are sent by secure email to DWP CHDA INTERCHANGE.

The exception is the DS1500 which can be supplied to DWP without the claimant's knowledge. Refer to Terminal Illness for more information.

Refer to the Capability for Work questionnaire for more information.

Employment and Support Allowance migration to Universal Credit

When a claimant moves from Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) to Universal Credit due to a change of circumstances and has had a WCA decision made on their ESA claim, this decision will be used on the Universal Credit claim.

Details of the ESA Work Capability Assessment decision will be captured on the UCFS MGP1 form.

If a claimant fails to report that they have a health condition on their migrated Universal Credit claim, confirmation must be obtained that they still have a health condition and the claimant must amend the information they have submitted.

If an ESA claimant has already been determined as having LCW or LCWRA, an agent will decide if this can apply from the start of the Universal Credit claim.

If the decision does apply from the start of Universal Credit claim, they will not be referred for another WCA unless a review is due or their health condition changes.

Where the ESA claimant has already been determined as having LCW or LCWRA, they will also be given a review period of between 3 and 36 months. Once the MGP1 form has been processed an automated notification will advise staff when to refer for a WCA.

If the ESA review WCA date has passed, Universal Credit will apply a 3-month re-referral date from the date of the Universal Credit claim.

When there is good reason to believe that a claimant no longer has the condition that resulted in the decision for having LCW or LCWRA in ESA, they can be referred to CHDA for a WCA. The claimant will retain the decision they have LCW or LCWRA until a review WCA has taken place and a further decision is made.

When a claimant migrates to Universal Credit before completing their WCA, they must provide medical evidence until the WCA outcome in Universal Credit.

Severe conditions

When a claimant who migrates to Universal Credit meets the Severe Conditions criteria for ESA, this continues to apply in Universal Credit. Refer to Severe Conditions guidance.

Referring claimants affected by terrorist attacks to Work Capability Assessments

We must ensure that Universal Credit claimants who are unfit for work and affected by recent terrorist attacks are treated appropriately throughout their customer journey.

There is no central list of those affected – we rely on claimants identifying themselves.

When a claimant is identified as being affected by a terrorist attack prior to a WCA referral:

- Medical Services Referral System referral is completed as normal
- this is highlighted to the Health & Disability Advisory Service Performance contact in the claimant's region

It is vital we treat these claimants sensitively paying particular regard to the Complex needs guidance.

Withdrawal from the Work Capability Assessment process

There are 7 situations when a claimant must be withdrawn from the WCA process. These only occur prior to the WCA determination.

The 7 situations when a claimant must be withdrawn from the WCA process are when:

- they are no longer unfit for work and has declared this
- their fit note ceases and they do not provide a further fit note
- the initial reason for their health condition has ended and the claimant has declared a different condition
- they move to Northern Ireland
- they are no longer in receipt of Universal Credit
- they are terminally ill and a DS1500 has been received, the 6 month prognosis accepted and action taken
- they have died

If a claimant is withdrawn from the WCA process we notify CHDA, unless the WCA has already been completed.

Claimant fails to attend or participate

If a claimant fails to attend or participate in the WCA, the CHDA returns the referral (updating the Medical Services Referral System) to inform DWP. Both cases are treated as failure to attend and a decision is made as to whether the claimant has good reason for their actions.

Work Capability Assessment outcomes

Refer to Work Capability Assessment outcomes for all information on this subject.

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Owner (enter the name of the person who is responsible for the information in this content item)

CID

See also (enter the names of related guidance)

Other Related items (enter the names of related ALPs, forms, leaflets etc.)

Refer for a WCA

Wales

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Stakeholders/Sources

Stakeholder's name	Work Area e.g. policy-(housing), L&D	Date Reviewed prior to QR
Julie Cremins	Service Design	8/04/2019
Hamish Bremner	Policy	1/4/2019
Stella Needham	Policy	
Tracy Coombs	Policy	
Donna Mckelvey	Policy	
Claire Blue	Policy	
Stephen Hall	Policy	

Version control (record details of updates to guidance or key sign off for each version)

Date	Version number	Comments/changes	Author	Reviewed by
24/05/2016	1.38		A Lemon	
25/05/2016	1.39	Stripped out red typeset for assurance purposes	J Irving obo Andy lemon	
15/7/16	1.40	Post assurance comments	Andy Lemon	
25/7/16	1.41	Incorporated Hamish Bremner's comments received as track changes	Daryl Beesley	

		through Winston Alexander		
28/7/16	1.41	HEO check		S Hollingsworth
29/7/16	V2.0	Version to be published	Daryl Beesley	
05/08/16	V2.1	HOC review. Internal link fixed		Sue
5/8/16	V3.0	Published version		Daryl Beesley
19/09/16	V3.1	LM policy comments for HoC check impacted. Moved to the ready for publishing folder.	Daryl	Sue
20/09/16	V4.0	Published		Sue
22/09/16	V4.1	Comments from Debbie Ralph & Karen Elsmore for HoC review		
22/09/16	V4.2	Comments impacted		Sue
22/09/16	V5.0	published		Sue
06/10/16	V5.0	Minor change from Carren Coleman. Republished as V5.0		Sue
9/11/16	V6.0	Published version there was a different version being updated because of HOC and are now together in this version		Daryl Beesley
09/12/16	v7.0	Added links for 2 pdfs 'switching off tailoring' & What to do when a claimant reports a health condition'	Brian Harrison	
16/06/17	V7.4	Updated for R68	Gill Ward	
20/6/17	V8.0	Published		
29/06/17	V8.1	Amendments requested by Julie Cremins for R70	Gill Ward	
19/07/16	V8.2	Amended to make more 'UCFS'	Gill Ward	
01/08/17	V9.0	Uploaded to Invotra ready for R71 on 02.08.17 (date set as 02.08.17)	Brian Harrison	

23/02/18	V9.1	Amalgamation of currently published products into one new Work Capability Assessment product: WCA, WCA Outcomes, Immediate WCA Referrals, WCA – claimants in employment (All currently published in Health section) These will be removed from UL site once replaced with this updated version.	Julie Irving	Gary Cook This version was superseded by the below and picked up in version 10.1
23/07/18	V9.1	UL687 claimant changes consent post WCA referral prior to dec made action added	Ann Zammit	Julie Cremins
01/08/18	V9.2	Addressed comments from FSO (UC policy)	Ann Zammit	
06/08/18	V10.0	Revisions FSO	Ann Z	FSO on revision by Steve Lawrence (UC) policy, Julie Cremins (SDT), Ann Parking for Dean Vincent (OED), Nicola Needham (DMA) & Naomi Sheppard (LM),
07/08/18	V10.01	Amended to include action to take when referring claimants affected by terrorist attacks – wording agreed by Ronke Abass	Gill Ward	Added V10.02 not published or assured independently
06/08/18	V10.02	Consolidation of 10.1, present published & comment on V9.2 by Julie Cremins and Hamish Bremner	Jemima Little	Impacted and incorporated V9.1 and V9.2 written by Julie Irving between March and July 2018

20/8/18	V10.3	For assurance	Jemima Little	
24/8/18	V10.4	Changed with assurance comments	Jemima Little	
31/8/18	V10.5	For Lync Sign off	Jemima Little	Clean copy all deleted content removed to make it easy to read
31/8/18	V10.6	Clear copy following Lync sign off meeting	Jemima Little	
31/08/18	V11	For publishing	Jemima little	Gills offered to publish for me – this was not published as an item was added to create V12 which was then published instead
10/09/18	V12	Amended to include list of contacts & published	Gill Ward	
16/11/18	V12	ESA acronym expanded No change to guidance	Gary Cook	
01/03/19	V12.1	Amended to include a 7th reason for WCA to be withdrawn – terminal illness (amendment made as part of MSRS rewrite)	Gill Ward	Julie Cremins
08/03/19	V12.2	Comments from FSO impacted	Gill Ward	
11/03/19	V13.0	Published	Gill Ward	
20.03.19	No version change	Natural migration changed to 'change of circumstances' re Neil Couling	Jemima Little	
28/2/2019	V13.01	Amendments to resolve UL-1351 addition of relevant periods guidance	Jemima Little	
05/04/2019	V13.02	Amended to accommodate Julie Cremins UL-1433 on 8.4.19	Jemima Little	

8/04/2019	V13.03	Tidy version for Assurance	Jemima Little	
13/4/2019	V13.04	Amended with assurance comments	Jemima Little	Blue is Guy Hart, purple Hamish, green Julie
16.04.2019	V13.05	Amended following advice of Julie Cremins to remove para which is not possible to present	Jemima Little	
28.05.2019	Unknown	Unknown	Sue Bale	On invotra / nothing saved to published file version
28.05.2019	V13.06	Amended for further comments.	Jemima Little	Liam –Brown , Lee South (29 & 30.05.19) dark blue
30.05.2019	V13.07	includes changes 31.05.0219	Jemima Little	
03.06.2019	V13.08	Includes changes from Skype	Jemima Little	Lee South, Amy Palmer and Hamish Bremner
03.06.2019	V13.09	Supplied for clearance by all those who'd previously commented	Jemima Little	
4.6.2019	V13.10	Amended with Hamish's new TT version changes and Lee Souths additional change	Jemima Little	
10/06/2019	V13.11	Amended to include medical evidence for ESA migraters following linked comment on medical evidence product	Jemima Little	
17.06.2019	Unchanged	Updated review date of published version	Jemima Little	
7.7.2019	V13.12	Further amendments for Hamish agreed by lee South	Jemima Little	
15.07.2019	V13.13	Further amendments for Hamish Bremner on a Skype Call 5.07.0219	Jemima Little	
19.07.2091	V13.14	Amended for Julie Cremins who spotted a couple of sentence	Jemima Little	

		which didn't align with the service actuality		
8.9.2019	V14.0	For publication changes include addition of section on WCA reviews and review periods, expansion of the ESA migration to UC section around when they are reviewed and referred and medical evidence for ESA migrated claims and additional relevant periods.	Jemima Little	Included removal of 'is' for Vironita
31/12/19	V14.01	UL-687 consent allowed or withdrawn email address put back in requested by PS&D		Previously agreed on FSO, Reza/Kirsty OK'd to publish
02/04/20	V15.00	The file path says v15 ??	Jane Platts	
11/06/20	V16.0	Compare and contrast completed. Discrepancies rectified on Word doc	Dave Tasker	
25/02/21	V16.1	Reference to CDHA clerical referrals removed – UL-3445.	Natalie Brown	Callum Shooter
10/03/21	V16.2	At assurance, amended wording around printing off and completing the WCA55.	Natalie Brown	
12/04/21	V17.0	Published	Natalie Brown	