

## **Work and Health Programme**

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## **Work and Health Programme**

The Work and Health Programme (WHP) is a targeted contracted employment provision offering tailored support to help eligible claimants to find sustained work.

It is voluntary unless the claimant reaches 24 months Long Term Unemployment and is not already participating in the Programme, in which case it is mandatory.

If a participant is already on the Programme as a volunteer, have disengaged and they are 24 months Long Term Unemployed or more, they must be mandated back on to the Programme at this point and must complete the balance of time left on the Programme.

A UC78e change of circumstances form is sent to the provider to inform them the claimant is now mandatory. The claimant is issued with:

- UCD549/UCD549W for WHP participants
- UCD549PSC for WHP Public Sector Comparator participants
- UCD549LLGP for WHP Local Government Partners participants

The notification issued informs the claimant they are now mandated to WHP.

The contracts have been awarded and are split into Contract Package Areas across England and Wales. The WHP will not be rolled out in Scotland. The Scottish government will use newly devolved powers to deliver employability support in Scotland. See Fair Start Scotland programme.

## Eligibility

To be eligible to join Work and health Programme (WHP), claimants must meet the following criteria:

- in England they must be aged 18 or over
- in Wales people who leave school on the last Friday in June, and are aged 16 or over by the end of that school year's summer holidays
- have the right to work in the UK
- have the right to live in the UK and is resident in England or Wales
- not already be participating on other contracted provision
- not have completed WHP previously
- not doing any paid work

If they fulfil the above they are eligible for WHP if one of the following criteria apply:

- they have a disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010
- they are Long Term Unemployed claimants (24 months plus) and will join on a mandatory basis

Or be in one of the following disadvantaged groups who need extra tailored support to find employment:

- ex-offenders (someone who has completed a custodial sentence or a community sentence)
- offenders (someone who is serving a community sentence)
- carers
- ex-carers
- homeless people
- former members of HM Armed Forces
- members of the HM Armed Forces reserves
- partners of current or former HM Armed Forces personnel
- people for whom a drug/alcohol dependency presents a significant barrier to employment including in the past
- care leavers
- refugees
- victims of domestic abuse
- young people in gangs

Claimants referred as long term unemployed will be mandatory participants throughout their allotted time on the Programme, whilst they remain in the Intensive Work Search regime. If they move to another non-mandatory regime, they will become voluntary participants on the WHP and will require another letter to say they are moving from mandatory to voluntary.

Were the claimant is a mandatory participant, the provider has the authority to mandate the claimant to activities, appointments, jobs or job interviews.

## Exemptions for Long Term Unemployed

### Temporary exemptions

A temporary exemption for the following may apply to:

- victims of domestic abuse are exempt from Work and health Programme for the period the circumstances remain relevant, this will be kept under review by setting a review for 13 weeks in line with current processes
- claimants who are homeless - this will be kept under review in line with the relevant conditionality guidance
- claimants with a drug or alcohol dependency while they engage in a structured treatment programme - for up to 6 months depending on their circumstances
- claimants serving community sentences may not be able to participate in the WHP as required - the exemption must be reviewed in line with current practice

Claimants with basic skills needs must not be referred until the basic skills need has been met.

### **Open-ended exemptions**

An open-ended exemption for the following may apply to:

- claimants who are pregnant and within 3 months of their expected date of confinement - although these could still volunteer for the Work and Health Programme (WHP)
- claimants for whom Specialist Employment Support (SES) is identified as a more suitable option - these claimants would have greater support needs/barriers than can be catered for in WHP (in these cases WHP would not be offered and the claimant would be steered towards SES)

### **Exclusion reasons for Long Term Unemployed**

The long term unemployed exclusion reasons apply when the potential participant:

- is in paid employment
- is on or has previously completed the WHP
- is in the Random Control Group for WHP
- does not have the right to reside in the UK
- does not have the right to work in the UK
- is not resident in England or Wales

Note: If the participant is on the Work and Health Programme on a voluntary basis, identify whether they have disengaged from the Programme.

### **Deferral criteria**

The proposed deferral reasons below are intended to ensure the Work and Health Programme for the Long Term Unemployed continues to meet the policy and is value for money, by not sending claimants with short-term barriers to participate in the WHP, where the Jobcentre Plus offer remains appropriate.

This would include:

- potential participants who have moved between conditionality groups and whose circumstances have changed, for example have had a break in claim due to work or sickness
- claimants who are close to employment and could move into work within 3 months with further support from Jobcentre Plus
- claimants, whose circumstances mean that they will not be able to participate in WHP as required, for example those with long periods of hospitalisation confirmed for the near future
- claimants who have known circumstances and changing conditionality groups
- other – to be used when none of the other deferral reasons apply but there is confidence the claimant will flow-off benefit or will meet the exemption criteria within the 90 days deferral period

### **Work and Health Programme support**

The Work and Health Programme (WHP) 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.

Potential participants may be referred by third party organisations and the person may or may not be in receipt of Universal Credit.

Providers will:

- provide the specialisation and capability to offer personalised and tailored support
- address both work and health barriers
- provide support via a range of delivery channels, including digital support
- effectively link with other services, including transition between support offers
- achieve a high level of quality employment outcomes that support the claimant and are in line with Universal Credit
- create an action plan outlining the manageable steps to take to help them

### **Participation on the Work and Health Programme**

Claimants on Work and Health Programme (WHP) must continue to attend their work focused interviews. If they fail to attend, a sanction may apply.

The WHP starts from when claimant takes part in the first meeting with the provider. The provider supports the claimant for up to 456 days (15 months), even if their benefit changes. If they find a job the provider can support the claimant for up to 182

days (6 months). Taking part in the Programme (including any period of in work support) cannot be longer than 639 days (21 months).

If a participant changes address to one outside their Contract Package Area they will remain the responsibility of their original provider.

Potential participants moving to Scotland will remain with their original provider. If the participant has been mandated to the WHP and moves to Scotland, they will become a voluntary participant. The new Jobcentre Plus office must send form UC78e to the original provider.

## **Voluntary referrals**

If participation is voluntary, referrals will be made when it is identified that a claimant would benefit from early access to the Programme or if they receive a WHPSO1 from a signposting organisation for a claimant. A voluntary referral should only be made if the claimant:

- is not in paid employment
- Is not a participant on another DWP employment programme (for example SES)
- can be supported by a Work and Health Programme (WHP) referral
- has already been assisted by the Jobcentre with their core job search activity (for example, basic job search skills/tasks such as CV writing)
- needs more support than can be provided by the standard Jobcentre offer (or through other available services and provisions), and has committed to the goal of finding employment within one year

The WHPSO1 will not be shared with the WHP provider and must be destroyed once all action has been completed.

Voluntary participants can disengage from the Programme, although they should be encouraged to return to the Programme. Their allotted time on the Programme will continue to count towards the 456 calendar days. They can re-engage with the provider at any point within their allotted time on the Programme.

## **Suitability**

Places on Work and Health Programme (WHP) are limited, therefore only suitable claimants are considered if they:

- are not in paid employment
- can be helped by the offer
- need more support than can be provided within the standard Jobcentre Plus offer or through other available services and provisions
- have committed to the goal of finding employment within one year
- have already been helped with their core jobsearch activity, for example:
  - basic job search skills
  - CV writing
  - use of email
  - support with Find a Job

## **Change of circumstances**

The work coach must encourage claimants to report changes of circumstances to the Jobcentre through their online account. The work coach must use form UC78e to inform the Work and Health Programme provider of the following changes of circumstances:

- claimant moves abroad, not including Northern Ireland
- claimant is terminally ill
- death
- change to benefit or conditionality
- outcome of a disengagement interview

If a mandatory claimant has a change of circumstances which results in a change of conditionality group, they must be issued with a notification to tell them they are now voluntary.

The notifications are:

- UCD550/UCD550W for WHP participants
- UCD550PSC for WHP Public Sector Comparator participants
- UCD550LLGP for WHP Local Government Partners participants

## **Work coaches must also report wider changes to the WHP provider, including:**

- address (including transfer of Jobcentre district)
- additional support / reasonable adjustments (for example, new Work Capability Assessment outcome)
- admission / discharge hospital
- appointee / power of attorney
- caring responsibilities
- changes to the participant's conditionality which impacts on participation on the WHP
- changes in complex needs
- imprisoned / leaves prison
- name
- new claim
- partner enters / leaves the household
- part-time education
- period of sickness (restrictions and duration)
- restrictions (for example, attendance)
- starts / ends work (including part time, voluntary, self-employed, permitted work, lost work, change in hours worked)
- telephone number
- changes that affect a participant's work-related requirements (for example, jury service, civic duties, domestic emergency, easements for domestic abuse/violence, Territorial Army/Reserve Forces, homelessness)

Information on how to complete the UC78e, and contingency arrangements for e-mail failures, can be found in Reporting change of circumstances to providers.

## **New claim to Universal Credit - claimant is already attached to the Work and Health Programme**

Once referred, the claimant is on the Work and health Programme (WHP) for up to 15 to 21 months whether on or off benefit, or in or out of work.

On every new claim to Universal Credit, check if the claimant is already attached to WHP (this includes checking other benefit systems through a colleague - for example, Labour Market System or the Work Services Platform).

If the claimant is still a WHP participant, issue form UC78e to the provider to notify them the claimant is back on Universal Credit.

If a mandatory WHP participant:

- issue UCD567/UCD567W (WHP participants)
- issue UCD567PSC WHP Public Sector Comparator participants
- issue UCD567LLGP WHP Local Government Partners participants
- explain to the claimant that they must take part in the Work and Health programme

If a voluntary WHP participant, explain to the claimant that they are still on WHP, signpost them back to WHP and promote the support they will receive.

### **Random Control Group**

A small percentage of claimants who are eligible and suitable for Work and Health Programme (WHP) will be randomly allocated to a control group. They will be excluded from joining WHP for 24 months but will receive the standard Jobcentre Plus support. These claimants can be referred to other suitable provision. The Random Control Group will support the evaluation of WHP.

Claimants are not informed they have been allocated to the control group as this can change behaviour and could undermine the evaluation. If a claimant is informed that they were allocated to the Random Control Group, either by asking directly or as part of a Right of Access Request, and are unhappy about the decision they can follow the usual complaints process.

If at the end of this, the individual does not want to be part of the evaluation they can be offered the option to ask for their data to be removed from the analysis. This request is then emailed to the [evaluation email inbox](#).

After 24 months has elapsed the customer can be referred again to WHP, however they cannot be randomly selected again to go into the Random Control Group.

### **Public Sector Comparator**

As part of the evaluation of the Work and Health Programme (WHP) some districts will operate a similar service called the Public Sector Comparator. This is to establish whether given similar resources, Jobcentres can deliver a similar or better performance in terms of outcomes and costs.

Claimants will be supported closely and frequently with more tailored support to tackle barriers to employment.

## **Completing the Work and Health Programme**

A participant will end the programme if:

- they have reached the 456 day end point and are not in sustained employment
- a final outcome payment in respect of the participant has been made by DWP to the provider
- they have moved abroad
- they have died
- they have reported a terminal illness, however, the participant has the option to continue

The provider emails an exit report which will provide details of the activities the claimant has undertaken whilst on the Programme.