

Claimant Commitment overview

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Introduction

The Claimant Commitment records and documents accepted and tailored work-related activities that give claimants the best prospects of getting work, moving closer to work or increasing their earnings.

Building the Claimant Commitment

Every claimant's circumstances are different and every Commitment must be personal. There is no 'one size fits all' approach when building the Claimant Commitment. See [Building the Claimant Commitment](#).

Earnings thresholds

The Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET) has been introduced to help highlight those claimants with no income, or on a very low income below the level of the AET, so they can receive the most intensive support.

The Conditionality Earnings Threshold (CET) ensures that claimants earning above a certain level will not be asked to carry out work-related activity. The CET is calculated on an individual basis, by multiplying the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or National Living Wage (NLW) by the claimant's expected hours.

For couples, the AET and CET earnings thresholds are applied separately to each individual but a household threshold is then applied against the combined household earnings.

For detailed guidance, see [Administrative and conditionality earnings threshold](#).

Accepting a Claimant Commitment

All claimants must accept their Commitments. Couples must both accept their individual Commitment for the household to qualify for Universal Credit. Whenever Commitments are updated, they must be accepted by the claimant.

There may be circumstances where the requirement to accept a claimant commitment can be removed temporarily or permanently.

This requirement can be lifted temporarily where:

- a person is undergoing medical treatment as an in-patient in a hospital
- a claimant (or local office) has an exceptional domestic emergency such as fire or flood
- the office the person would be required to attend to accept their Commitment is closed and alternative arrangements are not possible

This is not a complete list and is to show some circumstances that are exceptional.

Once the circumstances are resolved, the claimant will need to accept their Commitment.

If the claimant is physically or mentally unable to accept their commitment, and this is unlikely to change or it would be unreasonable to expect them to do so due to terminal illness, we will waive the requirement to accept a Commitment permanently.

Whilst a requirement to accept a Commitment may be waived, the system does not currently allow Commitment acceptance to be ignored. In these circumstances, the work coach can mark the Commitment as accepted so the claim can continue. However, they must make a note of the actions taken and the reason.

Where the Universal Credit claim is a phone claim, the claimant has no access to their online account and this means that the agent has to mark the Commitment as accepted.

The claimant must accept the Commitment verbally and give consent for the agent to mark it as accepted on their behalf. The agent must then record that verbal consent was given (and the reasons why the claimant was unable to accept it digitally) in the Commitment notes. The call with the claimant, in which they accept their Commitment, does not need to be recorded.

Appointees cannot accept a Commitment on behalf of a claimant.

Expected Hours

Expected hours are the most hours that a claimant can be expected to spend on work-related activities. These must be adjusted to take into account any health condition or caring responsibilities that the claimant may have. See Expected Hours guidance.

Job goals and work-related activities

Claimants must take responsibility for carrying out the work-related activities agreed and recorded on their commitment. Most work-related activities agreed on the Commitment carry a risk of reduced payments (sanctions) if not undertaken. The claimant must be told when this applies.

Other work-related activities to be recorded can be those that the claimant is encouraged to undertake, or otherwise volunteers to carry out.

The activities a claimant can be required to do depends on the Labour Market regime they are allocated to.

See the following useful links:

Job Goals

Work search activities

Work preparation activities

Other work-related activities

Work-related activities and the Labour Market regimes

Work availability and switching-off requirements

It is vital to build a positive individual relationship with each claimant so that work-related activities (whether required or voluntary) can be properly identified and agreed.

Any change in circumstances can change the claimant's work-related activities.

The Commitment must be reviewed after every change in a claimant's circumstances. For detailed guidance see Availability for work and Switching off work availability and work related activities.