

DWP Staff as Landlords

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Introduction

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment that replaces a number of existing benefits, including Housing Benefit. DWP staff who are landlords of privately rented properties may come into contact with a claimant who is also their tenant.

DWP has defined Standards of Behaviours procedures that DWP staff should adhere to in such cases.

Outside interests of DWP staff and conflict of interest

DWP staff members are responsible for ensuring that they have no conflict of interest between their interests outside of work and their role at the Department. For instance, if a DWP staff member is also a landlord, this could cause a conflict of interest.

Outside Interests of employees guidance provides information about the general principles regarding DWP staff who have interests outside of work.

All DWP staff have to comply with the Civil Service Code and failure to do so may result in disciplinary actions.

Accessing DWP records

DWP staff must not under any circumstances access or attempt to access any records of a Universal Credit claimant staying in any establishment they may be connected to outside of work.

Refer to the DWP Standards of Behaviour Procedures.

Claimant's entitlement to privacy

A Universal Credit claimant is entitled to privacy when they attend a face to face interview. If an agent is known to them, in any capacity, they can ask for an alternative agent to administer their claim. They can also request to be seen in a discrete area of the office or choose to attend a different office to the one allocated to them for Universal Credit.

Case Management approach for Service Centres

Staff who are landlords must never work on any aspect of a case where the claimant is their tenant even if the case has been allocated to them under Case Management principles. The agent must inform their line manager immediately, so the case can be reallocated.

DWP staff are not obliged to inform their line manager of their connection to the claimant but must request the case be reallocated. They can simply say that they have received information about someone they know.

If they accidentally access the record of someone they know, they must inform their line manager immediately.