

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 such as 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 programmes and provision locally procured through the Flexible Support Fund

- contracted employment programmes for claimants run by providers on behalf of DWP and arranged by district or national contracts
- non contracted provision – these are 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

When addressing barriers to work, the work experience and skills needs of the claimant must 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 and 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, for example:

- 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 the claimant when they are looking for work or progressing in their current employment. Therefore, it is vital that claimants are screened for essential:

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

Identifying skills gaps (sometimes called skills screenings) is an integral part of the meetings with the claimant. This includes observing the claimant and having discussions to gather evidence on skills, qualifications, previous training and work history. The information gathered will help to determine whether the claimant has any potential skills gaps or whether they need to reconsider their job goals.

Where further investigation of basic literacy and numeracy skills is needed, the claimant 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 needs and identifying their 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 found on the District Provision Tool

These are examples and 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 26 April 2022, there is a temporary increase to the number of weeks claimants in 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, for example Skills Bootcamps and the Level 3 adult offer.

If 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 activities 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.

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

Universal Credit is not intended to be a substitute for education maintenance or other educational grants. See Students: eligibility, conditionality and student income.

Pre-employment training

Skills training and pre-employment training is any training intended to help claimants to progress in the Labour Market. It can be full-time or part-time depending on the claimant's needs and could include:

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

These are examples and not a full list.

Pre-employment training 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 are looking for.

The programme 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 with the opportunity to gain valuable experience within a workplace. 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. Organisations such as the Prince's Trust, Barclays also offer employment support programmes that incorporate work experience. Opportunities available locally are to be found 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 and 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 be available for work.

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

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

Work Trials

Work Trials differ from Work Experience or other work-based training.

Work Trials can be offered to a claimant in a disadvantaged group who has applied for a vacancy with an employer and has attended a formal interview for the role.

Work Trials are offered on a non-competitive basis. This means that the claimant is the only person being considered for the vacancy and the job will be theirs if the claimant and employer are both satisfied following the trial.

The purpose of the Work Trial is to overcome any remaining doubts that an employer or claimant might have about their suitability for the role.

For information on eligibility and promoting Work Trials for claimants, see the Work Trials instructions.

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 Work Preparation group (because of their limited capability for work) from 3 April 2017

In these cases, the date to be used for eligibility 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 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 contracted employment provision that helps 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. It offers more intensive tailored support than that provided by the standard Jobcentre Plus offer or by other available services and provisions.

See Work and Health Programme for further information.

Fair Start Scotland programme

Fair Start Scotland (FSS) is targeted provision offering tailored support to help eligible claimants to find sustainable 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. It offers more intensive tailored support than that provided by the standard Jobcentre Plus offer or by other available services and provisions.

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 Fair Start Scotland 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 and offers 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 applying for a job
 - identifying existing skills
 - knowing how to make a good impression
 - researching and applying for the right jobs
 - creating and tailoring CVs
 - preparing for and succeeding at an 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 to 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 because 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 and the programme is generally 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 MtW experience is 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.

MtW opportunities are found on the District Provision Tool.

Intensive Personalised Employment Support

Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) is a new voluntary provision covering England and Wales and is 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 Circles 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 young people to help them to 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.

Mentoring Circles comprises 3 meetings where employers lead and share insight and information with the young people participating. The sessions are 2 hours long, spread over 3 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 and independent and volunteer / charity organisations, for example the Princes Trust programmes.

It hosts all the available provision and support in the district and nationally.

It helps work coaches explore the full flexible menu of support, maximise the opportunities to develop the claimant's skills and 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 & Refer

Find & Refer is used to make referrals for Universal Credit claimants to national Contracted Provision, for example the Work and Health Programme, New Enterprise Allowance, Specialist Employment Support and so on.

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.

Access to Work is available in England, Scotland and Wales and does not replace or subsidise an employer's legal duty to make reasonable adjustments. Specialist advisers work with the claimant and their employer to give the correct support. Access to Work can be paid to cover:

- the costs of employing an interpreter or communicator to accompany an applicant attending a job interview
- short-term or long-term financial assistance for 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 in the workplace or a 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 for employment purposes to assist people with an in-work disability need

These are examples and not a full list.

Access to Work 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
- 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 Access to Work support)

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

Access to Work Mental Health Support Services

Mental Health Support Service (MHSS) in Access to Work (AtW) is designed to support

- working people who are at risk of falling out of work
- those with a potential job offer to transition into work

Additional places have been funded to support claimants who are eligible for the Enhanced Support Offer.

Access to Work Mental Health Support Services is a 6-month support provision. Enhanced Support Offer claimants who have a potential start date with an employer but are unsure of their ability to sustain employment without support, are eligible to apply.

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 people 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 the person 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 the 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 is 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 and 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 are available for those claimants who can't manage the single monthly payment and there is a risk of financial harm to themselves or their family.

Claimant's with an Alternative Payment Arrangement must be offered money guidance and 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 Payment
- Split Payment

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

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

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

For help with 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 direct expert advice and support from the Money Advice Service by live chat.

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

- 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.

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.