

Armed Forces

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Introduction

As part of the [Armed Forces Covenant](#), the DWP has initiatives that help current and former armed forces personnel and families access Universal Credit services. This includes having an armed forces champion in every district.

Couple claims

People falling into the following groups are habitually resident and will go through the standard claimant process:

- Armed Forces personnel
- Crown Servants

Crown servants posted overseas and members of His Majesty's Forces posted overseas do not have to meet the basic condition that they be in Great Britain provided that they:

- are performing overseas the duties of an office or employment as a Crown servant or (as the case may be) as a member of His Majesty's Forces and
- were habitually resident in the UK immediately before the first posting (or the first of consecutive postings)

Normal UC entitlement, conditionality and sanctions rules will apply.

Non-householders including adult children who are members of the Armed Forces (including volunteer services such as the Territorial Army) are treated as living in the household when serving away from home (for example, training or active duty).

Benefit cap exemption

Claimants in receipt of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Guaranteed Income Payments or War Pension Scheme payments are exempt from the benefit cap.

Access to benefits for medically discharged personnel

When a service medical board decides a severely disabled person can no longer be employed in the armed forces and should be discharged, DWP now use the service medical board evidence where possible to determine eligibility to Universal Credit rather than conduct a face-to-face medical assessment.

This applies to the initial Work Capability Assessment made at the time of discharge. This will automatically be picked up by Centre for Health and Disablement Assessment (CHDA) when a referral is made.

Armed Forces Independence Payment

Ministry of Defence (MOD) in conjunction with DWP introduced the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) from 8 April 2013. AFIP is a simplification of the financial support available for members of the Armed Forces who have been seriously injured as a result of military service since 6 April 2005.

Since 8 April 2013 these individuals automatically receive on-going payments to help with the additional costs associated with their injuries, rather than face separate disability assessments.

AFIP is available on the basis of an award of a Guaranteed Income Payment of 50% or more under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

War Disablement Pensions/compensation payments under Universal Credit

Those receiving War Disablement Pensions and guaranteed income payments made under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme do not have their Universal Credit reduced to take account of this income.

Work and Health Programme

Veterans and HM Armed Forces reservist participants have early voluntary entry to the [Work and Health programme](#) as they may benefit from specialist employment support to find work. Early access is available for those who have served in the Armed forces for any day within the last three years. This early voluntary entry is also available to partners of currently serving and ex-service personnel where appropriate.

Universal Credit and Reservists

Reservists pay will be taken into account as earnings including commitment bonuses, paid as a loyalty payment, which are subject to Tax and National Insurance. The pay is subjected to Universal Credit work allowance and income taper rules.

Payments not treated as earnings include training allowances (also known as bounty payments). These are treated as capital and still need to be reported.

Rules regarding availability whilst undertaking reservist activities/duties

Work search and work availability requirements can be switched-off for any period during which a claimant is accepted as being engaged in approved public duties such as a United Kingdom Reserve Forces. This includes:

- Army Reserves
- Royal Navy and Royal Marines reserves
- Royal Auxiliary Air Force and Special Forces (reserves)

For more information on what a claimant or spouse/partner who has served in the forces might be entitled to see: [Armed Forces access to Jobcentre Plus services](#)