

# **Intensive Work Search regime**

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## **Aim**

For claimants who are able to work, our aim is to encourage them to undertake as much work (and earn as much) as they reasonably can do as quickly as possible.

## **Jobcentre Core Offer**

The Jobcentre Core Offer describes the method and frequency of contact that must be applied to claimants. When booking mandatory appointments, agents must follow the Jobcentre Core Offer guidance.

See also Spotlight On: Mandatory appointments.

## **Characteristics**

Those who are not working, or working but earning very low amounts, are expected to take intensive action to secure work or more work. This includes:

- a single claimant not working
- a single claimant with earnings below the individual Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET)
- a claimant with earnings below the AET and in a household with earnings below the couple AET
- a non-working claimant in a household with earnings below the couple AET

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- lead carers, who are either not working or earning below the AET and whose youngest child or children are aged 3 or over
- found fit for work following a Work Capability Assessment decision, for example - are not being treated as having Limited Capability for Work but is awaiting a reconsideration or appealing the decision outcome
- not fit for work or sick and have a fit note pre-Work Capability Assessment
- self-employed and the Minimum Income Floor does not apply

### **Framework**

The claimant is supported in this regime by the following interventions:  
Claimant's commitments meeting and Ongoing contact requirements.

### **Claimant's Commitments meeting**

The aim of the Commitments meeting is to ensure that the claimant fully understands the responsibilities and requirements they have to meet and are expected to achieve.

The claimant attends a face to face meeting covering four core elements and forms a set of requirements to be recorded in a Claimant Commitment. These are:

- diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance
- identifying the work that a claimant is expected to look for and be available for
- establishing which work search, preparation and availability requirements should apply
- establishing ongoing contact requirements

### **Diagnosis of claimant capability and circumstance**

This is to determine the claimant's capability and personal circumstances and includes exploring work history, qualifications and health and caring responsibilities.

It provides the opportunity to tailor work-related requirements to support the claimant to become an effective jobseeker. If the claimant has basic skills gaps, for example English language or numeracy skills below level 2, they can be mandated to do training to improve their skills. See Main provision overview of contracted and non-contracted.

For information and assistance in communicating with claimants whose first or preferred language is not English, refer to the Interpreter and Translation Services or Welsh language line.

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## Work-related requirements

Within this regime, all work-related requirements can be legally applied. Within these limits, the actual requirements imposed and the support available must be flexible and focused on the claimant.

Discretion can be applied in setting what a claimant must do, according to their own individual capabilities and circumstances. This provides safeguards to tailoring or switching-off requirements in circumstances when they would not be reasonable. This may be temporary or long-term. See Switching off work availability and work-related activities.

The table below sets out the four main types of work-related requirements that can be imposed on claimants within this regime:

<b>Work Focused Interview requirements are for any or a combination of:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• assessing the prospects for remaining in or finding paid work</li><li>• coaching claimants to remain in or find work</li><li>• identifying training or educational opportunities</li><li>• determining whether a claimant is in gainful self-employment</li></ul>	<b>Work availability requirements are to ensure the claimant:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is available for work</li><li>• is able and willing to immediately take up paid work, more work or better paid work</li></ul>
<b>Work search requirements include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• carrying out work searches</li><li>• making job applications</li><li>• creating and maintaining online job profiles</li><li>• registering with employment agencies</li><li>• obtaining references</li></ul>	<b>Work preparation requirements include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• attending a skills assessment</li><li>• improving personal presentation</li><li>• participating in an employment programme</li><li>• developing a business plan</li><li>• researching childcare provision and costs</li></ul>

These lists are not exhaustive.

## Availability for work

The claimant must agree on the type, location, hours and pattern of work they will be expected to look and be available for.

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In certain circumstances claimants can place limitations on their work availability. If a claimant's availability for work is limited, the number of hours they are required to search for work will be limited accordingly. See Availability for work.

### Expected hours

Expected hours cannot be set until the claimant's availability has been established. The expected hours of work-related activities that the claimant is required to do each week is used to calculate their Conditionality Earnings Threshold.

The Service defaults to the **maximum** expected hours of work-related activities per week for the relevant Labour Market regime. The maximum expected hours for claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime is 35 hours per week. However, this can be adjusted to take into account any health condition or caring responsibilities the claimant may have. See expected hours.

### Ongoing contact requirements

Agents must follow the Jobcentre Core Offer guidance when booking mandatory appointments for claimants.

Claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime, including those who have reported a health condition that **does not affect their ability to work**, are normally required to attend mandatory face-to-face work search reviews. These are weekly for the first 13 weeks unless an easement to their requirements applies. See Switching-off requirements (easements) for Labour Market regime interventions.

In each case, what the claimant has accepted in their Claimant Commitment is reviewed to determine whether it is appropriate to apply easements to tailor the Claimant Commitment to meet the claimant's current circumstances. The commitment must be reviewed when the work-related requirements are restarted. See Switching-off work availability and work search activities.

The weekly Work Search Reviews increase claimant contact frequency allowing any barriers to work, more work or more pay to be identified quickly. The weekly reviews allow for frequent checking that claimants are meeting their commitments.

After the first 13 weeks, 50% of claimants will be seen weekly and 50% fortnightly. These work search reviews must also be face to face unless an easement applies to their requirements. See Switching-off requirements (easements) for Labour Market regime interventions.

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Claimants are required to provide evidence of the work search and work preparation activities that they have agreed and accepted in their Claimant Commitment.

In addition to checking compliance, reviews must ensure that the claimant has a robust plan in place to meet their requirements over the coming period. Any concerns about this are addressed by scheduling a longer intervention to ensure they have the support they need to comply with their requirements.

If the claimant fails to meet their requirements without good reason, a sanction will apply.

Alternative attendance arrangements can be introduced to support and engage with claimants who live in remote areas in order to satisfy their conditionality requirements.

For claimants who meet the criteria, the work coach must discuss remote or digital management with them for the purpose of providing their work search evidence and showing that they are fulfilling the terms of their Claimant Commitment.

A claimant's work search evidence is to be obtained using digital or telephone channels. This must be agreed at the initial Claimant Commitment interview or at the point at which any change of circumstances leading to remote management was resolved.

Claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime with a health condition that **does** affect their ability to work, who have relevant medical evidence (or self-certification) **and** are awaiting their Work Capability Assessment, must have their requirements tailored to take this into account.

Their interventions will be tailored (using the most appropriate channel and frequency) to meet their individual needs. This includes group sessions if appropriate. See Health conditions and disabilities.

Main provision overview of contracted and non-contracted can be accessed for additional support. Local opportunities are on the District Provision Tool.

### **Returning to the Intensive Work Search regime following a break**

The length of time a claimant spends in a regime and the application of linking rules must be monitored in order to trigger mandatory interventions and access to broader support.

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Linking rules will apply if a claimant leaves a regime but then returns within 26 weeks. In these cases, they will continue from where they left off. If the claimant returns after 26 weeks, they must start the regime from the beginning.

This ensures that claimants who have briefly left the regime do not lose access to higher levels of support that apply with the increased time spent in regimes.

### **Claimant reports they are not fit for work and has supporting medical evidence**

Once a claimant reports a health condition or disability, they are required to attend an appointment to discuss the change of circumstances and to tailor their claimant commitment appropriately.

This includes those with short-term or longer-term sickness who are awaiting a WCA. See Health conditions and disabilities.

### **Claimant declares earnings that are payments of Statutory Sick Pay only**

A claimant may declare earnings that are payments of Statutory Sick Pay only. This means their earnings are below the Administrative Earnings Threshold.

Statutory Sick Pay is paid by the claimant's employer whilst they are too ill to work for a maximum of 28 weeks.

Work coaches must have discussions with the claimant to understand:

- the possibility and timescales of their return to work in their current role
- whether due to their health condition they may have to consider an alternative job with their current employer
- whether due to their health condition they may have to consider a new job with a new employer

### **Returning to work for the current employer**

The work coach must discuss how the claimant can be supported to return to their current job, or because of their health condition, be supported to look and apply for alternative jobs.

The work coach has discretion to impose Work Focused Interviews or reasonable tailored work preparation activities whilst the claimant is unable to return to work. These must always reflect the impact of the claimant's health

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condition, disability, caring responsibilities and ongoing circumstances to ensure they are realistic and achievable.

There is also the discretion to tailor requirements around the number of hours, type and location of work they are searching for to determine what is reasonable. For example, exploring the following options:

- contacting their employer
- discussing reasonable adjustments
- phased return to work
- workplace solutions
- Access to Work

This list is not exhaustive.

The Claimant Commitment must be reviewed and updated accordingly but must not include activities related to treatment, recovery or engagement with health services. The purpose must be exclusively work-focused.

If the employer is unable to offer an alternative role, the work coach must discuss other options with the Disability Employment Adviser and Employer Adviser.

### **Support for alternative employment**

If the claimant is not returning to work for their current employer the work coach must discuss how they can best be supported to look for alternative employment.

For example, this could be working in collaboration with an Employer Adviser, Disability Employer Adviser or Youth Employability Coach to support the claimant to move into or closer to work.

### **Work and Health Programme**

The Work and Health Programme (WHP) is DWP's new contracted employment provision which helps eligible claimants to find sustained work. The WHP is available for claimants who have a disability or have early access priority and referral is voluntary.

The 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.

See Work and Health Programme for eligibility, suitability and what the Programme offers.

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### **Skills and vocational training for lead carers with a youngest child aged 2 to 4**

Lead carers of children aged 2 to 4 years old may be further away from the job market and have lower skills when compared with the parents of older children. Therefore, greater acceptance and encouragement is required for them to participate in training that is longer than the normal period of up to 8 weeks.

Work-search requirements and availability may be switched-off or adjusted for up to one year if there is evidence to believe the course or training will enable the claimant to be in work by the time their youngest child reaches 5.

Contact with the claimant is maintained through all available channels to ensure the course/training is being completed.

The tailored work-search requirements and hours of availability are recorded on the Claimant Commitment. They do not impact their Conditionality Earnings Threshold or their expected hours. This type of tailoring is restricting, removing or switching-off requirements.

### **Travel to work ratio for lead carers with youngest child below compulsory school age**

Travel to Work for lead carers of children aged 3 – 4 must be proportionate to their expected hours of 16 hours per week. This is not a reduction in the Conditionality Earnings Threshold. Lead carers of 2 year olds are not subject to availability or work search.

The following travel to work ratios must be considered to limit the travel to work time:

- up to 10 hours' weekly work search requirements, capped at 30 minutes
- 10 to 16 hours' weekly work search requirements, capped at 60 minutes

Both these caps can be varied further to take into account individual circumstances where there is a reasonable prospect of the lead carer gaining employment by reducing the travel to work time.

### **Flexible Support Fund**

The Flexible Support Fund is a locally managed budget to supplement existing services and tailor support to the needs of individuals in the local area.



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Awards are discretionary, are aimed at improving a claimant's job prospects or supporting them to increase their earnings whilst in work (through increased hours or job change) and are subject to eligibility.

Claimants are eligible for a Flexible Support Fund payment from and including the first assessment period if they have:

- proved ID verification (including the Habitual Residency Test where relevant)
- attended their first Commitments meeting
- accepted their claimant commitment.

They can be considered for a Flexible Support payment if allocated to any of the following Labour Market regimes:

- Intensive Work Search
- Work Preparation
- Work Focused Interview only
- No Work Related Requirements
- Light Touch

The most commonly used awards are:

- training and education
- barriers to work
- travel expenses