

Fair Start Scotland programme

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Introduction

Fair Start Scotland (FSS) is the Scottish Government's employment support provision.

It is a voluntary programme for eligible claimants living in Scotland and provides support to people with a disability, health condition or those at risk of long-term unemployment.

The offer

Fair Start Scotland is a targeted provision offering tailored support to help eligible claimants to find sustained paid work. The Scottish Government service providers deliver to 9 areas across Scotland (called Lots). Claimants are allocated to the Scottish Government service provider in their Lot.

Fair Start Scotland tackles barriers to work by linking up with health and social care providers and other local services aimed at getting people into work. FSS offers more intensive tailored support than can be provided by the standard Jobcentre Plus offer, or through other available services and provision.

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.

Third party organisations may signpost potential participants to Scottish Government service providers to discuss the provision and consider their eligibility for it.

There is a strict data-sharing and data-processing agreement between DWP and Scottish Government service providers detailing what information can be shared.

The Scottish Government service provider allocates a key worker to each claimant. During the first 2 months, the key worker delivers weekly interventions to access a range of activities to help determine the level of support required and the appropriate service strand the claimant will start at week 9. Activities include:

- baseline development of employability skills
- health and well-being assessments and guidance
- jobsearch skills and resources
- better-off in work calculation and financial planning
- labour market information, including employer engagement
- mentoring support

- money management
- personal development and soft skills training, for example communications and interpersonal skills
- promotion of IT for job search (including assessment of IT skills)
- social activity to support the engagement and development of soft skills
- volunteering opportunities
- fast-track claimants to specialist organisations to provide appropriate support

These are examples, not a full list.

During this period, the claimant will develop a detailed personalised Employment Action Plan with the service provider which sets out agreed activities and timescales to help them move closer to work.

Claimants on FSS are still required to do the agreed work search activities on their Claimant Commitment and have the usual Work Search Reviews at the Jobcentre.

The FSS programme lasts for 12 months but in-work support is available for a further 12 months after the claimant has found paid employment. Claimants in the Intense Service Strand with significant barriers to employment may have their time on the Programme extended a maximum of 18 months.

Claimants on the FSS programme are not eligible for help from the Flexible Support Fund as the providers are funded to provide in-work support to participants.

Eligibility

To be eligible to join FSS, participants must:

- be aged over 18 and in receipt of a working age benefit or be aged 16 or 17 years old if they are:
 - disabled as defined in the Equality Act 2010
 - in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance
 - in receipt of Universal Credit and are in the Work Focused Interview regime, Work Preparation regime or No Work Related Requirements regime (if they particularly want to participate)
- not be in paid work of any kind at the point of referral
- have the right to work in UK (non-benefit customer)
- have the right to live in the UK and is resident in Scotland
- **must not** have been on Scottish Government Work First Scotland, Scottish Government Work Able Scotland, DWP Work Choice or Work Programme within 13 weeks of referral to FSS

and be either:

- long term unemployed - in receipt of a working age benefit and unemployed for 12 months without a break
- in one of the prescribed disadvantaged groups who need extra tailored support to find employment

The entry point for FSS varies:

Participating group	Qualifying benefit	Entry point to FSS	FSS category
Disabled people, as defined by the Equality Act 2010	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 1
Health issue placed in the Work Focused Interview regime or Work Preparation regime	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 2
Health issue placed in the No Work Related Requirements regime	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	On outcome of a Work Capability Assessment	Fair Start Scotland 2
Long-term unemployed	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	In receipt of a working age benefit and unemployed for 12 months without a break	Fair Start Scotland 3
Lone parents in the Work Focused Interview regime or the Work Preparation regime	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 4
Lone parents in the Intensive Work Search regime or the Light Touch regime (but not eligible if they are in work)	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 4
Person with a conviction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ex-offenders (someone who has completed a custodial sentence or a community sentence) • offenders (someone who is serving a 	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 4

community sentence)			
Care experience young people, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foster care • kinship • residential care at any point • eligible for referral until age 29 (up to, but not including, their 30th birthday) 	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 4
Refugees with leave to remain and entitled to claim benefit	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 4
Black and minority ethnic	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 4
Resident in the 15% most deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 4
Unemployed but with a health condition which is a barrier to employment	Universal Credit, New Style JSA/ ESA	Immediate	Fair Start Scotland 4

Existing claimants now considered to be in the 'Immediate' entry point category (who have not yet reached 6 month's unemployment) can also be considered for referral.

If the claimant is participating in other DWP provision, compatibility with FSS must be checked before the referral is made.

A claimant who has already participated in FSS can be re-referred providing that there has been a gap of at least 13 weeks between referral and their previous participation ending. This includes anyone who:

- left before completing their allotted time on the service
- finds a job with the help of FSS and becomes eligible again

- completes their time on FSS and is unsuccessful in finding work

Relocation

If the claimant moves out of Scotland while on FSS they are no longer eligible and must leave the Programme. However, if a claimant moves out of Scotland but continues to work in Scotland, the Scottish Government service provider will continue to provide in-work support.

If a claimant on the Work and Health Programme moves to Scotland, they will continue on the Work and Health Programme with their original provider.

Completing the Fair Start Scotland programme

Claimants on the core or advanced level who have not found paid work during the 12 month period on FSS will leave the Programme. There is no option to extend their time on the Programme.

Claimants on the Intense Service Strand may have their time on the Programme extended a maximum of 18 months where there is a realistic prospect of the claimant finding a job within the timescale. If not, they will leave the Programme.

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements - single point of contact

If a participant has employment restrictions due to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), the referral will be made via a clerical form:

- the referral will not include an address so the Scottish Government will be able to identify it as MAPPA
- the Scottish Government Performance Team will contact the MAPPA single point of contact (SPOC) directly to confirm the participant has MAPPA restrictions and to identify their address.
- the provider will contact the designated SPOC to discuss restrictions
- the SPOC must copy and post the DWP referrals form to provider (a list of provider SPOCs will be provided to DWP)

Unacceptable Customer Behaviour - single point of contact

If a claimant is flagged for Unacceptable Customer Behaviour, the provider's designated SPOC will contact the DWP SPOC to discuss risk management measures.