

Home visits

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When a home visit is appropriate

The standard process to make and maintain a Universal Credit claim is by online self-service.

Assisted digital offers a number of support options if an online claim cannot be made or maintained independently, even with help from a friend, family member or a third party. If none of the assisted digital options can help a claim by phone can be considered.

Home visits must only be considered in exceptional circumstances. When considering a home visit for a new claim, please note that the visiting officer will support the claimant to make a telephony claim.

In exceptional circumstances, home visits can also be considered for the following reasons:

- supporting the claimant to complete an e-HRT gather by telephone
- claimant is at risk of harm or abuse and when there are causes for concern
- ID verification
- verifying bank details
- verifying Private Rented Sector housing costs
- help to determine that the claimant fully understands their commitments
- New Style Employment and Support Allowance only claims (they do not have a claim on the Service and therefore cannot use the digital channels)
- appointees (to determine the claimant's capabilities, checking the suitability of the prospective appointee to act on the claimant's behalf and to explain their role and responsibilities)
- help the claimant to understand the health journey requirements and the implications of not complying

This list is not exhaustive.

A sanction must not be considered for a claimant who has complex needs and/or a health condition:

- that affects their ability to understand their requirements, and
- the consequences of not doing what is required of them

until at least two attempts have been made to complete a home visit.

If DWP Visiting are unable to make contact with the claimant after two visits and there is a risk of harm or abuse, the case is sent back to the referring agent to case conference with their team leader. All available evidence is then used to make a reasonable and informed decision about the correct action to take.

The visit address may not be the claimant's residential address. It could, for example, be a hospital.

When a home visit is not appropriate

The following actions cannot be undertaken on a home visit:

- HRT interview
- issuing a Personal Security Number (PSN)

This list is not exhaustive.

Compliance visits

A home visit may be required for compliance conditions such as:

- checking to ensure the claimant's benefit is correct
- obtaining information to enable an overpayment or underpayment to be calculated
- uncovering irregularities
- preventing possible future fraud
- encouraging claimants to report changes promptly

These are examples and not a complete list.

In the vast majority of compliance cases, a telephone interview (or exceptionally, a face-to-face interview) will take place with the claimant.

A DWP visiting service referral must only be made when the claimant is vulnerable or has complex needs and all other attempts to resolve the case have been exhausted.

See Compliance instructions.

Date of claim

If the claimant requires help with making their claim by a home visit, the date of claim will be the date of first contact, even if the claimant is not actually able to complete the claim on that same day.

Keeping visiting officers safe

An Unacceptable Customer Behaviour check must be completed when considering a referral for a home visit. An Unacceptable Customer Behaviour check must also be carried out for all members of the household before the visit.