

Restart Scheme: Guidance

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What is Restart

The Restart Scheme is a mandatory programme aimed at supporting claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime to overcome barriers to work and to find sustainable employment. It is available in England and Wales for claimants who have been receiving Universal Credit for 9 months or more.

Restart provides regular and tailored one-to-one support and allows work coaches, claimants and providers to work together to develop the claimant's employability skills and move them closer to and into work.

Because Restart is mandatory, activities must be reflected in the participant's Claimant Commitment or Work Plan.

Support provided by the Restart Scheme

Support lasts for 12 months, or until the claimant finds sustainable work (whichever is sooner) and is tailored to the needs of each individual which means that every participant receives unique support. All participants will benefit from:

- a skills assessment
- an individually tailored SMART action plan
- fortnightly sessions with a caseworker
- access to a wide range of support
- training
- employment opportunities

Additional activities will depend on local and individual needs but may include:

- addressing any concerns or barriers preventing the claimant from moving into work
- work search skills and career advice
- identifying suitable job sectors and vacancies
- support with job applications and interview skills
- personalised training
- developing sector specific skills and qualifications

Restart Scheme providers have support in place to help participants to address health issues or complex barriers that may affect their ability to actively look for work.

Providers are contracted to engage with the claimant, as a minimum, once every fortnight, with a face-to-face meeting no less frequently than every 4 weeks.

If the claimant fails to participate in Restart by failing to:

- attend a mandatory appointment, or
- complete a mandated activity

it is the responsibility of the provider to notify DWP who will, complete a pre-referral quality check and refer the case to a decision maker as required. The decision maker will then consider failure to participate and whether a sanction should be applied. Good reason cannot be decided locally when a claimant fails to attend or participate in Restart.

The 3-way relationship between participant, provider and work coach continues throughout the duration of Restart.

The number of hours the claimant is required to spend on work-related activities each week will be a combination of Restart activities the claimant has agreed with the provider and those agreed with the work coach. The claimant:

- is encouraged to share their action plan with their work coach throughout their time on the scheme
- must agree their Claimant Commitment which reflects the work-related activities they are taking to find work while participating in Restart (these activities are detailed in the claimant's action plan which must be updated regularly between the claimant and provider)
- claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime must continue to attend, as a minimum, 4-weekly work search reviews with their work coach. The frequency of attendance for other Universal Credit regimes remains as directed by their work coach.

If any issues arise while the claimant is on Restart, a 2 or 3-way telephone appointment should be arranged with them and the provider. This ensures that they receive the best possible support and any concerns can be dealt with promptly and pro-actively.

See Restart Video for work coaches for more information about additional support.

Flexible Support Fund

Claimants who are currently participating on Restart cannot access support from the Flexible Support Fund except in the following circumstances:

- travel expenses can be considered for up to 3 months once a claimant has started work on the Restart scheme, and
- upfront childcare costs can be considered until receipt of the claimant's first wage

For more information, see [Flexible Support Fund](#).

Flexible Support Fund travel costs must continue to be paid where a claimant has been referred for support prior to a referral to Restart and when directed by their Work Coach to undertake an activity where travel costs are not paid by the Provider such as attendance at a DWP organised Job Fair.

If the claimant attends activity arranged by the provider such as undertaking work related activities, job interviews or other related interviews, then the provider is responsible for funding their travel costs.

Eligibility

To be eligible for Restart, a claimant must:

- have been receiving Universal Credit for 9 months or more
- currently be in the Intensive Work Search regime
- have spent the last 6 months in any, or a combination of the following regimes:
 - Intensive Work Search
 - Light Touch (out of work)
 - No Work Related Requirements
 - Work Focused Interview
 - Work Preparation
- be 18 years old or over in England
- be 16 years old or over in Wales
- not currently be participating in any other DWP contracted provision
- not be receiving employed earnings or be on a zero hours contract (some claimants with self-employed earnings are eligible for referral, see 'Suitability')
- not be gainfully self-employed. see 'Suitability for self-employed claimants'

A claimant must not be referred when they are currently disengaged from another provision and if they are still considered to be on that provision.

Individuals who have been claiming Universal Credit for less than 9 months can be considered for a discretionary selection by their work coach. See 'Selection and referral' below.

If the claimant has received employed earnings in the current or previous assessment period and there is:

- a likelihood of those earnings continuing - the claimant is not eligible for Restart
- no likelihood of these earnings continuing - a referral to Restart may be appropriate if the claimant meets the remaining eligibility and suitability requirements

If the claimant has self-employed earnings but is not gainfully self-employed, they can be referred to Restart if they meet the remaining eligibility and suitability criteria.

If a claimant reports that they are on a zero-hour contract and the contract has not ended, referral to Restart is not appropriate. This applies even if earnings are currently zero in the most recent assessment period.

Claimants previously in receipt of New Style Jobseekers Allowance

A claimant is eligible for Restart if all the following apply:

- they were claiming New Style Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) immediately before claiming Universal Credit (without interruption between the New Style JSA and Universal Credit claims)
- they are currently in the Intensive Work Search regime
- they have not spent any time in the Working Enough or Light Touch (in work) regimes
- the total time claiming New Style JSA and Universal Credit adds up to 9 months or more

Claimants who do not meet all these criteria can still be considered for a discretionary referral to Restart by their work coach. See 'Selection and Referral' below.

Suitability

Claimants selected for Restart must be both eligible and suitable.

Claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime will have a range of needs which providers are required and equipped to cater for. However, some claimants may require additional support, while others will have complex needs or health conditions which need to be considered.

Having a health condition or disability does not exclude claimants from Restart, but their suitability must be determined. Referral to Restart is not suitable when:

- the claimant has previously completed Restart
- the claimant is starting a job
- it would be unreasonable to expect the claimant to engage or comply with Restart

- the claimant is already taking part in non-contracted provision which cannot be completed alongside Restart (see 'Claimant is already on non-contracted provision' below)
- the claimant is on or awaiting the outcome of a Sector-based Work Academy Programme (see 'Sector-based Work Academy Programme' below)
- support from the Work and Health Programme and Pioneer would be more appropriate (see 'Work and Health Programme and Pioneer and Intensive Personalised Employment Support' below)
- the claimant has an easement in place which prevents them from being able to participate in Restart (see 'Easements' below)
- the claimant is already engaged in other contracted provision (the work coach must check this)

See also Restart Scheme: claimants with a health condition or disability

Claimant is already on non-contracted provision

Claimants should be referred to Restart if they are already engaging with non-contracted provision which is:

- offering support complimentary to the Restart Scheme, and
- can be continued alongside the Restart Scheme

should be referred to Restart.

Claimants should continue engaging with their current provision if it is non-contracted provision which is:

- offering similar, intensive, employment focused support to that offered by Restart, and
- cannot therefore be continued alongside Restart

If the claimant is no longer engaging with the provision, the work coach must consider a referral to Restart.

If a claimant on Restart has skills gaps and needs that are not currently being met by the provision, the work coach must not look to fill these gaps with other provision.

The Restart provider is expected to adapt and tailor their support to meet the needs of the claimant and provide any additional support. No other provision should be considered.

Sector-based Work Academy programme

Claimants on (or who have completed) a Sector-Based Work Academy programme (SWAP) must not be referred to Restart until the outcome of their SWAP job application or guaranteed job interview is known.

If the claimant is not successful a referral to Restart must be considered, subject to eligibility and suitability.

Claimants currently participating in Restart cannot be referred to a SWAP.

Work and Health Programme and Pioneer or Intensive Personalised Employment Support

If a referral to Work and Health Programme and Pioneer is considered more appropriate, this can be offered as an alternative.

If referral to these schemes or other specialist provision is not considered appropriate, referral to Restart must be made where the claimant meets eligibility and suitability.

See Restart Scheme: Claimants with a health condition or disability and Work and Health Programme and Pioneer.

Starting a job

Claimants about to start work must not be referred to Restart.

The work coach must be satisfied that the claimant has evidence of the start date and must review the claimant's circumstances to ensure employment starts.

If the claimant does not start work, referral to Restart must be considered subject to the claimant being eligible and suitable.

Self-employment

Self-employed claimants must not be referred to Restart when:

- they are awaiting a Gateway Intervention or a gainfully self-employed decision
- they have been found to be gainfully self-employed following a Gateway Intervention

If the claimant is found not to be gainfully self-employed following the Gateway Intervention, they should be considered for a referral to Restart if they are still in the Intensive Work Search regime. This is regardless of whether they are reporting self-employed earnings or not. If they meet the other eligibility and suitability requirements, a referral can be considered.

Claimants considering starting self-employment are not excluded from Restart and if referred, they may not receive specific self-employment support from the provider.

The provider does have the ability to offer self-employed support where it is the claimant's best opportunity to increase their earnings or start work. However, the provider will also consider whether looking for employed work may be more appropriate.

Health conditions and disabilities

For more information, see Restart Scheme: Claimants with a health condition or disability.

Easements

A claimant may need additional support if their ability to carry out work-related requirements is disrupted for a temporary period due to their personal circumstances. See Switching-off requirements (easements) for Labour Market regime interventions.

If a claimant has an easement in place, this does not automatically mean a referral to Restart is not appropriate.

Depending on the type of easement, a conversation with the claimant must take place to discuss if a referral would be appropriate. If support offered by Restart could assist the claimant in their circumstances, a referral should be considered subject to eligibility and suitability.

If the claimant's circumstances mean that a referral is not appropriate while the easement is in place, this should be deferred and reconsidered once the easement has ended.

Selection and referral

There are two ways that a claimant can be selected to take part in Restart:

- automatic selection by the Service – claimants who are in the Intensive Work Search regime who have been receiving Universal Credit for 9 months or more
- discretionary selection by a work coach – claimants who have been receiving Universal Credit for less than 9 months who would benefit from the intensive support which is offered

Discretionary selection may also be appropriate when a claimant has:

- been receiving Universal Credit on and off for a period over 9 months and is clearly struggling to maintain employment
- moved on to Universal Credit after receiving a Legacy benefit or New Style Jobseeker's Allowance

This is not a complete list.

Discretionary selection is not appropriate when a claimant has been receiving Universal Credit for less than 9 months, have no significant barriers to work and for whom more suitable provision may be considered.

Pre-referral Intervention

Once selected, the work coach will confirm that the claimant meets all eligibility and suitability criteria at a Pre-referral Intervention which must take place at their next regular Work Search Review. The work coach must also:

- discuss the Restart scheme and explain how this can help the claimant to overcome work-related barriers and move them closer to finding work
- explain that sanctions may apply if they do not participate in the mandatory parts of the Restart scheme

Referral and Handover appointment (Warm Handover call)

The claimant is then required to attend a 20-minute Restart Scheme Referral and Handover appointment (Warm Handover call). This is a mandatory 3-way conversation which takes place between the claimant, work coach and provider. All 3 parties must take part in the full duration of the conversation.

This is booked in place of the claimant's next Work Search Review.

The purpose of the appointment is to start the 3-way relationship that will continue throughout the claimant's time on Restart.

During the Referral and Handover appointment (Warm Handover call):

- the work coach explains the role of the provider and the purpose and benefits of Restart
- providers discuss what they can offer and how they can support the claimant to develop their skills and move closer to work
- claimants can ask questions about the Restart Scheme
- a date, time and location for the initial meeting between the provider and claimant must be agreed and the work coach must enter this information on the correct notification
- any complex needs or vulnerabilities that the claimant may have must be discussed so that the provider can consider any tailoring or restrictions for the support they provide
- providers share the number that they will use to contact the claimant (claimants can save this to their 'Contacts' to easily identify when the provider is calling them)

The referral is completed once the warm handover call has taken place.

Cold referrals

The Referral and Handover appointment (Warm Handover call) must always be used wherever possible.

A claimant can only be referred without the call in exceptional circumstances. A referral without a Warm Handover call is known as a cold referral and the work coach must always obtain approval from their team leader. Exceptional circumstances include:

- claimant unable to take part due to a health condition or disability
- office outages and closures
- exceptionally high number of new claims and work coaches (locally or nationally) are focusing on delivering other services
- high levels of sickness or absence in the Jobcentre which means work coaches are having to focus on supporting other areas
- inability to book a warm handover call following multiple attempts to do so

A cold referral is not appropriate when a claimant fails to attend their Restart Scheme Referral and Handover appointment (Warm Handover call).

Claimant fails to attend or participate in the Pre-referral Intervention or Restart Scheme Referral and Handover appointment

If the claimant fails to attend or participate in either of the following appointments:

- the Work Search Review where the Pre-referral Intervention takes place
- Restart Scheme Referral and Handover appointment (warm handover)

follow the normal fail to attend and participate guidance

If the claimant fails to participate in either of these appointments, a sanction referral for failing to participate or comply must be made.

Claimants must not be referred to Restart until:

- a failure to attend or failure to participate decision has been made and the claimant has re-engaged, or
- the sanction has come to an end

Inappropriate and duplicate referrals

Inappropriate or duplicate referrals may be identified by the work coach or the provider before or after the claimant has started on Restart.

If a claimant has been referred to Restart more than once but has not yet started the provision, the earliest referral is used as the correct referral.

If this is not known until after the claimant has started the provision, the referral with the earliest start date is used as the correct referral.

Changes of circumstances

Claimants participating in Restart must report any changes of circumstances to both DWP and the provider.

If the changes are reported to DWP, the work coach must inform the provider and advise if any action is required.

Change of address within England or Wales

If a claimant moves to live in another part of England or Wales, they will continue Restart and stay with the same provider.

Claimant becomes gainfully self-employed

If a claimant becomes gainfully self-employed and enters the Start-up Period whilst participating in Restart, they remain on the scheme and have access to the full offer. However, any participation in Restart activities becomes voluntary.

Change of Labour Market regime

In some cases, a change of circumstances will result in a change to the claimant's Labour Market regime while they are participating in Restart. Claimants moving into the:

- Light Touch or Working Enough regime – will remain on Restart and are entitled to the full Restart offer, but any participation in the scheme will be voluntary and they cannot be mandated for any activities
- Work Preparation regime - must remain on Restart, they must attend mandatory appointments with the provider and participate in some work preparation activities, any other activities will be voluntary
- Work Focused Interview only regime - must remain on Restart and they can be mandated to attend Work Focused Interviews by the provider, they cannot be mandated to complete any work search or work preparation activities and these activities must be voluntary
- No Work-related Requirements regime - are entitled to the full Restart support offer but all participation in the scheme becomes voluntary and they can choose to withdraw if they wish

Restart Scheme is no longer appropriate

The Restart Scheme is no longer appropriate when a claimant:

- moves away from England or Wales for a period that is longer than the amount of time they have left on the scheme
- is in prison for a period longer than the amount of time they have left on the scheme
- is terminally ill and chooses to leave the scheme

The claimant will be exited from the scheme in these circumstances.

Additionally, a claimant can choose to leave Restart if they move into the No Work-related Requirements regime. However, these claimants have the option to continue with Restart on a voluntary basis.

Universal Credit claim is closed or there is a break in claim

After being referred to Restart, a claimant will remain on the scheme for 12 months unless their personal circumstances mean that the provision is no longer appropriate. See also 'Restart Scheme is no longer appropriate' above.

If the claimant closes their claim to Universal Credit, they will remain eligible to continue Restart. However, all participation will become voluntary from this point.

The provider must be informed if the claimant closes their claim so that they are aware that the claimant cannot be mandated to any Restart activities.

Claimant returns to Universal Credit

If the claimant then returns to Universal Credit, they will be expected to continue with Restart in most cases. See 'Exceptions' below.

These claimants do not need to be re-referred and they remain on Restart as part of the original referral.

Whether the claimant takes part in Restart on a mandatory or voluntary basis will depend on the Labour Market regime they are placed in.

The provider must be informed when the claimant has returned to Universal Credit and whether they can be mandated to take part in Restart activities or not.

Exceptions

Claimants returning to Universal Credit will not continue with Restart if:

- more than 12 months have passed since they were referred
- their personal circumstances match one of the reasons which would make Restart no longer appropriate (see Eligibility and Suitability above)
- the Restart Scheme status in Find and Refer is showing as 'Completed provision' or 'Found work'

These claimants must not be re-referred.

Work coaches must check Find and Refer for each Restart Scheme participant who returns to Universal Credit.

End of the Restart Scheme

A claimant will participate in Restart for a maximum of 12 months. If after 12 months they are still in one of the following regimes, the work coach must review the progress they have made and agree the next steps to prepare for or move into:

- Intensive Work Search
- Work Focused Interview
- Work Preparation

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements

Claimants with Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) can be considered for referral to Restart if eligible and suitable and the office MAPPA SPOC should liaise with the provider MAPPA SPOC regarding any referrals.

During the Referral and Handover appointment (Warm Handover call), the work coach must inform the provider that there are training restrictions in place. However, the specifics of these restrictions must not be discussed.

The initial appointment between the provider and the claimant must still be arranged as part of the Warm Handover call.

In some cases, the normal venue for an initial face-to-face appointment with the provider may not be appropriate due to the claimant's restrictions. In these cases, it is the provider's responsibility to reschedule the appointment at a venue and time

that does not conflict with the claimant's restrictions. The provider will also make any required reasonable adjustments.

For more information on MAPPA claimants, see Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

Details of each provider MAPPA SPOC can be found in the District Provision Tool (DPT).

Unacceptable Customer Behaviour

Claimants with Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB) markers can be considered for a referral to Restart.

If a claimant has been referred to Restart and they have a UCB marker on their claim, the UCB SPOC must be informed.

The SPOC will contact the Restart Scheme provider and share any UCB restrictions that are currently being imposed on the claimant.

Related content links to

[Restart Scheme: Spotlight](#)

[Restart scheme claimants' health condition or disability guidance](#)