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Work and Health Programme or pioneer and Pioneer

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## **Work and Health Programme and Pioneer**

The Work and Health Programme including Pioneer provides voluntary contracted employment support, in England and Wales, for disabled people and disadvantaged groups.

It offers tailored support to help eligible claimants find sustained work.

Pioneer became part of Universal Support From 13 September 2023.

The contracts have been awarded and are split into Contract Package Areas across England and Wales.

The Work and Health Programme including Pioneer will not be rolled out in Scotland.

The Scottish Government will use devolved powers to deliver employability support in Scotland. See Fair Start Scotland programme.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible to join Work and Health Programme or Pioneer, claimants must meet the following criteria:

- in England they must be aged 18 or over
- in Wales people who leave school on the last Friday in June, and are aged 16 or over by the end of that school year's summer holidays
- have the right to work in the UK
- have the right to live in the UK and is resident in England or Wales
- not already be participating on other contracted provision
- not have completed Work and Health Programme or Pioneer previously
- not doing any paid work, including zero-hour contracts

- must not be on any other DWP provision

If they fulfil the above eligibility criteria, they must also meet one of the following criteria:

- have a disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010
- be in one of these early access disadvantaged groups:
  - ex-offenders (someone who has completed a custodial sentence or a community sentence)
  - offenders (someone who is serving a community sentence)
  - carers
  - ex-carers
  - homeless people
  - former members of HM Armed Forces
  - members of the HM Armed Forces reserves
  - partners of current or former HM Armed Forces personnel
  - people for whom a drug/alcohol dependency presents a significant barrier to employment including in the past
  - care leavers
  - refugees
  - An Afghan resettler
  - A Ukrainian evacuee
  - victims of domestic abuse
  - young people identified as being involved or at risk of being involved in gangs or serious violence

### **Additional Work and Health Programme participant specific eligibility**

Claimants who reach 24 months unemployed, have disengaged from Work and Health Programme and are in the Intensive Work Search regime may be considered on a mandatory basis for the balance of their allotted time on the programme.

Where the claimant is a mandatory participant, the provider has the authority to mandate the claimant to activities, appointments, jobs or job interviews.

Universal Credit payments may be affected where mandatory participants fail to take part.

Claimants who move to a non-mandatory regime, then become voluntary participants on Work and Health Programme.

### **Suitability**

Claimants who are eligible must also be suitable to participate in the Work and Health Programme or Pioneer. Eligible claimants are only considered suitable if they:

- not doing any paid work, including zero-hour contracts
- can be helped by the offer
- have committed to the goal of finding employment within 12 months

- need more support than can be provided within the standard Jobcentre Plus offer or through other available services and provisions
- have already been helped with their core job search activity, for example:
  - basic job search skills:
  - reading, writing, numeracy
  - digital skills
  - CV writing
  - use of email
  - support with Find a Job

The last two bullets (and sub-bullets) will not be applicable for potential Pioneer participants who are not seen in a job centre or in receipt of any job centre Plus support.

### **Allocation to Work and Health Programme including Pioneer**

From 13 September 2023 customers on Universal Credit “Intensive Work Search” regime will be defined as ‘active’, and if eligible and suitable will receive the current Work and Health Programme.

Individuals who are defined as inactive (Inactive is defined as those who are not in the Universal Credit Intensive Work Search regime at the point of referral) will receive Pioneer or place and train support on the Work and Health Programme:

- Work Preparation
- Work Focused Interview Only
- No Work-Related Requirements
- Light Touch Out of Work
- Not in receipt of a benefit and not working

### **Work and Health Programme support**

The Work and Health Programme including Pioneer 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.

Providers will:

- provide the specialisation and capability to offer personalised and tailored support
- address both work and health barriers
- provide support via a range of delivery channels, including digital support
- effectively link with other services, including transition between support offers
- achieve a high level of quality employment outcomes that support the claimant and are in line with Universal Credit
- create an action plan outlining the manageable steps to take to help them

- receive support for up to 456 days (15 months), even if the claimant's benefit changes
- if the claimant finds a job, provides support for up to 182 days (6 months)

### **Participant responsibilities while on Work and Health Programme**

When a claimant on Universal credit commences the WHP programme, they must be informed that:

- they must continue to fulfil their agreed 'Commitments'
- they will be encouraged to provide evidence of what they have been doing to find work; including any activities agreed with their provider
- they must continue to attend work focused interviews and mandatory interviews, or a sanction may apply
- they must make the most of the support offered by the provider
- failure to comply with Labour Market conditions without good reason could result in a benefit sanction being applied
- they must continue to report changes of circumstances to Universal Credit and the provider (this is the only one relevant to Pioneer participants of this list)

### **Public Sector Comparator claimants on Work and Health Programme only**

Claimants who took part in Work and Health Programme within a Public Sector Comparator (PSC) district and did not fully complete the Programme due to COVID-19, can be given the opportunity to attend and complete the Programme

The 4 PSC Districts were:

- Devon and Cornwall
- Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, and Wiltshire
- Leicestershire, Northamptonshire
- Lincolnshire, Nottingham, and Rutland

This applies to claimants who were referred on and after 1 December 2018, and can be re-referred to Work and Health Programme, on a voluntary basis only, if eligible and suitable.

Up to 456 days (15 months) support is available, even if the claimant's benefit changes.

If the claimant finds a job, the provider can support the claimant for up to 182 days (6 months).

Taking part in the programme (including any period of in work support) cannot be longer than 639 days (21 months).

## **Work and Health Programme participants previously in the Random Control Group**

Claimants who were placed in the 'Random Control Group' category could not be considered for Work and Health Programme until 24 months had lapsed.

These claimants will have served this period and can now be considered for Work and Health Programme if eligible and suitable.

## **Voluntary referrals**

Claimants can volunteer for the Work and Health Programme or Pioneer at any time during their claim.

Claimants can be considered for a voluntary referral if the support offered by Work and Health Programme including Pioneer is thought to be suitable.

Before a voluntary referral is made, it must be confirmed that the claimant is eligible and suitable for the programme.

## **Mandating disengaged Work and Health programme participants**

Claimants can be referred to Work and Health Programme on a mandatory basis for the balance of their allotted time on the programme, when all the following apply:

- they have disengaged from the Programme
- been unemployed, in the Intensive Work Search Regime and in receipt Universal Credit or Jobseeker's Allowance for 24 months or more

The start of the 24 month period for Work and Health Programme is established by:

- identifying breaks in claims to Universal Credit or Jobseekers' Allowance
- calculating a date when the 24 month period of unemployment is treated as starting from
- using the number of days in any breaks between claims (only those less than 28 days each) to work out when the claimant will be eligible for Work and Health Programme

Periods of Employment and Support Allowance are not taken into account.

If claimants do not meet the 24 months long term unemployed criteria, they remain disengaged from the Programme until they re-engage.

If the claimant does meet the 24 months long term unemployed criteria, consideration is given to if the claimant can be exempted, excluded, or deferred from the Programme.

## **Autistic Spectrum Condition participants in Work and Health programme and Pioneer**

Referral opportunities have been set up, specifically to enable providers to be made aware discretely of participants who declare Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).

These are:

- WHP: Minister Disability Condition (Voluntary for disability participants with autism)
- WHP: Minister Early Access (Voluntary for early access group participants with autism)

This enables providers to recognise, prepare for and provide effective support for individuals with autism.

It also allows any reasonable adjustment solutions to be identified at the earliest opportunity.

The potential participant is informed that there is a process to ensure providers are discretely made aware of their health condition. Referrals made in this way, must have the claimant's consent.

## **Change of circumstances within Work and Health programme and Pioneer**

Participants should be encouraged to report changes of circumstances to the Jobcentre through their online account, and the provider. Form UC78e should be used to inform the Work and Health Programme or Pioneer provider of the following changes of circumstances:

- participant moves abroad, not including Northern Ireland
- participant is terminally ill
- death
- change to benefit or conditionality
- outcome of a disengagement interview

The following wider changes must also be reported to the Work and Health Programme provider or Pioneer, including:

- address (including transfer of Jobcentre district)
- additional support / reasonable adjustments (for example, new Work Capability Assessment outcome)
- admission / discharge hospital
- appointee / power of attorney
- caring responsibilities
- changes to the participant's conditionality which impacts on participation on the WHP
- changes in complex needs
- imprisoned / leaves prison
- name
- new claim

- partner enters / leaves the household
- part-time education
- period of sickness (restrictions and duration)
- restrictions (for example, attendance)
- starts / ends work (including part time, voluntary, self-employed, permitted work, lost work, change in hours worked)
- telephone number
- changes that affect a participant's work-related requirements (these may include jury service, civic duties, domestic emergency, easements for domestic abuse / violence, Territorial Army / Reserve Forces, homelessness)

If a participant changes address to one outside their Contract Package Area, they will remain the responsibility of their original provider.

Potential participants moving to Scotland remain with the original provider.

Participants mandated to the Work and Health Programme who move to Scotland will become a voluntary participant.

The new Jobcentre Plus office must send the UC78e to the original provider.

Information on how to complete the UC78e, and contingency arrangements for e-mail failures, can be found in Reporting change of circumstances to providers.

If a mandatory Work and Health programme participant has a change of circumstances which results in a change of conditionality group, they must be issued with a notification to tell them they are now voluntary. The notifications are:

- UCD550/UCD550W for Work and Health Programme participants
- UCD550LLGP for Work and Health Programme Local Government Partners participants

### **New claim to Universal Credit - claimant is already attached to the Work and Health Programme including Pioneer**

Once referred, the claimant is on the Work and Health programme for up to 456 to 639 days (15 to 21 months) whether on or off benefit, or in or out of work.

On every new claim to Universal Credit, check if the claimant is already attached to Work and Health programme by viewing 'History' in Find and Refer and Labour Market System.

If the claimant is still a Work and Health programme participant, issue form UC78e to the provider to notify them the claimant is back on Universal Credit.

If the claimant is a voluntary Work and Health Programme participant, explain they are still on the Programme, signpost them back to the Programme and promote the support they will receive.

If the claimant is a mandatory Work and Health Programme participant:

- explain to the claimant that they must take part in the Work and Health Programme
- issue UCD567 / UCD567W (Work and Health Programme participants)
- issue UCD567LLGP Work and Health Programme Local Government Partners participants

### **Local Government Partners**

The Work and Health Programme including Pioneer also include devolved funding arrangements with Local Government Partners in two areas of England:

- London
- Greater Manchester

Whilst on the Work and Health Programme including Pioneer, participants on benefit must continue to satisfy the conditions of entitlement and notify DWP of any changes in their circumstances.

### **Completing the Work and Health Programme including Pioneer**

A participant will end the programme if:

- they have reached the 456 day (15 months) end point and are not in sustained employment
- a final outcome payment in respect of the participant has been made by DWP to the provider
- they have moved abroad
- they have died
- they have reported a terminal illness, however, the participant has the option to continue