

Claimant Commitment overview: Guidance

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Introduction

The Claimant Commitment and work plan record all accepted and tailored work-related activities which give claimants the best prospects of:

- getting work
- moving closer to work, or
- increasing their earnings

The Claimant Commitment links to a work plan where all jobs and activities for the claimant are displayed.

Building the Claimant Commitment

Each claimants circumstances are different, and every Claimant Commitment must be personal. There is no 'one size fits all' approach when building the Claimant Commitment. See Building the Claimant Commitment.

Work plan

When a Claimant Commitment is created, it links to a separate page where jobs and activities can be added. This is known as the work plan.

The work plan is updated as part of an appointment without the need for the claimant to accept a new Claimant Commitment.

When the work plan is updated, the latest jobs and activities show up in all work plan links. The claimant is notified of the jobs and activities through their journal.

If the claimant does not understand or disagrees with their work plan, they can ask for another agent to review the requirements and consider if they are reasonable.

If it is found that the requirements on the work plan are reasonable and will improve the claimant's prospects of finding work, the agent will inform the claimant that the activities will remain on their work plan and explain the consequences of non-compliance.

If the second agent agrees with the claimant that the work-related requirements are not reasonable, the work plan should be amended, with new requirements set as appropriate.

See Claimant Commitment not accepted and the Second opinion section of the same guide.

Earnings thresholds

The Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET) has been introduced to highlight those claimants with no income or are on a very low income below the level of the AET. This is so that they can receive the most intensive support.

The Conditionality Earnings Threshold (CET) ensures that claimants earning above a certain level will not be asked to carry out work-related activity. The CET is calculated on an individual basis, by multiplying the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage by the claimant's expected hours or work.

For couples, the AET and CET are applied separately to each individual, but a household threshold is then applied against the combined household earnings.

For detailed guidance, see Administrative and Conditionality Earnings Threshold.

Accepting the Claimant Commitment

All claimants must accept their Claimant Commitment.

Couples must both accept their own individual commitments for the household to qualify for Universal Credit. Whenever these are updated, they must be accepted by the claimant.

There may be circumstances where the requirement to accept a Claimant Commitment can be removed temporarily or permanently.

The requirement to accept a commitment is removed permanently when a claimant meets the DWP definition for being terminally ill, or they are physically or mentally unable to accept it and this is unlikely to change. For more information, see Terminal illness.

For more information on when the requirement to accept a Commitment can be removed permanently or temporarily, see Removal of the requirement to accept a Claimant Commitment.

If the Universal Credit claim is made by phone, the claimant has no access to their online account and means that the agent must mark the Claimant Commitment as being accepted. This must be recorded in the commitment notes.

The claimant must accept the Claimant Commitment verbally and give consent for the agent to mark it as accepted on their behalf. The agent must then record that verbal consent was given (and the reasons why the claimant was unable to accept it digitally) in the commitment notes. The call with the claimant, during which their acceptance was made, does not need to be recorded.

Agents must mark the commitment as accepted without requesting verbal consent from the claimant.

Appointees cannot accept a Claimant Commitment on behalf of a claimant.

Appointee cases

In all appointee cases the need for a Claimant Commitment is waived.

The Service does not currently allow the acceptance of a Claimant Commitment to be waived and this must be marked as accepted by an agent so that the claim can proceed. Work-related requirements are switched-off and work group **not** overridden. Any actions and reasons for waiving must be noted in 'Claimant history'.

Some claimants may wish to undertake work-related activity with jobcentre support (for example, voluntary work) and the claimant, appointee and agent may agree voluntary activities together. Any actions and reasons must be noted in 'Claimant history' and journal. The Claimant Commitment must continue to be waived and marked as accepted.

The following must not be applied to appointee cases:

- mandatory activities, including mandatory Work Focused Interviews
- sanctions

Expected hours of work

Expected hours are the maximum number of hours that a claimant can be expected to engage in work-related activities. These must be adjusted to take into account any health condition or caring responsibilities that the claimant may have. See Expected Hours guidance.

Job goals and work-related activities

Claimants must take responsibility for carrying out the work-related activities agreed and recorded on their Claimant Commitment. Most work-related activities agreed on the commitment carry a risk of reduced payments (sanctions) if not undertaken and the claimant must be told when this applies.

Other work-related activities to be recorded can be those that the claimant has been:

- encouraged to undertake, or
- volunteered to carry out

Work-related activities that a claimant is required to undertake will depend on the Labour Market regime they are allocated to. See the following useful links:

Job Goals

Work search activities

Work preparation activities

Other work-related activities

Work-related activities and the Labour Market regimes

When a timebound activity is set, an appointment should be made for when the time period has ended, so the activity can be reviewed with the claimant. This allows for a thorough review of the claimant's commitment or Work Plan and ensures the activity is removed once completed.

Work availability and switching-off requirements

It is important to build a positive individual relationship with each claimant so that work-related activities (whether required or voluntary) can be properly identified and agreed.

Any change in circumstances can change the claimant's work-related activities.

The Claimant Commitment must be reviewed after every change in the claimant's circumstances. For detailed guidance see Availability for work and Switching off work availability and work related activities.