

Introduction to provision

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Introduction

DWP work in partnership with external third party companies (known as providers) to offer support for claimants and to help them overcome work related challenges, this is known as Provision.

There are also programmes that are delivered by DWP rather than a provider.

Provision may be put in place to help claimants with their final steps into employment, and other provision may focus on the very early stages of developing a claimant's essential employability skills. The length and intensity of the support is dependent on the claimants needs.

It is important that claimants receive the most appropriate support by ensuring they are participating in the correct provision. This will be determined by the claimant's personal circumstances, their current goals, and the type of support they require to reach those goals.

Provision can be contracted and non-contracted. Contracted provision is where DWP have a paid national contract with a provider and have agreed the required support and expected outcomes for the claimant.

Non-contracted provision is supplied by providers (for example charities and local authorities), free or with a locally arranged contract, on an ad hoc basis depending on the individual needs of the claimant. Often this provision is agreed at district or site level or the result of a local need identified.

Why we use provision

Provision gives claimants opportunities and support that they would otherwise not have access to. Claimants receive expert support from providers who have specifically designed programmes to support people, develop their skills and move towards work.

Provisions gives claimants the best chance in developing their skills to apply for or move into work. Provision can also help to develop the employability skills of claimants who are further away from the labour market and helps them to start moving closer to work.

There are also providers that specifically work with claimants who have health conditions, disabilities or complex needs. Their experience and expertise enables them to give claimants the right type of support.

Through the use of different provision, where appropriate, claimants can receive:

- tailored support based on their goals
- intensive or light touch support depending on their individual needs
- qualifications relevant to sectors they want to work in
- work experience opportunities
- specific sector based training
- support with essential skills to prepare them to start looking for work

This list is not exhaustive.

Local and National provision

Some providers operate nationally, using many sites across the whole of the country to deliver support to claimant's in different locations.

Some national provision may also be delivered digitally rather than face to face. This means that the provider can work with claimants across the country without having to have multiple sites.

Some national provision may only be available in England, Wales or Scotland (or a mixture of the three).

To find out more about national provision, see Skills and Provision or the National DPT.

Other providers may only work in specific parts of the country or may be local to a specific part of a city. These providers still offer valuable support and will have great knowledge of the local labour market and opportunities.

There are also local support and signposting organisations which may not be considered provision but can provide claimants with specific support. For example, where claimants have experienced domestic abuse or require additional support with their mental health. These organisations may provide on-going and frequent support for claimants who need it.

To find out more about what is available in your local area, see the District Provision Tool (DPT).

Both local and national provision are available to claimants and it is important that work coaches explore both to find the most suitable provision for each claimant.

When provision is appropriate

Establishing whether provision is appropriate is part of an on-going conversation between a claimant and their work coach.

Through discussions about a claimant's needs, goals, personal circumstances and work related skills, work coaches can identify potential provision opportunities.

Claimants can be referred to provision at any point during their claim and different provisions will be appropriate at different stages in their claim.

It is important that when work coaches identify provision that may be appropriate for a claimant, they discuss the opportunity with the claimant before making the referral.

If claimants are referred to provision at the wrong time, they will not benefit from the provision in the same way. It is important that provision gives claimants the chance to develop and work towards achieving their goals.

Finding the right provision for a claimant

Each provision is unique and provides claimants with specific support. Every claimant has their own personal set of circumstances which means that not all provision is right for all claimants.

Some provision may only be available to certain claimants based on criteria such as their age, labour market regime and employment status. Each has its own set of eligibility and suitability criteria.

When identifying whether a provision is appropriate for a claimant, work coaches must ensure:

- the claimant meets the necessary eligibility and suitability criteria
- the support the claimant will receive during their time on the provision meets their current needs
- the claimant's personal circumstances would not prevent them from attending the provision
- the provision will tackle the claimant's current work related barriers or meet an existing gap in their employability skills
- the provision will help the claimant develop skills for working in the future, move the claimant closer to work, help them in searching for work or give them the best opportunity to start work
- the claimant is not already participating in other contracted provision

It is important that work coaches understand the type of support that a provider will give to the claimant and whether it matches the claimant's individual support needs.

As claimant's circumstances change over time, their need for different types of provision will also change. Whilst something may not be suitable for them when they first make a claim, it does not mean that it will not be beneficial to them in the future.

New provision and programmes are frequently introduced so it is important that work coaches keep up to date with what is available. However, just because a provision is new or being heavily publicised, it does not mean that it is right for every claimant.

Products to support work coaches when trying to identify the most appropriate provision:

- National DPT
- District Provision Tool (DPT)
- Finding suitable programmes and provision