

# Work Focused Interview regime

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## Introduction

The Work focused interview regime encourages the claimant to think about work now and in the future. They are encouraged to consider the steps they could take to prepare for work through a series of regular interviews.

Any action other than participating in interviews is entirely voluntary

At the initial Work Focused Interview, the claimant is made aware of these expectations and their Claimant Commitment will include the requirement to participate in interviews.

## Characteristics

These are claimants who are expected to work in the future but are currently the nominated lead carer for a child or children including a:

- a nominated lead carer where the youngest child is aged 1
- single foster carer or main carer in a fostering couple where:
  - a foster child under 16 is placed with them
  - a qualifying young person's care needs would make it unreasonable for the claimant to comply with a work search or work availability requirement.
  - a foster parent (not the main carer in a fostering couple) of a child or qualifying young person, where the child or young person's care needs would make it unreasonable for the claimant to comply with a work search requirement or work availability requirement
  - the foster carer has fallen into one of the above categories in the last 8 weeks, is between placements and shows evidence of intent to continue fostering a child

- family and friend's carer (also known as a kinship carer) for the first year that a claimant is the responsible carer for a child under 16

## **Requirements**

The claimant is required to attend interviews and report all change of circumstance and must:

- fully understand the requirements of their regime requirements including a possible sanction if they do not attend Work Focused Interviews
- notify Universal Credit of any changes of circumstances (for example, when a child joins or leaves the household)
- provide evidence (if they are a family and friend's carer) to ensure they are in the correct regime

Any action other than participating in interviews is entirely voluntary (for example, claimants aged 16-24 in the Work Focused Interview regime can choose to participate in the DWP Youth Offer provided that they are not following the health journey).

For claimants with young children, childcare availability must be taken into account when arranging interviews.

Claimants must also be aware they can re-arrange interviews if they have a good reason why they cannot attend (for example, rescheduling appointments around childcare, social services or medical appointments).

## **Framework**

The claimant is supported in this regime by the following:

- Claimant Commitment Interview
- Flexible Coaching Support Interview

## **Discussion during all interviews**

During interviews the following topics will be discussed:

- caring responsibilities
- childcare options, and
- availability must be identified to ensure interviews and voluntary work preparation activities are arranged at suitable times

For carers who choose to consider returning to work, identifying suitable childcare will help them to prepare for the transition to the Work Preparation regime when their youngest child reaches their second birthday.

For help with childcare, see Childcare costs and the related content on this page.

### **First Commitment Meeting: face to face**

Claimants attending these interviews will have child aged 1 years old. The work coach must:

- enquire what skills, experience, and knowledge the claimant has
- help the claimant to focus on the work they can do in the future
- consider what the claimant can do now to help them to get prepared for work
- encourage the claimant to take voluntary actions and to set their commitments from the outcome of the discussion

The interview will include:

- agreeing the Claimant Commitment
- developing a detailed plan of work-related activity ( on a voluntary basis
- assessing claimant needs and voluntary referral to provision

### **Flexible Coaching Support Interview**

Contact with the claimant will be via digital or face-to-face depending upon diagnostic outcomes. There is a requirement for the claimant to be seen face-to-face if it is deemed necessary.

These interviews must take place every 3 months as a minimum. However, these interventions are recommended as a guide and there is flexibility to schedule these more often and to use interview time appropriately in order to achieve positive outcomes for the claimant.

Claimants are also able to request discussions and interviews.

These interviews can include:

- reviewing and discussing activities
- identifying support needs including childcare
- transitioning to the Work Preparation regime once the youngest child is aged 2 years

The work coach will:

- consider how to gradually increase the support offered in the months before the youngest child reaches the age of 2

- explain what requirements the claimant is expected to meet and the support available as part of the Work Preparation regime
- consider offering more frequent Work Focused Interviews during this period

### **Flexible Support Fund**

The Flexible Support Fund is a locally managed budget which is used to supplement existing services and tailor support to the needs of individuals in the local area. Awards are discretionary and aimed at improving a claimant's job prospects and is subject to eligibility.

Claimants allocated to the Labour Market regime; Work Focused Interview regime can be considered for the Flexible Support fund. See the Flexible Support Fund and Childcare and Flexible Support Fund guidance.