

Claims by phone: Guidance

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Introduction

The facility for claimants to make new claims by phone is available for those who are unable to complete the online service due to the following circumstances:

- being unable to make a claim online independently, perhaps due to a health condition or not having the digital skills
- not having anyone to support them to make a claim online
- being unable to claim online with in-house jobcentre support (see Assisted Digital Overview)
- being unable to claim online even with support from Citizens Advice or Citizens Advice Scotland using the Help to Claim Service - in these cases, Citizens Advice or Citizens Advice Scotland will have identified that the claimant cannot use online services and a claim by phone is appropriate
- not having access to a digital device or internet access to be able to make and maintain a claim online for example: prisoners
- Some corporate acting bodies and personal appointees

The claim by phone process must only be used when other assisted digital options have been exhausted and found to be not suitable, and all reasonable attempts have been made to enable, support and educate claimants to self-serve online. See Assisted Digital Overview

If a claimant does not satisfy the above circumstances but insists on making a claim by phone, they must be allowed to do so.

Prison Leavers

A prison leaver with no digital access can make a new claim to Universal Credit by phone using a dedicated number for this service.

Further information can be found in Prisoners guidance

Appointees

Some corporate appointees cannot provide an individual email address for each claimant they represent. Some personal appointees are unable to manage a digital account, so a claim by phone may be appropriate.

Further details on appointees can be found in Appointees, Personal Acting Bodies and Corporate Acting Bodies.

Changing from phone to an online claim

Phone claims are regularly reviewed to establish whether a phone claim is still the most appropriate channel for the claimant to manage their claim and check that their commitments are up to date.

If claimants have developed digital skills or are now able to manage their claim online they must be supported to do so.

Claimants who can no longer maintain their claim online

There may be reasons why a claimant with a digital claim is no longer able to manage their claim online. This could be short-term (for example, a brief admittance to hospital) or longer-term (for example, a new health condition).

If a claimant has a longer term issue and cannot manage their online claim a phone claim may be appropriate.

Short term reasons may be managed with additional support.

Further details can be found in Non-digital relationships and Complex Needs on how we can support non-digital claimants.

Informing a phone claimant of their obligations to attend appointments

Whenever an appointment is made the claimant must be made aware verbally of the following information:

- the reason for the appointment, why it is being booked
- to attend and take part fully in all appointments
- the date, time and channel of the appointment
- failure to attend without good reason will mean a reduction in payments from the date of the appointment until the day they attend a new appointment
- once they have attended the appointment their payment will be reduced for an additional 7, 14 or 28 days depending on whether this is a first, second or subsequent offence.