

Journal messaging: Guidance

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Introduction

The journal is a tool which belongs to the claimant. Although it is used by claimants and staff to communicate, its main function is to provide a full picture of the claimant's claim and track their activity.

Claimants may find it difficult to read or understand journal messages.

Consequences for claimants who are unable to engage using the journal can include being unfairly sanctioned or receiving delayed or inaccurate payments.

Underpayments for missing elements could result in rent arrears leading to possible homelessness.

Claimant Journal

The journal is used to:

- encourage digital communication and prevent calls
- help staff to progress a case
- maintain relationships with claimants if they don't see a work coach regularly
- find out what the claimant needs to do to prevent duplication or follow-up with a colleague
- respond to claimant questions and give updates
- get more information from the claimant – for example, further evidence
- remind claimants when an action needs to be taken

It is recommended that journal conversations are 'FRANC'. While the acronym has been borrowed from the Disability Discrimination Act, the meaning in this context relates to:

- **F**actual (personal opinions must not be recorded)
- **R**elevant
- **A**ccurate
- **N**ot excessive (to the point)
- **C**urrent (not out of date)

Journal security

In the case of couple claims, partners can see any journal information that is sent to the claimant. For this reason, a claimant's health information which is classed as sensitive data, must not be entered in the journal, as it is not to be shared with partners. This applies to information or support offered for domestic abuse situations.

To protect staff and DWP from harm, embarrassment or criticism the following must not be entered in the journal:

- personal information including surname, address, phone number, **National Insurance number** and email address
- bank account details
- personal or political opinions
- content relating to family members, private life, or personal opinions
- personal information of colleagues or other claimants
- uploaded images