

The Work Programme

When you must take part

The Work Programme aims to help you prepare for, find and stay in work. If you already have a part-time job, the programme can help you to increase your hours. It is delivered for Jobcentre Plus by organisations which we call 'providers', who aim to offer you more flexible support.

When you join the Work Programme, your provider will discuss your individual circumstances with you and develop a plan that is tailored to meet your needs. They will make sure that your time with them is a positive and helpful one.

What you can expect from the Work Programme

As part of the Work Programme, you can expect to:

- work with your provider and discuss what help you need to prepare for and find work as well as things you'll do to improve your chances of getting a job, and
- be treated politely, fairly and considerately.

Additionally, the provider will:

- keep your personal data secure and will not share it with any unauthorised third parties
- comply with current legislation including the Equality Act 2010, and
- not discriminate against you because of your age, race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

The Work Programme lasts for two years. Your provider will give you all the work- focused support you need during this time, even if you change benefits or get a job.

Once you find a job, your provider may continue to offer support to you to help you stay in employment.

If you get Employment and Support Allowance, any activities which you will be asked to do must be reasonable in your circumstances. If you think that they are not, you can ask your provider to reconsider them. The Work Programme provider will not make you seek, apply for, or do any work or have any medical treatment.

What we expect from you

We've explained what you can expect from the Work Programme, but there are also things we expect from you.

Your responsibilities whilst on the Work Programme are to:

- make the most of the help your provider gives you
- treat the provider and other participants politely, fairly and considerately
- attend meetings or take phone calls at the times agreed
- complete any activities the provider tells you to do
- tell Jobcentre Plus about any change in your circumstances, and

- if you claim Jobseeker's Allowance, attend the Jobcentre every two weeks and continue to be available for and actively look for work. This is on top of anything that your provider tells you to do. You must still meet all of the usual conditions to get your benefit.

Your benefit may be affected if you don't meet these responsibilities.

If you want more information or have any questions

If you need any more information or have any questions, please contact:

What happens if you don't meet your responsibilities?

If you fail to complete any activity your provider tells you to do, without a good reason, your benefit could be affected. This is called a 'sanction'. If a sanction is applied, you will lose benefit.

It's very important that you tell your provider if you're having problems or can't take part in the required activity at any time for any reason.

If you get Jobseeker's Allowance, you could also lose your benefit if you refuse a job, or leave a job without good reason, or are not available for or actively seeking work.

What to do if you get a sanction

Even if you have a sanction and your benefit is affected, you should still attend the Jobcentre and meet your Work Programme provider every time you're asked to. If you fail to do so, you may lose your benefit for a longer period or your claim may be closed.

If you keep in touch with your provider, they will still help you to find a job. We want you to stay with the Work Programme because we're committed to giving you the best possible help to find a job.

How a sanction affects Jobseeker's Allowance

A sanction means that your Jobseeker's Allowance is stopped for a fixed number of weeks. Sanctions last longer if you've already had a sanction before.

Your sanction could be ended early if your provider can give us evidence to show that you are serious about meeting your responsibilities for the rest of the Work Programme. To do this, you should meet with your provider.

The earliest that Jobcentre Plus can review your sanction is after four weeks.

Important - if you get a sanction and you have a joint claim, your partner will get an amount equal to a single person's Jobseeker's Allowance for as long as the sanction lasts, if they are entitled to this.

We will treat you as a couple if you live with your husband, wife or civil partner, or if you live with someone as if they were your husband, wife or civil partner. We call this other person your partner.

How you can get money if you get a sanction

If your Jobseeker's Allowance is stopped because of a sanction, you aren't automatically entitled to get help. You will have to show that you're suffering financial hardship, and meet other conditions. Your Jobcentre Plus adviser will explain how to apply.

How a sanction affects Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance is made up of two parts; the basic rate and a work-related part. If you get a sanction, the work-related part will be cut by half for the first four weeks and in full after this until you complete the activity set by your provider.

Please note that whatever benefit you claim, the best way of getting your benefit back is to carry out the activity your provider has asked you to do.

If you are not happy

Whether you are dealing with Jobcentre Plus or one of our providers, you should expect to be treated fairly. Your provider must explain the minimum standards of service you can expect from them.

If you're not happy with our service or that of the provider, you can make a complaint. Making a complaint will not affect your benefit.

If you wish to complain about the service of the provider, please get in touch with them first. They will explain their complaints procedures at your first meeting. If you have a complaint about Jobcentre Plus, please contact your Jobcentre. Tell them what happened, how it affected you, and what you want to happen as a result.

If you have gone through the provider's process and are not satisfied with the way they have dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Independent Case Examiner to investigate.

The Independent Case Examiner will normally only accept a complaint for investigation if you have:

- already received a final response from your provider, or
- waited eight weeks for a response.

For more information, go to www.ind-case-exam.org.uk

Supported by



In England, this programme is part funded by the European Social Fund. The European Social Fund aims to improve the training and opportunities for people to enter employment.

For more information, visit www.dwp.gov.uk/esf