

UCKM – WORK SEARCH AND CLAIMANT COMMITMENT

Initial Work Search Interview

The aim of the initial Work Search Interview (WSI) is to encourage claimants to get into as much work as they reasonably can do as quickly as possible. The work coach (WC) takes account of individual circumstances and sets requirements (that if complied with) will give the claimant the best possible prospects of finding:

- paid work
- more work
- better paid work

All such requirements are recorded in the Claimant Commitment. The claimant must accept their Claimant Commitment in order to receive Universal Credit.

Interview content

The interview covers core elements leading to a set of requirements to be recorded in the Claimant Commitment. These are:

- information gather and diagnosis of claimant circumstances
- identifying the work a claimant is expected to look and be available for
- establishing work search requirements
- establishing work-preparation requirements
- establishing on-going contact requirements

The WC must develop and record a set of personalised requirements (that when complied with) give the claimant the best prospect of finding work.

Availability and expected hours of work

The WC decides the claimant's availability for work and expected hours of work so that a Claimant Commitment can be tailored to their individual circumstances.

Creating a Claimant Commitment

The WC creates a Claimant Commitment using the information gathered in the initial interview.

The Claimant Commitment sets out what the claimant's requirements will be and what will happen if they fail to comply. The WC explains that their Universal Credit may be reduced if they do not do what is expected of them as set out in their Claimant Commitment. If they repeatedly fail to do what was expected of them their Universal Credit could be reduced for up to three years.

The WC tells the claimant:

- if they are unable to complete any of the activities as set out in their Claimant Commitment they should contact Universal Credit, as this may prevent a reduction of payment
- they will need to provide good reason if they are unable to complete any of the activities, and that if the reasons provided are not accepted they may lose some or all of their Universal Credit
- if they fail to attend any scheduled appointments without good reason their Universal Credit could be reduced

The WC asks the claimant to read the sanctions information in their Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack and explains it to them.

Hours of work search (work-related activity)

It is important that claimants are clear on work search expectations and that the WC knows the level of activity claimants should be meeting. Claimants in the AWRR Intensive regime are broadly expected to spend the same amount of time looking and preparing for work as they are expected to be in work.

A claimant's 'expected hours' of work search is not something that is intended to drive the claimant to meet an artificial hours target. The aim – and the focus of engagement with claimants – should be on getting them to do everything reasonable to find work as quickly as possible.

The WC needs to work with the claimant to establish a clear plan of action that if followed means the claimant will have done everything reasonable and will have met their work search requirement.

Claimants in the AWRR Intensive regime are expected to spend a minimum of 35 hours a week engaged in work-search activities, unless significant restrictions have already been agreed to reduce availability for work below this figure.