

## Spotlight on: Childcare - declaration and evidence

### Introduction

This Spotlight product has been designed to support work coaches and case managers with verifying childcare costs. It outlines the claimant's responsibility:

- to provide acceptable evidence to validate childcare costs paid, and
- lists the types of evidence that are acceptable to meet the DWP evidence requirement standards.

The Spotlight will remain in place for a temporary period until the Universal Credit design and supporting products are developed further.

### Initial declaration overview

A claimant can declare childcare costs when they make a new Universal Credit claim or at any time during the life of an existing claim. They must satisfy the work conditions although the service will automatically determine if these are met.

Universal Credit will provide 85% of childcare costs subject to a maximum of £646.35 for one child or £1108.04 for two or more children.

It is important for agents to explain to the claimant that it is their responsibility to provide the correct type of evidence and to be clear about when this needs to be provided by.

If the work coach has had these discussions with the claimant, then add the message below into the claimant's journal.

**Note:** this journal must not be sent to claimants until a discussion has taken place with the work coach.

OPEN ALL

Journal message

Welsh translation

When evidence is required, the claimant will be asked to supply unaltered evidence to verify each individual childcare provider and each individual childcare cost they have declared.

When the claimant initially reports childcare costs, the 'Provide proof of childcare provider' and 'Provide proof of childcare costs' to-dos are generated for the claimant.

On selecting either to-do, the claimant is given three options for how to provide evidence.

### How the claimant can provide evidence

Uploading

This is the preferred option and the claimant should be encouraged and supported to use this. Once selected, an 'Upload proof of your childcare provider' to-do is created for the claimant. Once the evidence is uploaded and the to-do completed, a 'Verify childcare costs' to-do is created for the case manager to complete.

### **Bringing documents into the jobcentre**

On selecting this option, the claimant is prompted to book a further evidence appointment with their work coach. The 'Verify childcare costs' to-do is created for the work coach or case manager to complete once the claimant has provided the evidence.

### **Posting the evidence**

On selecting this option, the claimant is prompted to post their evidence to the address supplied. The 'Verify childcare costs' to-do is created for the work coach or case manager to complete once the evidence is received

### **Acceptable evidence to verify a childcare provider and childcare costs**

For information on verifying childcare providers and childcare costs and the evidence required, see: [Childcare costs](#)

### **Childcare provider or costs cannot be verified due to lack of evidence**

If the declared childcare provider or costs can't be verified due to lack of evidence, the 'Verify childcare costs' to-do must be left open until either:

- acceptable evidence is received, or
- the time limit has been reached (one calendar month)

### **Childcare costs are unreasonable**

Once costs are declared, the agent must consider if they are unreasonable. This means considering the hours worked, travel time, location and total amount of childcare. If an agent considers the costs unreasonable, they must be referred to a decision maker.

For more information on reasonable usage of childcare costs, see: [Childcare costs: reasonable usage](#).

### **Proof of childcare costs not always required**

When the childcare costs are declared in Universal Credit, the 'Provide proof of childcare costs' to-do is generated. This tells the claimant what evidence is required to validate the costs and how to provide the evidence to us - either by upload, post or an appointment with a work coach:

- The system won't always generate a 'Provide proof of childcare costs' to-do and a 'Verify childcare costs' to-do - if the costs have been regularly

reported with similar or the same amounts over a period of time, the to-do's will always be created when costs are first declared

- when a 'Provide proof of childcare costs' to-do isn't generated, the system automatically accepts the reported costs and an entry is displayed in the claimant history to confirm the acceptance - in these cases, claimants won't need to provide any proof

## **When costs should be declared and the action to take if late**

### **When should a claimant declare costs?**

Agents must encourage claimants to report their childcare costs to us on the **same day they pay them**.

If childcare costs are not reported on the day they are paid, the claimant must report them within the assessment period in which the costs were paid (or at any point in the subsequent one) to ensure they are fully reimbursed for the eligible costs declared.

### **Costs are reported outside the assessment period in which they were paid**

A message is automatically relayed to the claimant informing them they still need to upload proof of the costs.

### **Costs accepted after the assessment period which paid**

If the costs are accepted in this scenario, the payment must be calculated manually by the case manager.

If the work coach accepts costs, the Service Centre must be notified either by using the Handover Tool or by contacting the case manager or case manager team leader.

### **Costs are reported outside the assessment period or subsequent assessment period in which they were paid**

If the costs are reported outside the assessment period or subsequent assessment period in which they were paid, a 'Refer to decision maker (late reporting of a change)' to-do must be generated and completed.

The decision maker will determine whether costs can be allowed. If they accept the reason for late reporting, the case manager will make a manual calculation to issue payment.

A 'Review an overpayment or underpayment' to-do will **not be** generated in these cases.

### **Evidence supplied is not acceptable**

### **The action to be taken if the evidence is not sufficient**

Agents must check whether the evidence exactly matches the costs displayed within the 'Verify childcare costs' to-do.

- if the evidence doesn't match the declared cost or provider, select 'No' in the 'Verify childcare costs' to-do
- if insufficient evidence has been provided, select the 'I still need to see proof' option - a free-text box is available if the claimant chose to upload their evidence and the to-do is completed and marked as done (this will produce a 'Provide proof of your childcare costs again' to-do for the claimant to provide the correct evidence - once the claimant completes the to-do, a 'Verify childcare costs' to-do will be created for the agent)
- those costs not accepted won't be included in the current assessment period payment

## **Time limits for supplying evidence to verify childcare costs**

### **When must evidence be received?**

Evidence must be received within 1 month of the costs being declared.

### **What must happen if evidence is not received within the time limit?**

The 'Verify childcare costs' to-do is created once the claimant completes the 'Provide evidence of childcare costs' to-do. The agent must then confirm if the evidence supports the declaration in the normal way.

If the claimant subsequently makes contact, they must be advised to re-declare the costs which will then be referred to a decision maker.

If evidence is received outside a calendar month and the 'Verify childcare costs' to-do is still open, a referral must be made to a decision maker.

The agent must then confirm if the evidence supports the declaration in the normal way.

These costs may not be included in the calculation at the end of the current assessment period.

A 'Review an overpayment or underpayment' to-do is created for the payment of the costs to be considered.

### **Action to take when more than one cost is declared**

There will be occasions when a 'Verify childcare costs' to-do contains more than one set of costs.

If a claimant provides evidence that does not verify all the costs, the agent must select 'I need more proof' for those costs and complete the to-do.

The Service will then automatically create a 'Provide proof of childcare costs again' to-do for the claimant. Once the claimant completes this to-do, a further 'Verify childcare costs' to-do is generated for the agent.

Childcare costs that have been verified will be included in payment calculations even if there are some costs still awaiting evidence within the to-do.

## Managing the 'Verify childcare costs' to-do

### Service Centres

Continue to case manage as normal. If you identify childcare costs that can be verified, then complete the to-do.

Initially there may be an increase in the number of childcare costs that need to be retrospectively calculated and paid to the claimant.

### Jobcentres

To enable claimants to be paid their childcare costs as early as possible, jobcentres are to proactively manage the completion of outstanding 'Verify childcare costs' to-dos.

They must nominate a site lead who will filter for 'Verify childcare costs' to-do's.

If the outstanding to-dos are designated just for the case manager, these will have evidence uploaded by the claimant and action can therefore be taken immediately.



WC CM DM

If the case is designated to the work coach and case manager, the claimant must have decided to provide the evidence either in person or by post.



WC CM DM

If a claimant has indicated they will provide the evidence in person, check if an appointment has been booked. If not, the claimant must be prompted to be make contact.