

Building the Claimant Commitment

Helping claimants move into work, move closer to work or increase their earnings can change lives. The Commitment documents the activities aimed at supporting the claimant do this.

Every claimant must accept their Commitments regardless of what Labour Market regime they are allocated to.

Often the claimant will pre populate their Commitments before a meeting at the jobcentre.

Each Commitment should be tailored and the activities recorded made personal to the individual claimant's circumstances. There is no 'one size fits all' approach regardless of what Labour Market regime the claimant's circumstances mean they are allocated to.

The work-related activities agreed on a Commitment should offer the claimant their best prospects of getting work, moving closer to work or increasing their earnings. They can be:

- required – with a risk of Universal Credit payments being reduced if not carried out
- voluntary – with no risk of Universal Credit payments being reduced if not carried out (but see Expected hours)

Whenever the activities are required, claimants must be advised that there is a risk of Universal Credit payments being reduced if not carried out

The activities claimants can be required to do depend on what Labour Market regime they are allocated to. The Labour Market regime table gives more details.

Commitment Meeting Outline

The following elements shape the Commitments and the meeting should:

- complete the information gather and diagnosis of a claimant's circumstances
- identify the work a claimant is expected to look for and be available for
- establish Work Search requirements
- establish Work Preparation activities required
- confirm ongoing contact requirements and a forward plan of action for the claimant

In addition the meeting should facilitate:

- a positive, individual and supporting relationship with each claimant as an individual
- an understanding of how close the claimant might already be in getting work, moving closer to work or increasing their earnings – for example, through ongoing work related activities and existing skills and experience
- an identification of what the claimant needs to do to get work, move closer to work or increase their earnings
- confirmation the claimant fully understands when work-related activities are required and that the consequences of not carrying them out may result in a reduction in Universal Credit payments
- confirmation the claimant understands to report all Changes in circumstances
- if any claimant requires Personal budgeting support and Alternative Payment Arrangements

Preparation

The information gather and analysis prior to the meeting is crucial to ensure the discussion can be as focused and relevant as possible.

Existing work-related activities and skills

Any information the claimant provides about existing work-related activities must always be considered to assess if the activities:

- are work-related
 - improve the claimant's work prospects
 - provide opportunities to work
 - prepare or help work search
 - provide skills, experience, or qualities, that improve work prospects
- The key is to understand the claimant's circumstances so that the activities recorded on the Commitment can be shaped in the best way to support the claimant in getting work, moving closer to work or increasing earnings as quickly as possible.

Skills and English Language Screening

A claimant may have an identified gap in their basic skills, specific work skills or generic work skills. These can be defined as follows.

Basic skills

- the ability to read, write and speak English
- the ability to use numbers at a level to function in work and society

Specific work skills

- skills required for specific occupations / sectors that are appropriate to the claimants stated job goals
- other skills needed to do a job

Generic work skills

- time management
- soft skills such as confidence building
- communication

Claimants should be assessed for skills gaps. Where appropriate, claimants can be required to attend training to improve their skills or language need with the intention of improving their prospects of finding employment.

Skills Assessments are carried out by providers. These are used to identify claimants' skills levels. Results are measured against national standards to ensure providers make appropriate decisions about training courses for claimants.

Diagnostic Skills Assessments conducted by providers give a specific breakdown of the claimants' skills need. For example, if a claimant has been assessed as having literacy needs, a diagnostic assessment will identify the specific area for improvement, for example spelling or punctuation. See National provision.

English language screening

At the Commitment meeting, all claimants will be screened for English speaking and listening skills at Entry Level 2 or below. Where necessary, some identified claimants will be required to undergo a full assessment completed by a provider and where appropriate, required to attend English Language Training to improve their language skills.

The training will generally last between 7 and 20 weeks for between 8 and 16 hours a week.

During training claimants will still be expected to undertake all other work preparation and search activities as accepted on their Claimant Commitment.

Not in Employment, Education or Training

A claimant is treated as NEET from the date immediately following the last date an 18 year old claimant took part in employment, education or training.

In terms of NEET, the following definitions apply:

- employment - any paid work (including part-time, temporary and self-employment); it does not include voluntary work
- education - any formal course of education (full or part time)
- training - any formal employment related training course (full or part time and including 'Basic Skills') – it does not include for example Work Experience or CV writing .

Intensive Activity Programme

The Intensive Activity Programme (IAP) is available for some single claimants if they are:

- aged 18-24
- not in education, employment or training
- making a new claim to Universal Credit
- in the Intensive Work Search Regime.

IAP may not be suitable for claimants with immediate barriers to work such as basic skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages. Claimants might need additional support to address these.

The IAP is a package of intensive work focused activity undertaken by claimants from day one of their claim. IAP is designed to accelerate the claimant journey so claimants operate as effective full-time job seekers from the earliest point of their claim. Under the programme there is a curriculum of activity for the claimant to complete within the first three weeks of their claim – consisting of approximately 71 hours of activity, alongside a comprehensive work search.

The requirement to attend IAP is a mandatory work preparation activity.

Claimants are booked onto the first of two facilitated workshops. Workshop 1 covers a range of topic guides such as producing high quality CV's and covering letters, completing competency based application forms and obtaining suitable work references.

Claimants are then set a series of activities to complete in relation to the workshop, with progress monitored regularly through on-going Work Focused Interviews.

On completion of these activities, claimants are booked onto the second workshop. This focuses on Recruitment Agencies, travelling to and from work, Interview skills, Internet Work Search and Speculative Applications.

Throughout IAP, claimants are required to complete 3-5 hours of structured activities each day in relation to the topics covered in the workshops.

The activities are mandatory and it is the responsibility of the claimant to complete them within the time specified and to a sufficient level, with support where required.

After completion of all activities the claimant is required to attend an IAP Exit interview to reflect on achievements and encourage momentum.