

# Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime)

## Topic 02: What is Changing?

October 2013

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**DWP** Department for  
Work and Pensions

## Time

30 minutes

## Objectives

At the end of this topic learners will be able to:

- describe the key changes introduced with the Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime)
- explain the purpose of the Claimant Commitment and Work Plan; and
- explain the changes in terminology associated with Welfare Reform.

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## Learning Points

This topic will cover the following learning points:

- An Overview of the Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime) and the Work Plan Booklet.
- Feedback from the Live Innovation Trial.
- The Key Changes.
- Terminology.

## Support Material

- PowerPoint Slides 2 and 4.
- Blank Claimant Commitment (to be handed back later).
- Blank 'My Work Plan' booklet (to be handed back later).

## Validation

Successful completion of this event will be measured by question and answer exercise.

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## Method of Delivery

This topic is facilitator led. It uses:

- Question and answer; and
- PowerPoint slides.

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## Moving Forward

Universal Credit (UC) is the most significant reform of the welfare system for a generation. By removing the challenges and disincentives to work and making the system simpler, Universal Credit will:

- make sure work pays – especially for those on the lowest incomes, helping people to live independent lives
- lift thousands of children out of poverty and reduce worklessness
- encourage people to take personal responsibility
- act as a 'launch pad' for motivating people back into work, fostering confidence and self-esteem and helping to end the dependency culture
- make the claimant aware of their responsibilities and the consequences of not meeting conditions of entitlement; and
- significantly reduce the cost of fraud and error to the taxpayer.

Not only is this a system change it is also a change in culture.

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The Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime) marks the first full roll-out of a revised labour market approach as part of Universal Credit. This will change the way you work with claimants.

A set of products underpin the new approach:

- The Claimant Commitment, which captures the high level expectations of what the claimant should do to look for work; and
- The 'My Work Plan' booklet, completed by the claimant, to set out the low level detail of how they will carry out these activities.



You may find it useful at this point to show the learners copies of the Claimant Commitment and My Work Plan booklet. You will look at these in more detail later and they should be collected back at the end of the event.

We are aiming to engender a significant change in behaviour in our claimants. We will challenge them to set high expectations about their worksearch.



You can find out more about Universal Credit on the Intranet as follows:

DWP Intranet Homepage >> A-Z >> 'U' >> Universal Credit.

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## The Claimant Commitment



For the purposes of this learning:

In the initial discussions with the claimant which feed into the Claimant Commitment, 'coach' refers to whoever is conducting the initial interview.

There are many benefits to the Claimant Commitment. It:

- focuses on what the claimant intends to do
- captures key information in one place
- enables regular steps and one off actions to be captured in one place
- captures the claimants skills and qualifications; and
- sets out the consequences of non compliance.

The Claimant Commitment mirrors the kind of output document that people will sign when they start work. In exchange for undertaking certain activities, the employee/claimant will receive a form of wage and other services.

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By using this structure we make it clearer that the claimant must fulfil certain conditions if they are to receive their JSA payments.

The consequences of failing to comply with the conditions agreed under the Claimant Commitment will be made clear from the outset. The Claimant Commitment sets out requirements which, if complied with, give the claimant the best possible prospects of finding paid work.

To do this, you will need a good understanding of the claimant's ability to find, obtain, and keep employment.

A personalised Claimant Commitment is drawn up by the Work Coach working with the claimant. The content of the Claimant Commitment should arise from the discussion at the Initial Work Search Interview in which the claimant must play an active part.

The Claimant Commitment is reviewed on an on-going basis to clearly record the expectations placed upon the claimant and the consequence (sanctions) of any failure to comply.

The current version of the Claimant Commitment is available to the Work Coach via a shared folder. A hard copy will be saved in the LMU which the Assistant Work Coach can refer to.

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Storage of the Claimant Commitment is covered later in this learning.

## My Work Plan

The My Work Plan booklet is issued to the claimant at the Initial Work Search Interview. Within the My Work Plan booklet the claimant records their plans including the actions they will take to return to work.

Working towards the introduction of Universal Credit, the My Work Plan booklet will support the claimants to take personal responsibility for planning and conducting their worksearch.

The Claimant Commitment and Work Plan signal a clear change in what we expect of the claimant.

The My Work Plan booklet is not mandatory, however you should encourage the claimants to use it as it will help them to structure their worksearch and ultimately improve their chances of finding work more quickly.

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If a claimant is not able to complete written evidence, for example because they have basic skills needs or English is not their first language, you should discuss with your line manager whether any support is available to them locally.

Remember, the claimant does not have to complete the Work Plan, but they do have to provide evidence of their worksearch activity, which can be a detailed oral description of what they've done, letters from employers, print out of job applications etc. We will go into this in more detail later in the event.

The My Work Plan incorporates the information which is currently in the ES40.

Similar products have been trialled in Stretford and Loughton and the best elements of both have been taken and linked, as closely as currently possible, to Universal Credit. This has received excellent feedback from staff and claimants.



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## The Key Changes



Refer the learners to the key changes on display from Topic 01.



Show Slide 2 - The Key Changes.

These are the key changes



Ask the learners if they have any questions about the key changes. The discussion which follows should include the following points.

- Listening to claimants is the easiest way to generate a tailored commitment for individual claimants. As a living document the Work Coach must review and update if necessary each time they have contact with the claimant
- From the outset claimants must be fully aware of their requirements, and reminded of this at each intervention. They must be very clear about what is expected of them and what will happen if they don't meet their responsibilities without good reason.

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- Claimants will be committed to meeting their requirements when they have informed or identified these themselves. They must set plans which are specific and achievable.
- Cultural change is informed by making it very clear immediately about roles and responsibilities, and raising our expectations of claimants. In return for coaching support, claimants must do everything they reasonably can to find paid work

Understanding claimant's abilities and circumstances is crucial to making this change. Consideration must always be given to the level of challenge set for vulnerable claimants.



Discuss how these key changes will affect what you do now.



When describing the new terminology it is good practice to write it on flip chart/wipe board and keep it on display throughout the event.

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## Personal Adviser to Coach

The introduction of Universal Credit brings changes to the way you will carry out your role in the future.

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There will also be a change in job role names. Currently we have Personal Advisers and Assistant Advisers. These will become Work Coaches and Assistant Work Coaches.

This is more than a simple name change; the Work Coach and Assistant Coaches' roles differ in several fundamental ways from those of the current Personal Adviser and Assistant Adviser:

- Coaches expect people to use their own initiative and not just follow instructions.
- The coach sets the goals but it is not their responsibility to achieve it.

If you are a coach then it is not your responsibility to get someone a job, merely to help guide their decisions. In the end, it is the responsibility of the claimant to put in the effort in order to find a job.



As an example, think of the relationship between a famous athlete (e.g. Usain Bolt) and his coach.

- What do you believe an athlete can gain from the support of an excellent coach?
- What do you believe that a coach would be doing to support the athlete?
- Whose responsibility is it to win a race?



Compare their responses with the list below.

The coach:

- pushes the claimant through their challenges/difficulties
- is firm when the claimant needs it, but supportive when they need it too
- challenges the claimant to raise their game and do everything they are capable of
- agrees stretching goals and encourages progress towards achieving them
- helps the claimant write an effective plan; and
- draws out best performance by challenging/encouraging as needed.



Check whether the learners have any questions before continuing.

You will need to coach the claimant to improve their performance in looking for a job, getting a job, and keeping it. This involves enabling claimants to learn that they can do more with their worksearch, and do it better.

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The role of the Coach and Assistant Coach, is to conduct interviews and worksearch reviews with claimants. The Work Coach will motivate and challenge the claimant to help them identify their own needs, and work with them to help maximise their chances of finding work quickly.

In the Worksearch Review, the Assistant Coach will review the claimant's worksearch thoroughly to ensure they have complied with their work-related activities and provided sufficient evidence on their work related activities as stated on their Claimant Commitment. They will also coach the claimant to plan ahead to how they are going to progress their worksearch activities following the review.

Our aim is for you to feel you are supporting claimants to change their work ethic. Where claimants choose not to accept advice and support, we have a variety of tools to direct them to that advice and support.

You need to have the skills to coach, challenge, and support their claimants to enable them to be successful and self sufficient in their jobsearch. For example:

- being clear about what it takes to be successful, setting stretching goals
- motivating the claimant to do more; and
- enhancing the claimants' skills/ qualifications through quality advice and provision.

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In this event we will be developing these skills.

## Interviews

As well as the change in Job Role titles, interview names will also change. The New Jobseeker Interview will become the Initial Work Search Interview, the Fortnightly Jobsearch Review becomes a Worksearch Review and a Flexible Intervention becomes a Follow-up Worksearch Interview.

## HEO Coach Role

The HEO Coach role has been introduced to support Work Coaches and Assistant Coaches by providing flexible coaching support, building capability for all.

Their role will be to ensure staff are confident in creating personalised commitments and are able to positively challenge claimants.

The HEO coaches will identify and share good practice to improve the quality of Claimant Commitments and subsequent Work Search Review interviews with claimants.

They will also support local management teams in communicating key messages.

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## Summary

In this topic we have covered:

- the purpose of the Claimant Commitment and 'My Work Plan' booklet and the changes which underpin them; and
- changes in terminology.

## End of Topic 02

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