

Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime)

Topic 03: Existing Skills

October 2013

Time

Approximately 1 hour 30 minutes, depending on the experience of the target audience.

Objectives

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

- state the skills and behaviours they use in their current role
- explain how effective interviewing skills can:
 - support a claimant to identify realistic job goals and activities that will make them a successful job seeker; and
 - help to ensure that the claimant understands their commitments.
- state the tools that are available to support the learners in their role.

Learning Points

This topic will cover the following learning points:

- Existing skills and behaviours.
- Transfer of skills.

Support Material

There is no support material required in this topic

Validation

Successful completion of this topic will be measured by participation in

- Question and answer activities
- Group activities

Method of Delivery

This topic is facilitator led. It includes:

- Group activities
- Question and Answer

Introduction

Before we look at the detail of the Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime) let's spend some time reviewing all the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that you use in your role currently and see how they will help towards identifying, with the claimant, what they need to do to carry out effective worksearch.

By the end of the interview, the claimants must be aware of what we expect of them. They need to be thinking about their work experience, their skills and the worksearch tools they must engage with, if they are not already doing so.

These include having a CV, a suitable and professional e-mail address and use of websites such as Universal Jobmatch and other job search websites.

The claimant must be clear that their role is to spend the majority of the day in taking appropriate action to be successful in their worksearch.

We will then look at how gathering that information to understand the work readiness of the claimant is the starting point to the completion of the Claimant Commitment and Work Plan.

In this topic and the next we are going to look at the skills you need to achieve this.



Explain to the learners that the word 'interviewing' is used in this event for any interaction with the claimant, including worksearch reviews.



When facilitating this topic you should take every opportunity to reassure the learners and make them aware that their general communication and interpersonal skills and abilities are entirely transferable to the Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime) and ultimately to the UC regime. This will help them to approach the change positively and with confidence and equip them, in turn, to support and motivate claimants.

However, you need to make it clear that, vital though their existing skills are, they will require further development through this event to meet the needs of the Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime). In this topic we will affirm the current skills and in the next we will build on the current skills to enhance them in order to meet the skills requirements of the Claimant Commitment (JSA regime).

Existing Skills and Behaviours



Bear in mind during the following activity that the learners have completed different learning routeways i.e.:

Personal Advisers/Work Coaches will have completed Adviser Skills Workshops whereas Assistant Advisers/Assistant Work Coaches will have completed the Assistant Adviser Skills event.

This means that they may not all understand some of the terminology being used. For example; Work Coaches may refer to the PIGEEP interview structure which Assistant Coaches may be less aware of. It is important to ensure that, if used, these terms are explained so that all learners understand the discussions taking place.

You should be guided by the learners as to the level of detail needed in this section.

As a Work Coach or an Assistant Work Coach you have to behave in a very particular way and use specific skills in order to work effectively with claimants.



For the following activity, you may wish the Work Coach and Assistant Work Coach to work in separate groups.



Ask the learners to work in groups of three or four for the following activity.

They should note their responses on flip chart under three headings:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Behaviours.



What specific knowledge, skills and behaviours do you use in your current role?



Answers should include:

Knowledge:

- JSA processes.
- Systems such as the Labour Market System (LMS).
- Local labour market.
- Provision available in the area.

Skills:

- Communication skills (listening, speaking/explaining clearly, using the appropriate type of question for the situation [open questions for more detailed answers, closed to gather specific information etc], summarising to check understanding and so on).
- Gaining commitment.
- Keeping the claimant focused.
- Motivating the claimant.
- Objection handling.
- Building rapport and trust.

- Addressing individual claimant needs, for example interpreter, access issues, basic skills needs etc.
- Keeping the momentum – ensuring the claimant is making progress in their worksearch.
- Managing expectations.

Behaviours:

- Treat claimants as individuals.
- Be polite, respectful.
- Show empathy.
- Avoid making assumptions.
- Body language.

These lists are not exhaustive.



Check whether the learners have any questions before continuing.

Effective Interviewing

You use all these skills and behaviours when you interview claimants.



What is the aim of interviewing claimants?



To identify activities towards finding work and motivate them to carry out these activities.

In short, to enable and encourage them to be able to become active, effective and persistent in their worksearch and ultimately successful.



Have the words 'Active, Effective, Persistent Worksearch' on display and refer the learners to it as appropriate during the day.

In order to achieve this you need to:

- get the claimant talking
- get them to think things through
- focus them on their job goals
- gain their commitment to working towards their job goal/s
- encourage the claimant to reflect on what worksearch activities they've done so far and what else they can do to progress into work.

Effective Interviewing skills help you to do all these things.



What can you do to encourage the claimant to actively participate in an interview?



- Listen to the claimant.
- Respond to what they say and ask questions that follow on from it.
- Ask questions that make them think.
- Allow time for them to reflect and respond.
- Use appropriate questions (for example open questions for fuller answers, focused questions for more specific information).
- Use positive non-verbal communications such as nodding and body language.
- Keep silent when appropriate to allow the claimant time to think and to speak.
- Reflect back what the claimant has said to gain their understanding.
- Summarise the discussion so far from time to time.

The use of effective interviewing skills encourages the claimant to participate in the interview, which in turn increases their commitment to the worksearch activities identified.

The claimant needs to know that you are listening to what they have to say. Allowing time for the claimant to respond is also a skill. It takes practice, as generally speaking people feel uncomfortable with big pauses and the temptation is to fill the silence; but you need to resist this.

Research has shown that the use of effective interviewing skills helps people to think things through. When a claimant thinks things through for themselves, they become much more committed to fulfilling a course of action.

Allowing your claimant time to think of what they want to say, instead of jumping in to 'rescue' them, is very supportive behaviour – even though it may not feel that way at first.

Self Belief

Many claimants want to work but genuinely think they can't. They may relate this to their personal circumstances, such as a health condition, but these can be overcome with support.

For many people this doubt is more to do with belief in their ability to work. Encouraging them to think about their strengths and preferences (pay etc) can result in people being flexible about their circumstances.

Objection Handling

As a quick guide to how to handle objections, you can use the ACDC Model.



Write up the initials ACDC

- A – Acknowledge the claimant's objection and welcome it.
- C – Clarify by asking your exploring, probing questions.
- D – Deal with it (decide what support you will give).
- C – Check it's been cleared before you carry on.



Inform the learners they can learn more about this on the Modern Advisory Service (MAS) Challenging and Objection Handling Skills event which is available on RM.

Learners should make a note on their Action Plan to discuss the learning with their line manager.

Realistic Job Goals

Using all the interviewing skills we have discussed so far enables you to help the claimant to identify the types of work they are capable of doing.

Some claimants believe they can only do the job they have already done so you may need to encourage them to see how their skills may be transferable into another area of work.



If a claimant is unable to identify the type of work they may be able to do, how can you help them?



Suggested answers may include:

- Use more open questions to encourage the customer to talk.
- Discuss their previous work experience with them.
- Identify any transferable skills.
- Discuss their hobbies, interests and aspirations.
- Identify preferences (do they want to work indoors or outdoors?) while stressing the need for some flexibility
- What is important to them in a job?
- Discuss how they will travel to work.
- Discuss the hours they are available for work.
- Establish if they want to work on their own or as part of a team.

This demonstrates how vital your interviewing skills are. We want the claimant to be committed to actively seeking the types of work they identify, so it must be their decision.

You may even set the claimant a one-off activity to research areas of work in order to find out what kinds of jobs might be suitable for them.

Tools to Support You

We have talked about the skills and experience that you bring to support claimants into work,



What tools are available to support you?



Responses should include:

- Universal Jobmatch (always ensure that claimants are aware of access available via the Internet Access Device [IAD] / Web Access Device [WAD]).
- District Provision Tool.
- WSD website.
- Learning and Development to gain new skills and develop existing skills.
- Support from colleagues – problem solving and sharing good practice.
- Case Conferencing.

This list is not exhaustive.

In this topic we have covered a small proportion of the skills that you bring to your role every day. These are an excellent basis for the skills that you will need to support the claimant in drafting a Claimant Commitment.

In the next topic you will consider how you can enhance your existing skills to work with the claimant to produce an effective Claimant Commitment and Work Plan.



Check whether the learners have any questions before continuing.

Summary

In this topic we have:

- revisited the skills you use in your role
- described how you can obtain the claimant's commitment by using these skills and;
- identified tools available to support you in your role.