

Home visits

When a home visit is appropriate

The standard process to make and maintain a Universal Credit claim is by online self-service. Assisted digital offers a number of support options if an online claim cannot be made or maintained independently, even with help from a friend, family member or a third party. If none of the assisted digital options can help, a claim by phone can be considered. Home visits should only be considered in exceptional circumstances. When considering a home visit to make a new claim, please note that the visiting officer will support the claimant to make a telephony claim. Home visits can also be considered, in exceptional circumstances for the following reasons:

- supporting the claimant to complete an e-HRT gather by telephone
- safeguarding/cause for concern
- ID verification
- verifying bank details
- verifying Private Rented Sector housing costs
- help to determine the claimant fully understands their commitments
- New Style Employment and Support Allowance only claims (they do not have a claim on the Service and therefore cannot use the digital channels)
- appointees (to determine the claimant's capability and checking suitability of the prospective appointee to act on the claimant's behalf and explain the role and responsibilities).
- help the claimant to understand the health journey requirements and the implications of not complying

This list is not exhaustive.

Claimants may have complex needs and/or a health condition that affects their ability to understand their requirements and the consequences of not doing what is required of them. A sanction must not be considered until at least two attempts have been made to complete a home visit.

If DWP Visiting are unable to make contact with the customer after two visits and there is a safeguarding concern, the case is referred back to the referring agent to case conference with their team leader. All available evidence is then used to make a reasonable and informed decision about the correct action to take.

The visit address may not be the claimant's residential address. It could, for example, be a hospital.

When a home visit is not appropriate

The following actions cannot be undertaken on home visits:

- HRT interview
- issuing Personal Security Number (PSN)

This list is not exhaustive.

If a home visit is required for the following, they are done by the Local Service Compliance team:

- check to ensure their benefit is correct
- uncover irregularities
- prevent possible future fraud
- encourage customers to report changes promptly

Date of claim

If the claimant requires help with making their claim by a home visit, the date of claim will be the date of first contact, even if the claimant is not actually able to complete the claim on that same day.

Keeping visiting officers safe

An Unacceptable Customer Behaviour check must be completed when considering referring a claimant for a home visit. A UCB check must also be done for all members of the household before the visit.