

## 02 Vulnerable or special types of customers

1. These instructions are to help identify and make judgement about those claimants for whom it would be more appropriate to deliver services either by phone or face to face because the claimant is vulnerable.

2. This client group are those who have difficulty in coping with the demands of our processes at the time when they need to access a service. As a result of this they are unlikely to be able to use normal channels to access, and are likely to benefit from a telephone call or face to face support.

3. For further information on dealing with claimants who need our help to use our services, see the Vulnerability instructions.

### **Identification of claimants who need our help to use our services**

4. It is vitally important that you talk with the person when making a judgment about whether a claimant needs additional support. Vulnerability is not a static state associated with a particular circumstance or situation, it can only be determined as part of a measured assessment. This assessment may need to be conducted in a matter of seconds.

5. When talking to the claimant, assess whether they:

- are in distress
- not understanding
- giving monosyllabic answers
- are they upset
- frustrated.

6. You need to focus on your questioning and listening techniques, and avoid making assumptions about your claimants.

7. Experience of dealing with claimants may help you to form an opinion. Ensure this opinion is based on behavioural evidence, which shows that they are unlikely to be in a position to use self help services. Some claimants will have disabilities that may mean they need extra personal support or that adjustments need to be made to enable them to access services. Other claimants may have conditions that are less obvious.

8. We have legal responsibilities to ensure our services are accessible to people needing language support because of limited English or Welsh.

9. The following personal factors can be associated and identified with being vulnerable, however this list is not exhaustive:

- mental health conditions
- sensory impairments
- drug or alcohol dependency or both
- physical disabilities
- learning disabilities
- literacy Levels
- language skills
- difficulty in communicating

10. Claimants also requiring help to use our services are those with hidden impairments such as:

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD),
- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD),
- Dyscalculia,
- Dyslexia,
- Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) also referred to as Dyspraxia, and
- Speech, Communication and Language Needs (SCLN)

11. Staff in Jobcentres, Service Centres or who are visiting the claimant at home who may interact with claimants and their supporters/carers either:

- face to face,
- by telephone or
- through a claimant's on-line account

require the relevant knowledge and understanding of these conditions and how they may impact on each person's job-search.

12. It is important that staff anticipate the need to put in place appropriate reasonable adjustments, at the earliest stage, to support the claimant throughout their journey to work. The Hidden Impairments toolkit provides comprehensive information for staff to anticipate reasonable adjustment solutions for claimants with these hidden impairments.

13. A claimant's personal circumstances could also make them vulnerable. For example, the claimant has:

- just left prison
- just left hospital
- some form of learning disability, or
- a drug or alcohol dependency, or both.

14. Other claimants who could be deemed to be potentially vulnerable are:

- homeless claimants
- recently bereaved claimants
- claimants whose behaviour may pose a risk to the health and safety of other claimants and, or staff
- claimants who have suffered domestic violence or threats
- claimants who have recently been a victim of crime

### **16 to 17 year olds**

15. 16 to 17 year old claimants should not be automatically be deemed as needing help to use our services. However, you should always be sensitive to the needs of this client group. It is likely that many young people will need our help to use our services.

**Note:** It is important to stress that the identification of claimants who could be judged to be in need of help to use our services, is a matter of judgement. All staff irrespective of their role must be aware of the help that is available for this claimant group.

### **Handling contact with claimants who need help to use our services**

16. We have to ask our claimants very personal questions at times, and it is important that we do it in a sensitive way. The type of question you ask will determine how useful the answer is. The skill is to ask the correct type of question to obtain the information you need.

17. When giving information it is essential that it is presented in a clear, concise way and that the claimant feels clear and confident about what they have been told and what to do next.

18. We need to be vigilant to the claimant's reactions, to be sure that they are following and understanding what we are saying to them.

19. Use language that they can understand, and pitching what you say at a level which suits them, without being patronising.

### **ESA50 completion for claimants who need help to use our services or claimants requiring additional support**

20. When a claimant asks for assistance in completing an ESA50, advise them to telephone Health Assessment Advisory Service which is the Department's Assessment Provider. The Centre for Health and Disability Assessment (CHDA) will only help with the completion of an ESA50 by telephone. They will not provide this service in person.

21. Claimants should be asked to call 0800 2888777, and press 1 if they wish to conduct the conversation in English, then press 2 for help with the questionnaire (ESA50).

22. This is a standard rate telephone number and the lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. If a claimant requires help with the cost of the call they must ask the CHDA adviser for a call back. Welsh speaking claimants can also use this number.

23. Vulnerable claimants, especially blind and deaf claimants, should still be offered a home visit by a DWP visiting officer to help with the completion of an ESA50 in their own home.

### **Providing extra support**

24. Ensure that you take into account the individual needs of the claimant. The claimant knows best what their needs. Ask claimant rather than assume what they might need. It might be appropriate to offer or arrange another appropriate service.

25. For claimants who have physical disabilities or sensory impairments, take into account the relevant health/disability issues or other individual needs.

### **Useful information and links:**

- Access to Jobcentre Plus Services
- Blind or Visually Impaired Claimants
- Hearing Facilities

26. For further instructions on dealing with claimants who need help to use our services, see the Vulnerability instructions

### **Unacceptable Claimant Behaviour (formerly Potentially Violent claimants)**

27. Jobcentre Plus is responsible for ensuring that the Health Assessment Advisory Service is notified when a claimant is recorded as Unacceptable Claimant Behaviour. The action to take depends on where the case is within the Work Capability Assessment referral process.