

Identifying vulnerability

How to identify those individuals who may need additional support to enable them to access DWP benefits and use our services

1. Individuals now contact us through a variety of channels. Identification of support needs will depend on the channel used.

2. A individual may require additional support to enable them to:

- access benefits and use our services (may be unable to use on-line claim facility, unable to read claim forms for ESA, JSA, PIP, PENSIONS, etc)
- prove eligibility (may not understand or remember what evidence they have to provide, to prove they are eligible to claim)
- maintain conditionality (may not understand the requirement to attend an interview in the jobcentre)
- maintain their claims (may not understand when to provide change of circumstances information)
- maintain their finances (be in severe financial hardship/debt, may not have the ability to understand money/numbers)

3. An individual might experience difficulties with:

- understanding information
- interpreting situations
- making decisions
- giving consent
- communicating information or their views
- requesting specialist or additional help and support
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4. When making a judgment about whether an individual requires additional support, it is essential that you communicate with them and record their additional requirements. If, and what, support is required can only be determined as part of a measured assessment.

5. Some individuals may be unwilling to reveal that they are experiencing difficult life events or personal circumstances

6. You should use a flexible approach to put additional support/special arrangements in place that are tailored to the specific needs of the individual. This will provide them with equal access to our products and services and enable them to follow the standard Customer Journeys.

7. This support may be put in place once; for a short, medium, long period of time; or recurring dependant upon their needs.

8. Examples of special arrangements or additional support (not an exhaustive list):

- assisted telephony service
- offering a face to face appointment
- implementing benefit easements where appropriate (for example for victims of domestic abuse)
- reasonable adjustments must be put in place if required for disabled people and individuals with health issues

9. All service providers, including DWP, have a legal duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure their services are accessible to disabled people.

10. LMS markers and hotspots – Working age. It is essential that you update markers/hotspots accurately and when required. Markers and hotspots that are not completed, or hold inaccurate information, can have a significant impact how DWP addresses the needs of an individual. The marker information, if used correctly, will help us to target support where most needed, keep all staff informed in hand off/over situations and reduce the need to obtain this information time and time again. Incorrect marker information can result in the individual not receiving the correct payments or not getting the additional support they require. Some of the life events and personal circumstances require the LMS markers/hotspots to be completed and staff should follow the appropriate guidance to complete them:

- Disabled Person (DP)
- Benefit Cap
- Ethnicity
- Incident or PV
- Domestic Abuse
- Care Leaver
- Work Focused Support for Carers (WFSC)
- Alcohol Misuse
- Drug Misuse
- Refugee
- Ex-Offender
- Person Without Accommodation
- Parent
- Lone Parent WFI
- Child Details and Childcare Barrier to Work
- LA Families Programme (Offices in England only)

Life Events, personal circumstances, health issues and disabilities

1. There are many life events, personal circumstances and health issues/disability that may impact on the individuals' ability to access DWP benefits and use our services. Some individuals may not require additional support even though they are experiencing difficult life events and/or have complex personal circumstances, health issues or disability. These life events,

personal circumstances, health conditions and disability may indicate that these people require additional support putting in place, to enable them to access the standard Customer Journeys.

- Adoption - children
- Age - older person
- Age - older person - financial abuse (pensions)
- Age - Young Person - 16 & 17 year olds
- Bereavement, Death - recently bereaved
- Caring responsibilities
- Children - child care
- Children who leave care/over 18 care leavers
- Crime – Victim of crime
- Cultural Barriers, Language barriers – English not their first language
- Debt/indebted
- Divorce/termination of Civil Partnerships
- Domestic Abuse
- Drug and alcohol dependency
- Gender recognition/transgender
- Homeless (person without accommodation, in temporary accommodation, frequent change of address)
- Just Left hospital
- Leaving the Armed Forces, Ex-armed forces personnel and their spouses/partners
- Lone Parent
- MAPPA individuals (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements)
- Offender/ex Offender/ Prisoners/Detainees
- Race - Immigration status/refugee/asylum seeker/people arriving from abroad
- Redundancy
- Retirement
- Rural Isolation
- Suicide and/or Self Harm Declaration
- Supported by Troubled Families programme

Note: Further detail around the above examples may be available by referring to the Customer Service A-Z.

2. Individuals may tell you about a life event (for example, “my mum has just died”) or give out information in the conversation that indicates they may have complex personal circumstances (for example: they have no ID which may indicate they are currently homeless). There may be a combination of factors which mean they require additional support to enable them to access benefits and use our services.

Note: Follow Claimant Commitment guidance, if appropriate, regarding acceptable restrictions.

Note: Some individuals might **not** require additional support even though they are experiencing a life event, health issue or disability; have complex needs or difficult personal circumstances. Try to avoid making assumptions; the individual themselves is the expert on what support is required. If you are unsure as to whether they want/need any additional support, you should consider asking “do you require any support to help you to use our services”.