

JSA Claimant Commitment

Background

1. The introduction of the new Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimant commitment is a critical building block to pave the way for the cultural transformation that Universal Credit (UC) will deliver.
2. From 28 October 2013, around 100 Jobcentres a month will begin using the Claimant Commitment for new JSA claimants and Work Programme completers until it is in place nationally. Stock claimants and 16-17 year old JSA claimants have not been included in the phased roll-out.
3. In simple terms, we will roll out the Claimant Commitment model developed in the Pathfinder sites; Wigan, Warrington and Oldham. This new approach is not simply a revised Jobseeker's Agreement (JSAg), it is a fundamental culture shift for Personal Advisors, Assistant Advisors and claimants in driving a very different relationship and conversation supporting the transition in to work.
4. The products supporting this transformation are:
 - The JSA Claimant Commitment;
 - The My Jobseeker Profile; and
 - The My Work Plan booklet

What is the JSA Claimant Commitment?

5. The aim of the JSA Claimant Commitment is to ensure claimants:
 - Are clear about the requirements they must meet;
 - Recognise that they must do all they reasonably can to find work;
 - Take responsibility for getting themselves into work;
 - Have a detailed plan of action in place that they are committed to following; and
 - Are coached and supported to ensure they are taking the right action at the right time
6. The JSA Claimant Commitment will be tailored to an individual following a discussion between the claimant and their Work Coach. It will set out the availability and actively seeking requirements that a claimant must meet, and the consequences of any failure to do so.
7. It will take into account someone's personal circumstances, and will set out clearly what work search activity a claimant has agreed to do.
8. When someone makes a new claim for JSA or completes the Work Programme they will attend an interview where they will agree with their Work Coach what work search activities they will do to give themselves the best chance of finding work quickly. These work search activities will be included in their JSA Claimant Commitment. The JSA Claimant Commitment will replace the JSAg for these claimants.
9. The support a claimant will receive with their work search and the consequences of failing to do the activities they have agreed to do will also be outlined in their JSA Claimant Commitment.

10. The JSA Claimant Commitment is a PDF form that is completed on the desk top following the discussion with the claimant. Two copies of the form are printed and signed with a copy given to the claimant. The form is saved to a secure folder and a copy filed in the LMU.
11. Should a referral to the LMDM be required the JSA Claimant Commitment should be attached. The DMA Referrals Guide advises that details of the JSA CC should be included for the following referral types:
 - Availability
 - ASE
 - LV
 - NTA
 - RE
 - FTA if appropriate

However, if the JSA CC is not included, the referral should not be cancelled until the Jobcentre have been contacted and given a reasonable amount of time in which to provide it. The LMDM can request a copy of or details of the content of a JSA CC at any time for any referral type.

What is the My Jobseeker Profile?

12. The My Jobseeker Profile is part of the same document as the JSA Claimant Commitment. The intention is that Coaches will hold an in-depth discussion with claimants, and then complete this section prior to completing the JSA Claimant Commitment itself.
13. The profile does not form part of the legal Claimant Commitment. It is a separate component. However, as this supports the JSA Claimant Commitment and sits in the same document, it could be sent to LMDMs if a JSA Claimant Commitment is attached or scanned.
14. The profile is information about the claimant that will help the Coach determine the level of support required at that particular stage of their claim. It lists the types of work they think they are most likely to get, their qualifications, skills for work and experience, and their circumstances.
15. All are free-text boxes and Coaches are expected to fully complete these to a good standard. Band Bs who may create a JSA Claimant Commitment do not fill this section in.

What is the My Work Plan booklet?

16. The My Work Plan booklet is used by claimants to record their plan to search and find work. The JSA Claimant Commitment and work plan booklet work in tandem and should be used together; they will enable claimants to better plan, manage and review their work search activity.
 - The My Work Plan booklet details the how, where and when. It is written by the claimant, but the coach has a critical role in ensuring the claimant establishes a plan that will meet the requirement on them to take all reasonable steps to secure employment.
17. My Work Plan will therefore help us judge whether or not the claimant has met their requirements.
18. However, claimants do not have to use the My Work Plan booklet.

19. Coaches will advocate the benefits of using the My Work Plan booklet, in that it will help claimants plan their job search activities and demonstrate that they have been ASE. But we cannot force claimants to use the booklet.
20. In cases where a claimant refuses to use the My Work Plan booklet, claimants will be told that it is up to them to demonstrate they are doing all that's reasonable to look for work, and a judgement will be made based upon what they say they have done and what we think is reasonable, given their circumstances.

Impact on Labour Market Decision Makers

21. There have been no legislative changes associated with the introduction of the JSA Claimant Commitment. It will act as the Jobseekers Agreement, and the same rules that apply to the JSAg now will continue to apply.
22. For the purposes of section 1(2)(b) of the Jobseeker's Act 1995, the JSA Claimant Commitment is the Jobseeker's Agreement.
23. A key difference between the JSA Claimant Commitment and the JSAg is that the Claimant Commitment will no longer include a total number of activities box. This is seen as inhibitive, i.e. if we ask for 20, that's all claimants will aim for.
24. The JSA Claimant Commitment was introduced into Wigan, Warrington and Oldham ahead of UC implementation. We did not see increase in referral rates for LM decisions.
25. What we did see was an increase in the adverse decision rate – this was just under 99%.

What additional information might be included in DMA referrals?

26. Clerical referrals, such as disputed JSA Claimant Commitments, would include this form rather than the JSAg. All relevant information will be included, and the same processes as are used currently would be followed.
27. The DART referrals will be completed as usual, however an electronic version of the JSA Claimant Commitment could be attached to the email if appropriate to the referral type.
28. Scanned or clerical copies of evidence from the My Work Plan booklet could be received.
29. The entries on the My Work Plan booklet are split into two sections:
 - The first half is titled “**I will: (what I am going to do, including how, when and where)**” and is where the claimant completes their plans for the coming weeks;
 - The second half is titled “**What I did and what was the result**” This is where the claimant records the outcome and where the Jobcentre staff will start to check that ASE has been met.