

# **Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) – Jobcentre Operating Model (JOM)**

## **Introduction**

1. From 28 November 2016, the DEA role changed. The role now focusses on up-skilling and supporting work coaches to deliver an excellent service to claimants who have a health condition or disability which impacts on their ability to find and sustain employment.

## **The DEA role**

2. The Disability Employment Adviser (DEA):
- is part of the work coach team, line managed by a work coach team leader
  - provides up-skilling and support to a cohort of work coaches by:
    - work coach and DEA skill conferences
    - work coach and DEA case conferences
    - informational support
    - three way interventions (work coach, DEA and claimant)
    - group work coach conferences
  - conducts a minimal number of claimant support interventions
  - provides support to operational colleagues throughout the jobcentre
  - works with the work psychologist to provide additional upskilling/awareness to work coaches where a need has been identified, for example at DEA or work coach case conferences
  - creates and commissions opportunities with employer engagement and Third Party Provision (TPP) teams and external organisations
  - raises awareness and acts as a point of contact for GPs, NHS and disability charities
  - ensures the local disability hub contains the right and most up to date information to support work coaches
  - works with employer advisers, disability employment provision, Access to Work (AtW) and work psychologists to support effective employer and provision strategies for claimants with complex health conditions or disability

**Note:** The DEA will not have a caseload of claimants.

3. Under the Jobcentre Operating Model (JOM) and Universal Credit (UC) model, the DEA and work coaches will be unable to offer support to non-benefit claimants (this includes claimants receiving Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA)).

4. The DEA must ensure that they assist the service delivery team leader and the service delivery coach to enable them to refer non-benefit claimants to an appropriate source of support and, or, information.

5. The only exception to this would be a non-benefit claimant who is clearly vulnerable or who declares their intention to commit suicide or self harm which may compromise their health and wellbeing.

## **Up-skilling and supporting a cohort of up to 30 work coaches**

6. The DEA provides one to one support for work coaches to discuss either:
- a specific claimant with a complex health condition or disability, or

- additional support or up-skilling for the work coach themselves
7. The DEA delivers this support using a range of channels, for example:
- face to face
  - email
  - telephone
  - Microsoft Lync.
8. Frequency of support is flexible and dependent on the needs of the work coach or their claimants.

## **DEA support request from the work coach**

9. The work coach identifies that they need support from the DEA. They need to identify whether the request is for:
- **One to One Claimant Support** - the work coach needs advice or support to help them progress a claimant with a complex health issue or disability
  - **One to One Skill Support** - the work coach needs information/upskilling to address a specific knowledge gap e.g. retention, reasonable adjustments, disability-specific information

### **One to One Claimant Support**

10. To request one to one claimant support from the DEA, the work coach:
- creates a new email
  - enters 'DEA Support Request' in the subject bar of the email, including required response date e.g. next appointment date
  - in the body of the email, enters the surname and NINO of claimant, a brief description of claimant's challenges and why DEA support needed
  - emails the request to the DEA's inbox
  - notes details of the request in LMS conversations

### **One to One Skill Support**

11. To request one to one skill support from the DEA, the work coach:
- creates a new email
  - enters 'DEA Support Request' in the subject bar of the email, including required response date
  - in the body of the email, types a brief description of the support needed
  - emails the request to the DEA's inbox
  - retains the email until the request is resolved

12. The DEA receives and reviews the support request and, if more information is required, contacts the work coach by phone or email to obtain this.

**Please note:** if the DEA notices a trend in inappropriate or common referrals from one or more work coaches, they must inform their Work Coach Team Leader. This might be an indication of a skills gap that can be addressed on a one to one basis or via group upskilling.

13. Once the DEA accepts the request, they will determine the appropriate channel of support:

- work coach and DEA case conference
- work coach and DEA skill conference
- informational support only
- three way intervention (work coach, DEA and claimant)

- group work coach conference
- claimant support intervention by DEA

## **Work coach and DEA case conference**

### **14. The DEA:**

- books an Ad Hoc appointment into the work coach diary on LMS, using the claimant's details.
- blocks the appointment as a period of unavailability in their DEA diary
- replies to the support request email, with a summary of support offered including time, date and channel, which may be face to face, Microsoft Lync, video conferencing or teleconferencing
- conducts the case conference with the work coach. The Work Coach Team Leader may attend to conduct a Quality Assurance Standards check
- shares any additional info, and/or products with the work coach by email
- shares a summary of outputs with the their Work Coach Team Leader, to inform people performance and ensure the work coach records agreed activity on their Performance Development Plan if appropriate

### **15. The work coach:**

- records case conference outcome and actions/recommendations in conversations on LMS
- implements the actions/recommendations in the next claimant intervention

### **16. Outcomes of the work coach and DEA case conference may be:**

- further work coach and DEA case conference
- claimant support intervention by the DEA (at the DEA's discretion)
- three way intervention (work coach, DEA and claimant)
- case selected for group work coach conference
- Work Psychologist action
- Employer Advisor action
- Third Party Provision Manager action
- no further support needed

## **Work coach and DEA skill conference**

### **17. The DEA:**

- DEA, work coach or Work Coach Team Leader blocks out an allotted time in the work coaches diary
- replies to the support request email, with a summary of support offered including time, date and channel, which may be face to face, Microsoft Lync, video conferencing or teleconferencing
- conducts the skills conference with the work coach. The Work Coach Team Leader may attend to conduct a Quality Assurance Standards check of the skill conference
- shares any additional info, and/or products with the work coach by email
- shares a summary of outputs with the their Work Coach Team Leader, to inform people performance and ensure the work coach records agreed activity on their Performance Development Plan if appropriate

### **18. The DEA may offer further support dependent on the outcome of the one to one skill conference:**

- further work coach and DEA skill conference

- case selected for group work coach conference
- Work Psychologist action
- Employer Adviser action
- Third Party Provision Manager action
- no further support needed

## **Informational support**

19. Informational support is internal or external information that can be provided by the DEA without the need for a case or skills conference. It may be provided in response to a work coach's request for claimant or skills support.

20. The DEA:

- sources the relevant information and/products based on the work coach request
- replies via the support request email including a summary and the information/products or a holding response with expected return date if the information cannot be immediately sourced
- contacts the work coach for further discussion if required
- may share the information at the next group work coach conference or on the local Disability Hub

## **Three way intervention (work coach, DEA and claimant)**

21. The three way intervention can be voluntary or mandatory, depending on the conditionality of the benefit they are claiming.

22. If the intervention is mandatory, normal conditionality will apply. The work coach must obtain permission from the claimant before the three way meeting can take place. They must explain the role of the DEA and why the DEA's participation in the meeting may be beneficial to the claimant.

- if work coach gains agreement, they must ensure the claimant understands the consequences of failure to attend the appointment
- if the claimant does not agree, the work coach requests a case conference with the DEA to explore alternative solutions which do not require the DEA to attend a claimant intervention

23. If voluntary, the work coach must obtain permission from the claimant before the three way meeting can take place. They must explain the role of the DEA and why the DEA's participation in the meeting may be beneficial to the claimant.

24. If the claimant does not agree, the work coach requests a case conference with the DEA to explore alternative solutions which do not require the DEA to attend a claimant intervention

## **Booking a three way intervention**

25. To book a three way intervention:

- the work coach and DEA agree their availability
- the work coach books the intervention on LMS, using the claimant's records to ensure a notification letter is sent to the claimant with the date and time of the intervention

## **Conducting the three way intervention**

26. To conduct a three way intervention:

- the work coach leads the intervention and introduces the DEA to the claimant
  - the DEA role in the intervention is to offer advice and support where requested
27. Outcome of the three way intervention:
- the DEA provides additional advice or information to the work coach if required
  - the work coach records the intervention outcome and actions/recommendations in conversations on LMS and shares this with the claimant.
  - DEA will share a summary of the intervention outputs with the DEA Work Coach Team Leader
28. Further outcomes of the three way intervention could be:
- further work coach and DEA case conference
  - claimant support intervention by the DEA (at the DEA's discretion)
  - further three way intervention (book on LMS using claimant's details, to ensure notification letter is sent to the claimant)
  - case selected for group work coach conference
  - Work Psychologist action
  - Employer Advisor action
  - Third Party Provision Manager action
  - no further support needed

### **Group work coach conference**

29. The DEA will hold a minimum of a 1 hour monthly group conference with their cohort of work coaches. Group conferences are recommended to include no more than 10 work coaches per session, so a DEA with a cohort of 30 work coaches will facilitate a minimum of 3 group conferences each month. Although flexible, the preferred delivery method is face to face.

### **Preparing for the group work coach conference**

30. The DEA:
- may invite their own and/or the work coaches' Work Coach Team Leader and Work Psychologist to the group conference if required
  - may have identified cases to discuss at the group case conference at previous work coach case conferences. They email the work coaches' Work Coach Team Leader to coordinate identification of suitable cases for the group work coach conference
31. The Work Coach Team Leader:
- is responsible for blocking time in their work coaches' LMS diaries for them to attend the group conference. Work Coach Team Leaders are recommended to block diaries at least 4 months ahead, to ensure their work coaches are available to attend
  - identifies and emails to the DEA details of suitable cases to discuss at the group work coach conference

### **Conducting the group work coach conference**

32. The DEA and work coaches:
- share best practice and consolidate skills and knowledge
  - discuss the best coaching style to progress individual claimants. It is expected 3-4 cases will be discussed at each conference

- highlight training or development needs specific to coaching claimants with a complex health condition or disability
  - provide motivational and practical support in dealing with complex cases
  - increase understanding of health conditions, including a better understanding of the impact conditions have in work as well as on the claimant's job search and work related activity
33. Outcome of the group work coach conference:
- once the meeting is concluded the DEA will summarise the output and progress any further actions which have been identified
34. Further outcomes of the group work coach conference may be:
- work coach and DEA case conference
  - claimant support intervention by the DEA (at the DEA's discretion)
  - three way intervention (work coach, DEA and claimant)
  - Work Psychologist action
  - Employer Advisor action
  - Third Party Provision Manager action
  - no further support needed

## **Claimant support interventions**

35. The DEA may provide minimal face to face support to claimants. Claimants will remain on the work coach caseload.

36. Each claimant may have up to three DEA claimant support interventions. The DEA's Work Coach Team Leader may agree further interventions, in exceptional circumstances.

37. The claimant support intervention must progress the claimant towards work or provision and may include:

- intensive targeted job matching/sourcing for those who cannot independently job search, beyond normal work coach resourcing
- condition management discussions and signposting
- a review of condition management
- managing a customer declarations of intention to attempt suicide or self harm. This is detailed in the 6 point plan

## **Requesting a claimant support intervention**

38. The work coach:

- discusses the case with their Work Coach Team Leader
- agrees with the DEA that a DEA claimant support intervention is appropriate
- gains consent from the claimant for a DEA support intervention
- informs the claimant that the DEA will contact them to arrange the intervention
- explains that attendance at the DEA support intervention is voluntary
- reminds the claimant that any regular interventions will take place and normal conditionality still applies

39. In exceptional circumstances Work Coach Team Leaders and Service Delivery Team Leaders can request a claimant support intervention.

40. The DEA:

- books a 'DEA Support Intervention' into their LMS diary using the claimant's details

- contacts the claimant by the most appropriate channel e.g. phone, email, face to face or by letter to inform them of the date and time of the support intervention
- Should a letter be required in large print or braille please refer to Delivering equality for blind or visually impaired customers.

## **Conducting the claimant support intervention**

### **41. The DEA:**

- conducts the support intervention with the claimant, without the work coach being present
- the DEA's Work Coach Team Leader may conduct a Quality Assurance Standards check of the intervention
- provides advice and information to the claimant, signposting them to external support provision where appropriate
- records actions / recommendations in conversations on LMS
- workflows a brief summary with next actions to the claimant's work coach, who will follow up on any actions the DEA has recommended

### **42. Outcomes of the claimant support intervention may be:**

- work coach and DEA case conference
- further Support Intervention by the DEA (at the DEA's discretion)
- three way intervention (work coach, DEA and claimant)
- Work Psychologist action
- Employer Advisor action
- Third Party Provision Manager action
- no further support needed

## **Working with the Work Psychologist**

### **43. The DEA will utilise the skills of the Work Psychologist by:**

#### **44. regular case conferences to:**

- discuss individual claimants with a health condition or disability, with barriers to provision and work as and when appropriate
  - commission specific awareness sessions, themed case conferences and training identified from work coach feedback
  - look at local disability strategy needs
- retention work assessments – by exception only via business case completion
- working together to commission bespoke disability products with OED SDM Disability Employment Service Manager and Disability Employment Strategy e.g. disability provision toolkit, hidden impairment toolkit
- monthly meetings, ideally meeting face to face, to discuss issues arising from skill/case conferences, group case conferences and claimant support interventions

### **45. The Work Psychologist and the DEA will create a strategy to support their work coach peers and claimants. This could be based around one or more of the following areas:**

- condition management
- employment
- provision
- work coach awareness and/or L&D requirements

46. The DEA will then progress each element of the strategy with their Employer Engagement and Third Party Provision teams or external stakeholders.

47. Further information may be found in Working with Employer Engagement and Third Party Provision teams and External Organisations

## **Working with Employer Engagement and Third Party Provision teams and External Organisations**

48. The DEA forms partnerships and commissions employment and provision opportunities with Partnership Managers, Employer Engagement, Third Party Provision teams and external organisations.

## **Working with the Employer Engagement team**

49. The DEA:

- leads and progresses a strategy to address gaps in employment for claimants with a health condition or disability. The strategy owner is the DEA's Work Coach Team Leader
- sets up monthly meetings with their Employer Engagement team, ideally meeting face to face, to develop and progress
- considers whether the meeting requires participation from their Work Coach Team Leader, Partnership Manager, Third Party Provision, Work Psychologist or external organisations. Information about formulating joint strategies may be found in Joint local strategy meetings
- centres the discussion around any outputs from skill/case conferences, group case conferences and Work Psychologist meetings which have identified gaps in employment opportunities for claimants with a health condition or disability
- formulates employment solutions with Employer Engagement. They may include job shadowing, job trials, apprenticeships, contracted employment
- checks progress on employment requests with the Employer Engagement team
- communicates employment solutions notified to them by Employer Engagement, to their work coaches, in person, by E-mail or, for group opportunities, on the local Disability Hub
- if no immediate solution is identified, informs work coaches and advises that Employer Engagement will continue to investigate
- provides advice and support to the Employer Engagement team, who work with retention cases. See Retention cases for further information

50. The Employer Engagement team:

- investigates employer resource to identify employment solution/opportunity
- notifies the DEA of the employment solution by email
- raises the opportunity on LMS for work coaches to refer their claimants to. This could be a single speculative opportunity, an individual employment solution for a single claimant, or a group opportunity
- if no immediate solution is identified, notifies DEA by email and will commence on-going reviews with employers until the required opportunity becomes available

51. The work coach:

- refers the claimant to the employment opportunity



- ensures the claimant fully understands the conditionality requirement to apply for and take up the opportunity
- takes appropriate DMA action if required

## **Working with the Third Party Provision team**

### **52. The DEA:**

- leads and progresses a strategy to address gaps in provision for claimants with a health condition or disability. The strategy owner is the DEA's Work Coach Team Leader
- sets up regular meetings with their Third Party Provision team, ideally meeting face to face
- considers whether the meeting requires participation from their Work Coach Team Leader, Partnership Managers, Employer Engagement, Work Psychologist or external organisations. Information about formulating joint strategies may be found in Joint local strategy meetings
- focusses the discussion on outputs from skill/case conferences, group case conferences and Work Psychologist strategy meetings which have identified gaps in provision to support claimants with a health condition or disability
- formulates provision solutions with the Third Party Provision team. These may be external non-contracted, existing contracted provision or new provision funded by the Flexible Support Fund
- checks progress on provision solutions with the Third Party Provision team
- communicates provision notified to them by the Third Party Provision team, to their work coaches, in person, by E-mail or on the local Disability Hub
- if no immediate solution is identified, informs work coaches and advises that the Third Party Provision team will continue to review available provision with providers

### **53. The Third Party Provision team:**

- investigates availability of provision
- notifies provision solutions to the DEA by email
- raises the opportunity on LMS for work coaches to refer their claimants to. This could be a single speculative opportunity, an individual employment solution for a single claimant, or a group opportunity
- if no immediate solution identified, notifies the DEA by email and will commence an on-going review with providers until the required provision becomes available

### **54. The work coach:**

- will refer the claimant to the provision
- ensures the claimant fully understands the conditionality requirement to take up the provision opportunity
- takes appropriate DMA action if required

## **Working with external partners - GPs, NHS, disability-specific charities and organisations**

55. The DEA is the jobcentre single point of contact for external health and disability related organisations. The aim is for the DEA to build a comprehensive network of support, to help work coaches to deliver the best possible service to claimants who have a health condition or disability which impacts on their ability to find and sustain paid employment.

56. The DEA:

- raises awareness of jobcentre support in local GP surgeries
- forges partnerships with organisations who are equipped to support claimants with a health condition or disability
- works with disability-specific charities to help raise work coaches' awareness of the provision and support which is available for people with specific disabilities. The DEA arranges for these organisations to attend office/team meetings
- ensures any changes in external health and disability services are communicated throughout the district if there is a potential impact on claimants e.g. a reduction in occupational therapists, closure of a mental health charity
- makes contact with external organisations by email or phone, preferably leading to a face to face meeting, videoconference or telekit
- focusses meetings on the following objectives:
  - raising the profile of the jobcentre and its services with external organisations
  - raising the DEA's awareness of external services and opportunities available, to share with work coaches
  - discuss and input to local strategies to support claimants with a health condition or disability. The DEA may wish to include the Third Party Provision team in strategy discussions

57. Refer to **Working With Partners** for further information about forming partnerships with internal and external stakeholders.

## Joint local strategy meetings

58. The DEA may need to work with internal and external partners to create a joint strategy to support claimants with a complex health condition or disability.

59. The DEA:

- has the lead for creating a joint local strategy. Their Work Coach Team Leader will own the strategy and should actively engage in this process
- discusses the requirement for a joint local strategy with their Work Coach Team Leader and gains their agreement to proceed
- makes contact with all the internal and external partners who are needed to help deliver this strategy. Internal partners include Employer Engagement and Partnership Managers, Third Party Provision teams, Work Psychologists, Customer Services Leader, Work Coach Team Leaders and work coaches. External partners may include GPs, NHS, Local Authority, Disability Peer Led Organisations and charities
- will schedule a meeting, using the most effective channel of delivery e.g. face to face, telekit, videoconference
- will issue an email invitation which will include a summary of why a joint strategy is needed, including as much detail as possible to ensure understanding and buy-in
- leads the meeting and sets out the purpose of the strategy. The group will discuss and propose solutions to populate the strategy
- creates and maintains the strategy, supported by their Work Coach Team Leader
- schedules further meetings at times agreed by attendees

## **Maintain the Local Disability Hub**

60. The Disability Hub is an informational resource on your local district provision tool for DEA to deliver products directly to their cohort of work coaches. The DEA is responsible for quality of the content on the local Disability Hub.

61. The DEA:

- ensures the local Disability Hub is up to date by emailing new content, updated content and details of any content which needs to be removed from the hub, to the District Provision Tool Single Point of Contact, who will publish the information on the DWP intranet
- maintains a forum on the Hub for feedback from jobcentre colleagues on health and disability related issues
- provides links to:
  - internal knowledge sites, toolkits, instructional guidance and provision
  - external disability-related charities' websites, non contracted provision
  - local disability confident products and disability confident employers
  - outputs from local strategies

62. The work coach:

- uses the local Disability Hub to keep up to date on health and disability issues, provision and services in the local community

## **Support to other operational colleagues**

63. The DEA supports operational colleagues throughout the jobcentre, to promote better understanding of the needs of claimants with a complex health condition or disability.

## **Request for DEA support**

64. Jobcentre colleagues:

- send an email to the DEA. Include in the subject bar their job role and reason for request e.g. 'Service Delivery Coach skills support request'
- provide details of the request in the body of the email
- state the criticality of the support request e.g. urgent, non-urgent

65. The DEA decides the best channel of support:

- provides one to one work support, by phone or face to face. The DEA contacts the jobcentre colleague and organises the meeting. If face to face, the Work Coach Team Leader may conduct a Quality Assurance Standards check at the meeting.
- responds to information-only requests by email, telephone or Microsoft Lync

## **Retention cases**

66. If a claimant/employee requires support to retain employment due to a health condition or disability, they should be referred to the Employer Adviser, who will decide whether this is:

- a straight forward reasonable adjustment need, which may be resolved by the Employer Adviser  
*Or*
- a complex case. For example, the claimant/employee may no longer be able to carry out the duties of their current job and will require a managed transfer to

a more suitable job role, for which they meet the skill requirements and can be reasonably adjusted to meet their health or disability-related needs.

67. The Employer Adviser can consult with the DEA to help them assess whether or not a case is complex.

68. For a complex case, the Employer Adviser and DEA will consult to decide next steps:

- in the majority of cases the DEA will support the Employer Adviser to facilitate the retention directly with the claimant/employee and the employer
- if the case is too complex or sensitive for the Employer Adviser to resolve, which risks a breakdown of the employer/employee relationship, the Employer Adviser may request the DEA to undertake retention activity as a 'DEA Support Intervention'
- if the DEA is unable to resolve the retention issue, they may refer the case to the Work Psychologist, who will conduct the retention activity.

## Quality Assurance Standards for the DEA

69. Work Coach Team Leaders have 3 Quality Assurance Standards (QAS) checks available to them to quality assure the work of the DEA.

	Description	Purpose	Suggested frequency
QAS 1	work coach quality standards	For the DEA Work Coach Team Leader to quality assure the DEA undertaking a Claimant Support Intervention	As these appointment types are minimal, no frequency has been set. This QAS will be as and when required
QAS 2	DEA / work coach individual case/skills support	To quality assure the; work coach and DEA case conference work coach and DEA skill conference three way intervention	Monthly QAS with focus on the work coach and DEA case conference.
Group Case Conference Check List	Group case conference check list	For the Work Coach Team Leader to assure quality of the group case conference	Monthly checks in the first 3 months then at the discretion of the Work Coach Team Leader

## Glossary

DEA	-	Disability Employment Adviser
DPLO	-	Disability Peer Led Organisations
EA	-	Employer Adviser
ESA	-	Employment and Support Allowance
FTA	-	Fail To Attend
OED	-	Operational Excellence Division
WC	-	Work Coach

WCTL - Work Coach Team Leader

For Further support go to the JOM project intranet site, in the DWP  
Homepage A to Z click J