

## Flexible Support Fund

Flexible Support Fund (FSF) is a budget managed by Service Leaders (SLs) to supplement mainstream services and tailor support to the needs of individuals and the local area.

### Barriers to Work

1. A key element of FSF is giving Advisory Teams a means by which they can remove barriers that are:

- preventing claimants from moving closer to the job market
- hindering a claimant's search for work
- preventing a claimant from accepting a firm job offer or moving into self-employment.

2. This chapter focuses on 'other' barriers that **aren't** classified elsewhere in FSF guidance.

3. In regard to these 'other' barriers it is important for Work Coaches to be fully acquainted with the content of the FSF Overview and General Information, in particular the consideration of the 'tabloid test' and financial responsibilities. Although this advice holds for the more common barrier awards e.g. clothing and tools, it assumes even greater importance when making awards for things that might be considered out of the ordinary. The aim here is not to stifle innovation but to safeguard Work Coaches.

4. Anyone that falls within the over-arching eligibility for FSF could qualify for an award; however you should be aware of any local restrictions.

5. As regards the circumstances in which an award might be appropriate, it is best to first understand when a barriers award definitely cannot be made and where strict restrictions apply.

6. If something is not specifically mentioned within this or any other chapter of FSF guidance, decisions should be made locally taking into account any limitations imposed by the Service Leader (SL).

7. FSF travel payments can be made in advance if it removes the barrier of getting to and sustaining employment.

8. There is no provision to pay any other mileage rate other than the rate set in FSF instructions (standard DWP rate of 25p per mile).

9. A claimant must request the support prior to starting work as with any FSF request to remove a barrier to commence employment.

10. Work coaches must ensure that the cheapest and most convenient form of travel is undertaken, if private transport is most convenient then this should be at the standard DWP rate of 25p per mile.