Visits - Home visits overview

Summary

How and when to make a referral to the DWP Visiting Team

Content

Home visits introduction

Home visits are a service provided to claimants, however they are only offered in exceptional circumstances.

DWP Visiting helps those claimants who are unable to complete their business transaction through any of the other channels by undertaking a home visit.

When is a home visit appropriate?

A home visit must be considered:

- when a claimant has been identified as being vulnerable or having complex needs due to health issues or is unable to access normal channels of communication as an individual or through a friend, family member or third party stakeholder partner
- to safeguard claimants against sanctions where it is deemed they have a health condition which restricts them from leaving their home, this will help determine whether the claimant has fully understood their commitments and good reason can be gathered if appropriate

For Universal Credit purposes, a home visit will involve a claimant with complex needs, when all other attempts to contact the claimant have failed.

The need for a home visit, known as a 'core visit' will usually be determined by Universal Credit processes..

Universal Credit core visit types

The following Core Visits type list indicates when a Core Visit is appropriate, however referrals may also be applicable for other claimants and scenarios. See 'Universal Credit non-core visits' below.

Appointee visits

When a claimant in receipt of Universal Credit requests an appointee, a visit must be arranged to establish that an appointee is required. A visit would not be required if the claimant has an existing appointee. See Personal Acting Body or Corporate Acting Body - claimant requests representation.

Prior to making a referral to DWP Visiting, the agent must check for an existing appointee by accessing the Customer Information System (CIS) Searchlight.

If an appointee visit is appropriate an agent completes a Referral Template and forwards it electronically to DWP Visiting, requesting that a visit is made to establish whether an appointee is required. See Visiting Referral Tool.

The referral must contain full details of any prospective appointee including name, National Insurance number, address, contact details and relationship to the claimant. If these are not available, the agent must include an explanatory note in the referral.

The agent then:

1. Emails the template to DWP Visiting attaching any hard copy documents, where applicable.
2. Updates CAMLite 'Contact history' and Work Services Platform (WSP) 'Notes' as appropriate, with details of action taken.
3. On receipt of the referral, DWP Visiting will arrange to visit the claimant and prospective appointee.
4. At the visit, form BF56 is completed as appropriate and review action taken if required. See Personal Acting Body or Corporate Acting Body - claimant requests representation.

Failed to undertake work-related activity

Where appropriate - Universal Credit claimants with a mental health condition, learning difficulties or who are deemed vulnerable and/or have complex needs, and who have failed to meet their work-related activity.

Aim of visit - to ensure the claimant fully understands the work-related requirements placed on them by Universal Credit and the implications of not attending appointments with their work coach. This includes recording good reason for not meeting their work-related requirements.

Help to complete UC50

Where appropriate - claimants with complex needs who need help to complete an UC50. The claimant must be made aware that the visiting officer will provide a transcribing service only.

Aim of visit - to provide a transcribing service to complete an UC50 recording exactly what the claimant says in response to the questions as worded on their questionnaire.

Failed to attend a Work Capability Assessment

Where appropriate - Universal Credit claimants with a mental health condition, learning difficulties or are deemed to have complex needs, and have failed to attend all or part of their Work Capability Assessment (WCA) which could result in the claimant leaving the health journey, and affect their conditionality.

Aim of Visit - to ensure the claimant fully understands the requirements placed on them by Universal Credit and the implications of not attending their WCA, including recording good reason for nonattendance. Appointments for the WCA are issued directly to the claimant by the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA).

Safeguard visits

Where appropriate: to ensure that claimants with complex needs have the opportunity to be seen face to face and to have the implications of failing to comply with the WCA requirements fully explained.

Aim of visit - to ensure that the claimant fully understands the requirements placed on them by the Universal Credit health journey and the consequences of not attending or complying with the provision of medical evidence until the WCA outcome decision is made, including recording good reason for nonattendance.

Also - if during the course of a safeguard visit, the claimant agrees to attend or comply with a WCA appointment, to advise the claimant that they may be referred for a further assessment.

Universal Credit non-core visits

While there are a number of occasions when a core visit referral is appropriate, it is not possible to identify every scenario where a home visit would be the best approach. For this reason, agents should apply a degree of judgement to each situation and consider whether a referral to DWP Visiting may be appropriate.

Considerations before making a non-core referral

Before making a non-core visit referral to DWP Visiting, the agent must consider whether they have taken all reasonable action to assist the claimant:

- have they already attempted to clear the query by correspondence or by phone?
- could the claimant be supported using preferred existing claimant support channels, for example - a face to face appointment or telephony support?
- are there any other channels of support available to assist this claimant's needs, for example - do they have a family member, a carer or another person who provides support who can help?
- is it safe for a visiting officer (alone or accompanied) to carry out a home visit?

If the agent has tried or considered all of above and a home visit is the only remaining (and safe) option to support the claimant, refer to DWP Visiting.

Making the referral

A referral can be made to DWP Visiting where it is appropriate, where it is safe to do so and there is no perceived or identified risk to the Visiting Officer.

All referrals to DWP Visiting are made using the Visiting Referral Tool.

Before completing the template, the agent must check the Staff Protection List / Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB) list. The agent must include:

- the check for UCB
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- all approved methods of contact have been considered and all Universal Credit systems have been checked for up-to-date addresses and telephone contact numbers before referring to DWP Visiting - this will prevent unnecessary visits

Claimants with no fixed address (NFA) and persons without accommodation (PWA) must provide a postal address. Referrals received without a visit address will be rejected. The agent must have agreed a visit address with the claimant before making the referral.

The visit address does not have to be the claimant's residential address, however it should not be a Jobcentre or similar Government building as it would be expected that the claimant would be interviewed by the Jobcentre and a visit would not be required.

Completing the referral template

When it has been identified that a case requires a core visit, the agent must read Making the referral   which explains how the form should be completed to ensure the referral includes all relevant information. References to LMS within this guide should be substituted with WSP.

The agent opens the template, saves a copy of the form and ensures all mandatory boxes are completed fully (including any appointee or prospective appointee details) as the referral will be returned if the form is incomplete.

It is essential that prior to referral, the agent identifies any markers (including MAPPA cases) and completes the special indicator tick box. All system records and the SPL must be checked for any evidence that indicates potential risk to the safety of a home visiting officer. This may include reports of erratic behaviour or unacceptable behaviour which have not been logged on the SPL.

Once DWP Visiting have been advised of potential risk, they will determine (based on a risk assessment) how to conduct the visit.

Completed templates must be sent to the DWP Visiting Team. See Making the electronic referral below.

Making the electronic referral

The agent accesses the DWP Visiting Referral Tool and:

1. Enters the post code of the claimant's address and selects 'Submit'. Contact details for the Booking Centre will then display.
2. Opens the template hyperlink under the heading 'Making a referral'
3. Selects the email hyperlink and a new email page opens.
4. Completes the email subject line in the following order:

- Postcode
- Claimant's surname

5. Attaches the completed template to the email.

The agent must note CAMLite 'Contact history' and WSP 'General Notes' with:

- the referral completion
- the date of the referral
- a brief description why the visit is required
- contact details of the referring officer/section
- details of the Visiting Team sent to

Documentation

All documentation relevant to the referral must be sent electronically using the email obtained from the DWP Visiting Referral tool.

Exceptionally, if it is not possible to send the supporting documentation electronically it must be sent by courier to the appropriate Visiting Team on the same day as the electronic referral ensuring that the Visiting Team are made aware.

The documentation must be clearly marked with the:

- claimant`s details
- date of the referral

Tracking a referral

If the agent has provided a valid email address they will receive regular updates about the referral. If the visit is outstanding more than 21 days, the agent must contact the Work Flow Manager (DWP Visiting) using the contact details in the DWP Referral Tool. See Visits - home visit referral outcome not received.

Cancelling the referral / visit

If following a referral for a core visit, and prior to the visit taking place:

- the claimant contacts the work coach, for example to make a new appointment, or
- the agent receives information that the visit is no longer required, for example notification that the claimant has left the country, consider cancelling the Core Visit

The agent sends an e-mail to DWP Visiting to notify the visit is not required - the email address can be located via the DWP Visiting Referral Tool.

The subject line of the email must be in the following order:

- postcode
- claimant surname
- 'Visit not required'
- appropriate restricted marking

Outcome of visit

When the core visit action has been completed, the visit outcome will normally be returned electronically to the agent.

If the Visiting Officer obtains details of any changes affecting Universal Credit, they record this on the Outcome Report.

If the Visiting Officer obtains change of details which do not relate to the Universal Credit award, for example a change of telephone number, they will provide full details on the Outcome Report.

On receipt of the Outcome Report, any Universal Credit related changes are recorded on the appropriate systems, for example the Agent Portal, WSP or Medical Services Referral System (MSRS).

The agent updates CAMLite 'Contact history' and WSP 'Notes' with the outcome of the Core Visit from the details on the Outcome Report.

The Outcome Report is sent to the Mail Opening Unit or uploaded to the Document Repository System and retained in line with Information Management Policy.

See also

- Complex needs