

Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Cessation of Visits

1. From 16 March 2020, home visits to claimants (usually carried out by DWP Visiting) have been curtailed in response to the developing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
2. In the majority of scenarios, claimants will instead be contacted (or will contact us) by phone or post to avoid any delay or disruption to their claim or payment schedule.
3. With immediate effect, alternative processes and easements must be enacted across customer journeys in the absence of home visits, usually carried out by DWP Visiting.
4. For action to take, refer to the following pages as appropriate.

Subpages

- Disability Living Allowance child
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- New Style Employment and Support Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Appointee action - Working Age
- Appointee action - Disability Benefits

Disability Living Allowance child

1. Take the following action:
 - extend the current Disability Living Allowance (DLA) award for those claimants who have reached between the ages of 15 years 7 months and 16 when the form PIP182 has been received and actioned, to stop the need to claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
 - this will be revised depending upon public health advice
 - review in 6 months depending on public health advice
 - a visit is only necessary where safeguarding issues present

For more information refer to the current Delivery Implementation Guide (DIG).

Employment and Support Allowance

1. Take the following action:

Fail To Attend (FTA) mandatory interview or Work Related Activity (WRA)

- all face to face appointments are suspended
- for those already referred for a visit, visiting officers will triage and referrals will be returned. A further communication will be issued
- no Labour Market (LM) decision maker action will be taken
- sanctions will not be applied if an ineffective visit is returned for those that are currently with visits
- benefit will remain in payment
- jobcentre appointments will be rebooked once face to face appointments are reinstated

For more information refer to the current Delivery Implementation Guide (DIG).

Habitual Residence Tests (HRT)

- all face to face appointments are suspended
- any outstanding or new Habitual Residence Test (HRT) will be completed by phone. This information will be passed to decision makers to consider. Decision makers will verify as far as possible what the claimant has told us, using any other information sources
- claimants must not be impacted by the fact they are unable to attend the jobcentre to provide documentation
- for those claimants unable to complete this action by phone a visit must be considered
- any HRT currently held with visits will be returned to sites
- if you are unsure what action to take see further information in the Legacy HRT instructions and Gatekeeper memo 03.20.13

Living Together As a Married Couple (LTAMC)

- assess the claim or continue to make payments
- for those already referred for a visit, any suspension of benefit must be lifted and benefit reinstated
- set a case control for 6 months to consider a referral to compliance for a Living Together (LT) review

For more information refer to the current DIG.

Work Capability Assessments (WCAs)

- for those already referred for a visit, visiting officers will triage and referrals will be returned. A further communication will be issued
- benefit will remain in payment
- set a review date and appointments will be rebooked once easements are lifted

For more information refer to the current DIG.

Income Support

1. Take the following action:

Fail To Attend (FTA) a mandatory interview

- all face to face appointments are suspended
- for those already referred for a visit, visiting officers will triage and referrals will be returned. A further communication will be issued
- no Labour Market (LM) decision maker action will be taken
- sanctions will not be applied if an ineffective visit is returned for those that are currently with visits
- benefit will remain in payment
- jobcentre appointments will be rebooked once face to face appointments are reinstated

For more information refer to the current Delivery Implementation Guide (DIG).

Habitual Residence Tests (HRT)

- all face to face appointments are suspended
- any outstanding or new Habitual Residence Test (HRT) will be completed by phone. This information will be passed to decision makers to consider. Decision makers will verify as far as possible what the claimant has told us, using any other information sources
- claimants must not be impacted by the fact they are unable to attend the jobcentre to provide documentation
- for those claimants unable to complete this action by phone a visit must be considered
- any HRT currently held with visits will be returned to sites
- if you are unsure what action to take see further information in the Legacy HRT instructions and Gatekeeper memo 03.20.13

Living Together As a Married Couple (LTAMC)

- assess the claim or continue to make payments
- for those already referred for a visit, any suspension of benefit must be lifted and benefit reinstated
- set a case control for 6 months to consider a referral to compliance for a Living Together (LT) review

For more information refer to the current DIG.

Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

1. Take the following action:

Change of circumstances

- all current awards are being extended
- this will be revised depending upon public health advice
- refer to the Lines To Take (LTT)
- cases already referred are being held in the providers' space. New referrals are not currently being made
- if a Special Rules Terminally Ill (SRTI) referral is required, a paper based review is completed by the provider within 2 days

For more information refer to the current Delivery Implementation Guide (DIG).

New claims

- the need to attend face to face assessments has been removed
- this will be reviewed after agreed timescale depending on public health advice
- new referrals are not being made. Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) are stockpiling cases

For more information refer to the current DIG.

Jobseeker's Allowance

1. Take the following action:

Fail To Attend (FTA) a mandatory interview

- all face to face appointments are suspended
- for those already referred for a visit, visiting officers will triage and referrals will be returned. A further communication will be issued
- no Labour Market (LM) decision maker action will be taken
- sanctions will not be applied if an ineffective visit is returned for those that are currently with visits
- benefit will remain in payment
- jobcentre appointments will be rebooked once face to face appointments are reinstated

For more information refer to the current Delivery Implementation Guide (DIG).

Habitual Residence Tests (HRT)

- all face to face appointments are suspended
- any outstanding or new Habitual Residence Test (HRT) will be completed by phone. This information will be passed to decision makers to consider. Decision makers will verify as far as possible what the claimant has told us, using any other information sources
- claimants must not be impacted by the fact they are unable to attend the jobcentre to provide documentation
- for those claimants unable to complete this action by phone a visit must be considered

- any HRT currently held with visits will be returned to sites
- if you are unsure what action to take see further information in the Legacy HRT instructions and Gatekeeper memo 03.20.13

Living Together As a Married Couple (LTAMC)

- assess the claim or continue to make payments
- for those already referred for a visit, any suspension of benefit must be lifted and benefit reinstated
- set a case control for 6 months to consider a referral to compliance for a Living Together (L)T review

For more information refer to the current DIG.

New Style Employment and Support Allowance

1. Take the following action:

Fails to attend (FTA) a mandatory interview

- all face to face appointments are suspended
- for those already referred for a visit, visiting officers will triage and referrals will be returned. A further communication will be issued
- no Labour Market (LM) decision maker action will be taken
- sanctions will not be applied if an ineffective visit is returned for those that are currently with visits
- benefit will remain in payment
- jobcentre appointments will be rebooked once face to face appointments are reinstated

For more information refer to the current Delivery Implementation Guide (DIG).

Work Capability Assessments (WCAs)

- an initial referral will still be completed
- the Centre for Health and Disability Assessment (CHDA) will clear by scrutiny where possible
- if unable to clear by scrutiny, CHDA will contact the claimant by phone to complete the Work Capability Assessment (WCA)
- if CHDA are unable to contact the claimant good cause will be accepted and benefit will remain in payment

For more information refer to the current DIG.

Personal Independence Payment

1. Take the following action:

Award review

- all current award reviews are being extended and the issue of AR1s is currently paused

- this will be revised depending upon public health advice
- refer to the Lines To Take (LTT)

For more information refer to the current Delivery Implementation Guide (DIG).

Completion of forms

2. Claimants can no longer be referred for a visit by a Visiting Officer for PIP1, PIP2, AR1 UI (Formerly known as PIP2 UI) or AR1 completion.
3. It is the claimant’s responsibility to complete the form, sign it and return it to DWP. However, in some circumstances the claimant may need help with completion.
4. If the claimant advises they need support to complete PIP1, or if a PIP2, AR1 UI (Formerly known as PIP2 UI) or AR1 needs to be completed, take the following action:

Step	Action
1.	Consider if claimant requires an alternative format.
2.	Check if they have any other support available to them such as a family member or carer who could assist them.
3.	Signpost to GOV.UK/PIP – How to claim PIP. This provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help and tips in filling in the PIP form • a link to CAB Support who are still offering support by phone, and • other local support organisations
4.	If the claimant advises that all of the above have been exhausted and still require assistance, a warm handover to a caseworker is required. Note: If the claimant wants support to complete the form at a more convenient time, the caseworker must arrange a call back on a suitable date and time.
5.	During the warm handover or call back the case worker must support the claimant and answer their questions by referring to the following PDF versions of these forms:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIP1 • PIP2 • AR1 UI (Formerly known as PIP2 UI) • AR1 <p>Note: The PIP Case Worker role is not to complete the form on behalf of the claimant by offering exact wording, or to lead the claimant in what words to put on the form, but to support in explaining the questions and the type of information they need to enter. Remember the claimant may need some time to write down the information you give.</p>
6.	The call must be completed on an NGCC phone. As the call is recorded the verbal agreement and declaration cover the 'wet signature'.

Claimant requires DWP to complete the form over the phone

5. If the claimant has no support and it is felt that help is required to complete a PIP form because they so severely disabled that they cannot physically complete it, refer these cases to the shared inbox below. **Do not** refer for a visit:

For more information refer to the current DIG.

Face to face assessments

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) face to face assessments are paused - this is initially for 3 months. This easement is now in place
- this will be revised depending upon public health advice
- assessments to be paper-based or by a phone consultation

For more information refer to the current DIG.

Full rollout

- full PIP roll out is paused, including those in flight, and the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) award will be extended
- this will be revised depending upon public health advice
- refer to the Lines To Take (LTT)

For more information refer to the current DIG.

Appointee action - Working Age

1. With immediate effect, alternative methods must be enacted regarding the processing of requests for DWP appointees.

2. DWP will accept mental incapacity of claimants if representation is made by existing established external stakeholders from the statutory, voluntary sector or by virtue of admission into hospital or care homes.

3. Any report from a prospective individual appointee of mental capacity of their charge will be accepted at face value.

Initial contact

4. Take the following action when DWP is notified that a claimant is unable to manage their own affairs. This may be by an:

- established appointee such as a care home, or
- individual such as a family member or friend

Step	Action
1.	Take details of the potential appointee and claimant and record on the potential appointee stencil.
2.	Email the potential appointee stencil to the central inbox
3.	Telephony sites advise the potential appointee they will receive a call to discuss the responsibilities involved and completion of the necessary paperwork.

Established appointee

5. Take the following action when DWP is notified by an established third party that a claimant is unable to manage their own affairs, such as:

- a statutory body
- the voluntary sector
- a care home

Step	Action
1.	Telephony site completes the potential appointee stencil with details of potential appointee and claimant and emails it to
2.	On receipt of the email, phone the potential appointee ensuring it is a recorded line.
3.	Open the BF57 and read out the rules and responsibilities (at part 3).
4.	Once the established appointee has agreed to carry these out, complete the Electronic BF56. A wet signature is not required as the call will be recorded.

5.	Upload the completed BF56 to the Document Repository System (DRS).
6.	Complete BF57, ensure parts 1 and 2 are completed.
7.	Advise the established appointee that their signature is required on part 4 of the BF57.
8.	Upload the PDF version of the completed BF57 to DRS.
9.	Print and post a copy of the completed BF57 to the appointee.
10.	Update the relevant systems.
11.	If unable to contact the potential appointee by phone after 3 of days, post a BF56 and request it to be completed and returned.
12.	Set a 28 day BF review for the return of the completed form.
13.	When the completed BF56 is returned the Mail Opening Unit (MOU) will scan it and put it on DRS.
14.	The site completing the appointee process must then pick it up via the CAMLite queue.
15.	Phone the potential appointee to complete the BF57 declaration.
16.	If the BF56 is not returned after 28 days, consider a visit.

Not established appointee

6. Take the following action when DWP is notified by an individual that a claimant is unable to manage their own affairs:

Step	Action
1.	Telephony site completes the potential appointee stencil with details of potential appointee and claimant and emails it to
2.	On receipt of the email, check notes for any safeguarding concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if concerns are raised - request an appointee visit as per Business As Usual (BAU) • if no concerns are raised - go to Step 3
3.	Phone the potential appointee ensuring it is a recorded line.
4.	Open the BF57 and read out the rules and responsibilities (at part 3).

5.	Once the established appointee has agreed to carry these out, complete the Electronic BF56. A wet signature is not required as the call will be recorded.
6.	Upload the completed BF56 to DRS.
7.	Complete BF57, ensure parts 1 and 2 are completed.
8.	Upload the PDF version of the completed BF57 to DRS.
9.	Print and post a copy of the completed BF57 to the appointee.
10.	Update the relevant systems.
11.	Set a 12 month review date to follow up.
12.	If unable to contact the potential appointee by phone after 3 days, post a BF56 and request it to be completed and returned.
13.	Set a 28 day BF review for the return of the completed form.
14.	When the completed BF56 is returned the MOU will scan it and put it on DRS.
15.	The site completing the appointee process must then pick it up via the CAMLite queue.
16.	Phone the potential appointee to complete the BF57 declaration.
17.	If the BF56 is not returned after 28 days, consider a visit.

12 Month Review Due Matures

7.

Step Action

1. Review the case to make sure appointee is still in place.
2. Update relevant systems.
3. Set a further 6-month review date to follow up.

Appointee action - Disability Benefits

1. These instructions cover the action to taken when DWP is notified that a claimant is unable to manage their own affairs.

Established third party

2. Take the following action when DWP is notified by an established third party that a claimant is unable to manage their own affairs, such as:

- a statutory body
- the voluntary sector
- a care home

Step	Action
1.	Contact the potential appointee by phone ensuring it is a recorded line (NGCC) and open the BF57. Note: If the initial call is received by the Enquiry Line it will be classed as a Warm Handover to a Case Worker (CW).
2.	Read out the rules and responsibilities from part 3 of the BF57. Once the established appointee has agreed to carry these out complete the Electronic BF56 (a wet signature is not required as the call will be recorded).
3.	Complete the appointee screens in PIPCS with the details provided.
4.	Upload the completed BF56 to the Document Repository Service (DRS).
5.	Complete the BF57 , ensuring Parts 1 and 2 are completed. Advise the established appointee that their signature is required on part 4 of the BF57.
6.	Upload the PDF version of the completed BF57 to DRS.
7.	Print and post a copy of the completed BF57 to the appointee.
8.	Create an outbound communication record in PIPCS advising BF57 issued.
9.	If unable to contact the potential appointee by phone after 3 days, post a BF56 and request it to be completed and returned.
10.	Create a manual to do task and defer for 14 days to monitor the return of the BF56.
11.	If the BF56 is received through the post the CW must action and update PIPCS with the required information providing the BF56 has been signed. The CW must then follow the steps 5, 6 and 7
	above to complete the BF57, upload it to DRS and post a copy.

12.	If no response is received, consider calling the prospective appointee again before taking further action.
-----	--

Appointee action requested by post

3. On the rare occasion the request is received via the post PIPCS will create a task when the letter is received at the Mail Opening Unit (MOU), which must be actioned accordingly when the task is received.
4. Please refer to the current Delivery Implementation Guide.

Not established third party

5. Take the following action when DWP is notified by a non-established third party that a claimant is unable to manage their own affairs, such as:

- family
- a support group
- a friend

Step	Action
1.	Check notes for any safeguarding concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if concerns are highlighted - raise an email with details of the case 'safeguarding appointee' • if no concerns are raised make contact with the prospective appointee by phone ensuring it is a recorded line (NGCC)
2.	Confirm that the claimant is unable to manage their own affairs - see Making a call to a prospective appointee.
3.	Read out the rules and responsibilities from part 3 of the BF57: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the prospective appointee does not agree, advise the process cannot continue • if the prospective appointee agrees complete the Electronic BF56 (a wet signature is not required as the call will be recorded)
4.	Upload the completed BF56 to DRS.
5.	Complete the BF57 , ensuring Parts 1 and 2 are completed.
6.	Upload the PDF version of the completed BF57 to DRS.
7.	Print and post a copy of the completed BF57 to the appointee.

8.	Create an outbound communication record in PIPCS advising BF57 issued.
9.	If unable to contact the potential appointee by phone after 3 days, post a BF56 and request it to be completed and returned.
10.	Create a manual to do task and defer for 14 days to monitor the return of the BF56.
11.	If the BF56 is received through the post the CW must action and update PIPCS with the required information providing the BF56 has been signed. The CW must then follow the steps 5, 6 and 7 above to complete the BF57, upload it to DRS and post a copy.
12.	If no response is received, consider calling the prospective appointee again before taking further action.

Appointee action requested by post

6. On the rare occasion the request is received via the post PIPCS will create a task when the letter is received at the MOU, which must be actioned accordingly when the task is received.

7. Check notes for any safeguarding concerns:

- if concerns are highlighted - raise an email with details of the case with subject 'safeguarding appointee'
- if no concerns are raised make contact with the prospective appointee by phone ensuring it is a recorded line (NGCC) and follow steps at paragraph 5.