

Advanced Customer Support: Stopping or Suspending Payments

Note: These instructions will evolve. Please ensure you are always working from the most recent version.

The generic instructions detailed below are intended to support the continuing work of each individual product line, and promote consistency of approach across the department.

Staff should always refer to their own product lines for detailed, benefit specific, instructions on Advanced Customer Support: Stopping or Suspending Payments.

Stopping or suspending payments may create serious hardship for a person who is [vulnerable](#), e.g. customers with very complex needs, including mental health concerns.

By building a **pause** before payments are stopped or suspended, we can continue to make payments while we consider vulnerability and next steps.

Depending on your product line, you might:

- Defer the original intervention prompting the stop/suspension of payment
- Escalate internally via vulnerable customer escalation routes
- Reach out to external partners who can provide additional support for the customer
- Submit a visit referral

This list is not exhaustive.

Following these steps, a case conference should be held to allow a review of all circumstances and information to agree next steps before a decision is made on stopping or suspending payments.

In each case a record should be made of the reasons behind the decision, so that we are able to explain this to the customer and other interested parties as necessary. Below are some steps you might consider, though this is not exhaustive and will be different for each product line.

Actions to take when stopping payment stage is reached

1. Is the customer receiving regular payments? If No, follow normal process and update system with action taken.
2. Does the customer have a Power of Attorney or Appointee? If Yes, follow normal process and update system with action taken.

Consider the reason for stopping or suspending payments

3. If payment suspension is considered for a change of circumstances or due to a change in underlying entitlement follow normal process and update system with action taken.

Consider contacting the customer if vulnerability has been identified to offer advice/signpost to external partners who can provide additional support.

4. If payment suspension or stopping payment is considered for a compliance issue **do not** stop payment at this stage.
5. Conduct an initial review by checking owning benefit systems for indicators of vulnerability concerns.
6. Utilise the [Checklist](#) to identify additional considerations using information where possible from DWP systems.
7. If no vulnerability concern is identified, follow business as usual instructions.

Vulnerability concern has been identified

8. If a vulnerability concern is identified discuss with Team Leader/Nominated Person and utilise Complex Needs Toolkit/District Provision Tool if applicable to your product line.
9. Follow next steps as agreed with Team Leader/Nominated Person.

Next Steps – Contacting the customer

10. Identify escalation routes available for your product line and take action as agreed with Team Leader/Nominated Person. Examples include:

- [a. Telephone call to the customer](#)
- [b. Contact the Vulnerable Claimant/Customer Champion \(VCC\)](#)
- [c. DWP Visiting referral](#)
- [d. Contact the Advanced Customer Support Senior Leader \(ACSSL\)](#)

This list is not exhaustive; your next steps should be determined by the conversation with your team leader/nominated person.

a. Telephone call to the customer

11. Call the customer. If the customer has an Alternative Format or a Reasonable Adjustment recorded, contact the customer using an alternative method of communication.
12. Attempt to call the customer 3 times over 48 hours at different times. Note the appropriate systems with a record of the Outbound Call.
13. If unable to contact the customer update the system with all action taken.
14. If the call is successful explain purpose of the call and obtain any information required or agree timescales for evidence to be provided. Defer case and update appropriate systems with all action taken.
15. If we have the information required within the agreed timescales to progress the case, follow normal process and update appropriate systems with action taken.
16. If we don't have the information, discuss next steps with Team Leader/Nominated Person.
17. If you no longer have vulnerability concerns, follow normal process and update appropriate systems with action taken.
18. If you still have vulnerability concerns, follow agreed next steps which may include one, or more, of the other options detailed below (dependent on your product line).

b. Contact the Vulnerable Claimant/Customer Champion

19. Contact the Vulnerable Claimant/Customer Champion (VCC) using the agreed process for your product line.
20. VCC will review appropriate information and provide insight on next steps.
21. Consider reconvening as a case conference, if required.
22. Follow next step as agreed with **VCC**.

c. DWP Visiting Referral

23. [Make a Visiting Officer \(VO\) referral](#).
24. Follow the instruction for your product line for where visits are effective/ineffective. **Do not stop or suspend payments**. A Visit is undertaken by a Visiting Officer from DWP Visiting.
25. If an **Effective visit** occurs, follow normal process and update system with action taken.
26. If the visit is **Ineffective** a **Second visit** is undertaken and if this is effective follow normal process and update system with action taken.
27. After two Ineffective visits the case is referred back to VO referrer. **Do not suspend or stop payments**.

d. Contact the Advanced Customer Support Senior Leader

28. Following a discussion with your Team Leader/Nominated person, contact the [Advanced Customer Support Senior Leader \(ACSSL\)](#).
29. The ACSSL will collaborate with relevant organisations where appropriate.
30. Consider reconvening as a case conference, if required.
31. Follow next step(s) as agreed.

Next Steps

32. Discuss the case in more detail with Team Leader/Nominated Person as part of the case conference. Consider including other relevant parties, for example any **VCC** or **ACSSL** that has been involved.
33. Once all reasonable steps have been taken, use all the available information to decide whether payment should be suspended/stopped as per normal process.
34. In each case a record should be made of the reasons we have made a decision, so that we are able to explain this to the customer and other interested parties.
35. Update system with all action taken.

Subpages

- [Stopping or Suspending Payments Checklist](#)