Universal Credit

# WS016 Universal Credit Subsequent Work Search Interview

Facilitator Led Brief
v12.3

Department for Work and Pensions

# Contents

| Topic | Topic title | Duration |
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| 01 | The Purpose and Structure of a Subsequent Work Search Interview | 17 mins |
| 02 | Prepare for a Subsequent Work Search Interview | 35 mins |
| 03 | Work Search Interview Discussions and Review | 20 mins |
| 04 | Claimant Reports a Change of Circumstances | 27 mins |
| 05 | In Work Progression (IWP) including 1 hour for Case Studies | 90 mins |
| 06 | The Benefit Cap or Grace Period Support | 10 mins |
| 07 | Review and Update a Claimant Commitment | 10 mins |
| 08 | Next Steps | 5 mins |
| | | **219 mins** |

**Learners will have already completed WS012 Basic Navigation on WSP If needed take 5 minutes to refresh**

**their understanding of this through a short discussion**

**Refer the participants to About Universal Credit content item: Work Services Platform Guide.**

**Before delivery of this module you should familiarise yourself with the contents of the Facilitators Preparation Pack.**

**Show Slide 01 – WS016 Universal Credit Subsequent Work Search Interview**

**Show Slide 2 – Module Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

This module aims to provide you with the knowledge to conduct a subsequent Work Search Interview (WSI).

## Objectives

By the end of this module, with the aid of any reference material, you will be able to:

- explain the purpose of a subsequent WSI
- preview appointments on Work Services Platform (WSP)
- describe how to review evidence of work search and work preparation activity carried out by a claimant since last attendance
- consider the impact of a change of circumstances on the claimants conditionality and the support available
- explain the In Work Progression (IWP) process
- explain the Benefit Cap and any effect it will have on a Universal Credit claim
- explain how to create and issue a revised Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack
- explain how to book the next appointment

# Topic 1 The Purpose and Structure of a Subsequent Work Search Interview

**Show Slide 3 – The Purpose and Structure of a Subsequent Work Search Interview**

**Show Slide 4 – Topic Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

This topic aims to provide the background and purpose of a Subsequent WSI.

## Objectives

By the end of this topic, with the aid of any reference material, you will be able to:

- describe the actions that will have taken place at the Initial Work Search Interview (IWSI) that you will be reviewing in the subsequent WSI
- state the purpose of a Subsequent Work Search Interview (WSI)
- explain the structure of a Subsequent WSI

## Background

When attending a subsequent WSI, the claimant will have attended an Initial WSI where they will have been informed about the expected work related activity required in order to receive the full amount of Universal Credit.

They will have engaged in an assessment of their personal situation (including personal circumstances/life events), their abilities, their English, Maths and IT literacy and their work related skills and experience.

They will also have accepted a Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack which will have been fully explained. This information will be recorded in the appropriate claimant record screens of WSP.

When a Work Coach carries out a subsequent WSI they will have knowledge of the claimant from the information held on WSP. The reason for the interview will usually be to review compliance and progress and to plan the next steps to move the claimant further towards obtaining sustainable employment but the claimant could also have contacted the Service Centre and requested an appointment.

They will have been informed that if they do not comply with agreed work related activity they may be subject to a sanction.

# The purpose of conducting a Subsequent Work Search Review

**Show Slide 5 – Discussion**

**Ask the Learners to discuss:**

- why it is important to have regular Work Search Interviews
- what benefits are there for the Claimant and the Department in timely Work Search Interviews

Allow 15 minutes for this discussion

**Answers could include-**

- to review all Work Related activities and set new ones, with the intention of moving the claimant forward
- to ensure compliance with Universal Credit conditionality set out at the Initial Work Search Interview
- any changes to the claimants circumstances can be actioned, their conditionality can be checked and additional support provided either by the Work Coach or through signposting to provision and external Partners

- the claimant will have a clear understanding of their work search and work preparation activities and how to meet them
- the claimant and Work Coach will build a rapport, helping the claimant to get the support they need to return to work, increase their work or get better paid work
- failure to comply with Universal Credit conditionality will be identified promptly allowing for a doubt to be raised and sanctions to be imposed where appropriate

# The Structure of a Subsequent Work Search Interview

PowerPoint

**Show Slide 6 – Structure of Subsequent Work Search Interviews**

Five core elements form the basis of a subsequent WSI.

- explaining the Purpose of the Subsequent WSI
- outstanding Actions from Claimant Record Notes
- review of Work Search and Work Preparation Requirements on Claimant Commitment / Commitment Pack
- review Evidence of Universal Jobmatch Activity
- consideration of other Work Search and Work Preparation Evidence

These five elements all feed in to assist the Work Coach in making a decision which will either confirm compliance with requirements for Universal Credit purposes or raise a sanction doubt.

Throughout the interview the Work Coach will use their advisory interview skills and a range of questioning techniques to identify and address any barriers and skills needs and encourage or challenge the claimant.

# Topic Summary

**Show Slide 7 – Topic Summary**

In this topic you have learned:

- the actions that will have taken place at the Initial Work Search interview that you will be reviewing in the subsequent WSI
- the purpose of a Subsequent WSI
- the structure of a Subsequent WSI

# Topic 2 - Prepare for a Subsequent Work Search Interview

**Show Slide 8 – Prepare for a Subsequent Work Search Interview**

**Show Slide 9 – Topic Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

This topic aims to provide you with the skills and knowledge to preview a list of your day’s appointments.

## Objectives

By the end of this topic, with the aid of any reference material, you will be able to:

- explain how to access a list of claimants due to attend on the current day
- describe how to identify from the list if a claimant requires special arrangements
- explain how to identify whether the claimant has a Universal Jobmatch account and whether authority has been given to DWP to access the account
- identify a change of circumstances and the action to take
- determine whether a WSI is required for a claimant who has reported sickness
- list the correct action to take with a claimant who is to be remotely managed

Prior to conducting your day's appointments, you should preview them.

You will now look at a screenshot to remind you how to navigate to bring up a list of your appointments on WSP.

PowerPoint

**Show Slide 10- Previewing Appointments – My Activities on WSP.**

**This slide is interactive, selecting enter will bring up each of the steps below.**

From your WSP Dashboard:

- select Workplace from the section at the bottom of the Navigation menu on the left hand side
- select Activities from the My Work section of the Navigation menu
- select the Subject column header to group all today's appointments together

You can now select each appointment in turn to carry out your preview.

There is another way to view a list of 'outstanding appointments' only which is by selecting the arrow next to my activities > appointments > my appointments

**What activities do you think your preview should include?**

**Conduct a short 10 minute discussion around which activities need to be completed. Possible answers are on slide 10.**

**Show Slide 11 – Previewing Appointments.**

**This slide displays possible answers**

Your preview should include:

- a check of the claimant's notes and any tasks received
- a check for the homeless/not in employment education or training (NEET)/unacceptable customer behaviour (UCB) markers
- a check to identify claimants with complex needs or who have additional requirements which need special arrangements
- reading the most recent claimant record notes to check if any special arrangements are in place
- checking the notes for any updates or outstanding actions regarding previous interviews/reviews
- identifying if the claimant has a Universal Jobmatch account and if they have given permission for the DWP to access it
- identifying a claimant who is Remotely Managed

All DWP employees have responsibility to provide equal access to our services. We have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to standard services so all claimants can access them, this includes holding WSRs/WSIs over the telephone in appropriate circumstances.

It is mandatory for claimants with the ability and who are able to obtain access, to have a Universal Jobmatch account but it is not mandatory to allow DWP access to their account.

Claimants who do not have access to the internet at home will be expected to use facilities at the Jobcentre, local Library, Job Clubs, etc.

When previewing your list of appointments you might identify a claimant who will not be attending the Jobcentre in person on this occasion.

Telephone interviews/appointments will follow the same format as face to face appointments.

For example: some claimants who live in remote areas will have difficulty attending a Universal Credit outlet on a regular basis. Whilst they must still attend the Universal Credit outlet on some occasions, it might be impractical to do so regularly for their Work Search Review.

**Access Knowledge Management and find out what the regulations are for identifying a claimant as living remotely?**

**Allow 5 minutes for this activity.**

**To be considered as living remotely claimants must live in areas where it takes over an hour to get from their home to their nearest Universal Credit outlet door to door, or whose attendance would result in the claimant being absent from home for 4 or more hours. These claimants are identified as needing remote management.**

As a Work Coach you will have agreed a time and date to review the claimant's work search evidence when they attended their Initial WSI/previous WSI.

There is no requirement in Universal Credit for the claimant to sign a declaration stating they have been searching for work. They are, however, still required to assure Universal Credit that they are meeting their conditionality requirements and we will go into this in more detail later in this topic.

You are now going to complete a simulation to practice Previewing Appointments – Claimant Screen in WSP.

## Simulation – Previewing Appointments

**Show Slide 12 – Simulation – Previewing Appointments – Claimant Screen in WSP**

**To view the simulations please refer the participants to the Universal Credit Simulations and Screenshot Walkthroughs intranet page which is within the Learners Support Site.**

**http://intralink/1/jcp/directorates/hr/learning/coursesandproducts/dwp_t750753.asp**

**The participants should scroll down to WS016 – Previewing Appointments and select the See It, Try It or Know It links for the Previewing Appointments simulation. Note the information at the top of this intranet page which describes how to use the hyperlinks.**

**Allow participants 10 minutes to complete this simulation.**

**Remind the learner that the subject of trusted intermediaries or informal representatives was covered in Module WS017 – Initial Work Search Interview.**

## Change of Circumstances

Before we continue with this part of the learning, it is worth considering for a moment, those claimants who report a change of address from a Full Service (FS) area to a Live Service (LS) area.

When a claimant moves from a FS to a LS area the UCFS work coach will contact the UCLS team leader to book a warm handover with the UCLS work coach.

Though their claim will continue to be managed by FS the claimant will attend interviews in the LS area.

Both work coaches must agree a convenient time (10mins) after each interview to discuss the outcome of each intervention or work search review.

**Full details regarding this process can be found in:**

**About Universal Credit - Claimant reports a change of address from Full Service to a Live Service postcode area.**

Your previewing could identify that a task has been sent through from the Service Centre detailing a change in the claimant’s circumstances. In some cases this will mean that the claimant is unable or not required to attend a face to face interview at the jobcentre.

**What changes could take place that would prevent a claimant attending your interview?**

**Allow 5 minutes for this discussion**

**Possible answers include:**

- temporary/permanent health condition
- domestic emergencies
- change to caring responsibilities
- a change to a Remote Managed claim following a change of address
- starting work/ increasing hours of work

The Account Developer can action many changes of circumstances but if the change requires a revised personalised Claimant Commitment the Account Developer will book an appointment for a subsequent WSI.

The Work Coach can then decide if it is appropriate to provide any additional support and determine the frequency of subsequent work search interviews.

## Temporary or permanent health condition reported

Claimants who are in the All Work Related Requirements Conditionality Group and have become sick whilst in receipt of Universal Credit will notify the Service Centre.

After gathering the details, the Telephony Agent/Account Developer (TA/AD) sends a task to the Work Coach 'Claimant reported sick from (dd/mm/yyyy) with (details of illness) see DRS. First/Second period of sickness in 12 months. Please consider switching off requirements and rescheduling outstanding appointments'.

The Work Coach telephones the claimant to discuss the claimant’s health condition. It is during this phone call that you can decide the level of intervention appropriate and create a new claimant commitment.

You will determine whether a subsequent WSI is required to gather more information. This is so that the Claimant Commitment can be updated and tailored if required. You will also discuss the need for further work search appointments and if the claimant is waiting for a Work Capability Assessment referral to be processed.

There are currently no set criteria in making this determination. The Work Coach will use the information contained in the task and recorded in the claimant's health barrier screen to make this decision.

The Work Coach will also need to check special arrangements recorded for the claimant and consider if the reasonable adjustments (required under the Equality Act 2010) need amending (this will usually have been recorded by the Service Centre but might need updating).

DWP anticipates that imposing limited requirements on claimants whilst covered by a fit note may encourage them to focus on what they can do, rather than on their current incapacity.

This means they will be treated in a similar way to other jobseekers (for example, expected to attend an Interview to accept the Claimant Commitment) although work related requirements will be limited.

Claimants who are unfit for work and have a fit note cannot be required to be immediately available for work. They may be required to search for work and/or attend job interviews with an employer, with a view to starting work in the future when the fit note has expired.

They may also be required to undertake work preparation activities or they may be set no requirements whatsoever in the run up to their WCA if they continue to be unfit for any work.

The Work Coach should apply discretion and be reasonable when setting the work preparation/work search activities. Attendance at work related interviews/ participation in telephone interviews should be appropriate to the claimant's health condition.

**Show Slide 13 – Determine if WSI is Required – Work Coach Action**

If a WSI is appropriate for the claimant the Work Coach will:

- check if the claimant has any special arrangement requirements
- book a WSI appointment on WSP
- notify the claimant of the WSI appointment
- record a new note in the ‘notes’ section of the claimant’s health barrier screen to outline the reason for the decision and outcome

During the WSI the Work Coach will focus on work search/preparation activities the claimant can do, with consideration to the health condition.

The Work Coach can carry out the interview over the telephone if this is more appropriate to the claimant's health condition.

**Show Slide 14 – Determine if WSI is not Required – Work Coach Action**

If a WSI is not appropriate for the claimant the Work Coach will:

- check the claimant's WSP appointment list to establish if there are any outstanding appointments that need to be cancelled
- cancel any outstanding appointments
- telephone the claimant to inform them of the outcome of the decision and of any cancelled appointments
- record a new note in the 'notes' section of the claimant's health barrier screen to outline the reason for the decision and outcome

**What methods are available for a Work Coach to be satisfied a claimant is meeting their conditionality requirements?**

**Show Slide 15– Claimant Unable to Attend Universal Credit Outlet.**

**The answers are on this slide**

- **Universal Jobmatch** – if the claimant has given DWP access to their Universal Jobmatch account then this would be the preferred method to provide the evidence for meeting conditionality requirements
- **E-mail** – this is quick and provides an audit trail for follow up action
- **Verbally** – telephone is the 3rd preference. This does have a drawback as there is no audit trail for the follow up action
- **Post** – this is the least favourable option as it is resource intensive and has unavoidable delays built in

It should be remembered that providing evidence by post will be the best option for some claimants. For example, a claimant with disabilities who can only communicate in writing and has no access to the internet at home will need to use the postal service.

**The following section may not be relevant to your area. If that is the case signpost learners to About Universal Credit- Claimants who live in Remote Areas.**

## Process for Remote Management Claims

**Show Slide 16 – Steps to conduct Remote Management Work Search Interview.**

To conduct the Remote Management WSI, at the allocated appointment time, take the following steps:

- access WSP Notes from the Navigation page and look for the notes about the claimants remote management and their preferred method of contact
- retrieve the claimants Jobsearch evidence by whichever means has been agreed by the Work Coach and the claimant. For example: Universal Jobmatch or by email
- navigate to the Contact Details in WSP to retrieve the claimant's phone number
- telephone the claimant

When contact is made, confirm the claimant's identity using between 3 and 5 questions in accordance with DWP Bogus Caller Guidance and then conduct the interview as you would face to face interview.

If you are unable to make contact with the claimant by attempting 3 telephone calls in the agreed time slot you will take normal Failed to Attend action.

**DWP Bogus Caller Guidance is available on the intranet under DWP security Portal Home >> security guidance > Bogus Caller Main Guidance.**

If a claimant has been offered and has accepted remote management you will need to update WSP Notes with "claimant lives in remote area. Jobsearch evidence to be taken by Universal Jobmatch/e-mail/verbal/post".

There might also be a need to consider other supporting action to make sure the claimant is treated equally – this should be assessed on an individual basis and discussed with your line manager, Disability Employment Work Coach and/or Social Justice Equality specialists.

The claimant will have been made aware of the time and date of the appointment. It will be listed on their Commitment Pack.

You will need to try to contact the claimant 3 times. The calls should be made within the allocated time for the appointment. For example the claimant will be told someone will contact them between 10:00 and 10:15 to allow the Work Coach some slippage if previous appointments run on.

# Topic Summary

**Show Slide 17 – Topic Summary**

In this topic you have learned how to :

- access a list of claimants due to attend on the current day
- identify from the list those requiring special arrangements
- identify whether the claimant has a Universal Jobmatch account and whether authority has been given to DWP to access the account
- identify a change of circumstances and the action to take
- determine whether a WSI is required for a claimant who has reported sickness

take the correct action with a claimant who is to be remotely managed

# Topic Three- Work Search Interview Discussions and Review

**Show Slide 18 – Work Search Interview Discussions and Review**

**Show Slide 19 – Topic Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

This topic aims to explain Work Search discussions at a subsequent WSI.

## Objectives

By the end of this topic, with the aid of any reference material, you will be able to:

- discuss any outstanding actions
- review evidence of compliance with Work Search Activity, Work Preparation Activity and Other Work Related Activities with your claimant
- consider compliance confirmation or raising a Sanction doubt

**Ask the learners what they think will need to be discussed during the Subsequent Work Search Interview, ensuring that the following is covered:**

**Allow 10 minutes for this discussion**

- review the claimant's evidence of carrying out work search activities, taking into account their particular capability and circumstances
- discuss any challenges to completing the work search activities the claimant may have experienced and any additional support available to them
- if there are any outstanding actions in the claimant record notes, discuss them with the claimant. Notes will be individual to the claimant's circumstances and will have been made either by the WC at the Initial/last subsequent WSI or by an AD due to a claimant change of circumstance (in some offices by an Assistant Work Coach during claimant attendance for a Work Search Review)
- update work search requirements
- update completed work preparation activities and set new ones where this is appropriate
- ensure the claimant clearly understands what is required of them to keep their Universal Credit claim in payment and why sanctions are applied

- ensure the claimant is taking responsibility for their own work search and work preparation actions and is motivated to find work

- if the evidence provided shows that the claimant has not done what was asked of them in their Claimant Commitment you will need to consider if there has been a sanctionable failure

Note

**The message to pass onto the claimant is that the work related requirements they have agreed will give them the best chance of preparing for work, finding work and taking up more and better paid work.**

**Sanctions are only imposed if they fail to meet their work related requirements as they will be prolonging their chances of finding more work/better paid work.**

**You should be having the conversation with the claimant on what they need to do to avoid being sanctioned.**

For example, a claimant might have had work related requirements taken off or reduced whilst waiting for the outcome of a Work Capability Assessment (WCA). Where the WCA has not resulted in a change of conditionality group, the Work Coach will be required to focus on the abilities of the claimant and expect the claimant to commit to taking part in work related activities.

These will be set according to claimant circumstances/abilities, concentrating on what the claimant can do, not what they cannot do.

Activity

**Using the example on the next slide ask the learners to think about what the Work Coach will need to consider.**

**Allow 5 minutes for this activity**

PowerPoint

**Show Slide 20 – Activity**

An Assistant Work Coach has recorded on WSP that the claimant indicated they had been struggling to load a CV onto Universal Jobmatch.

The Assistant Work Coach gave some advice to the claimant at the time.

The Work Coach needs to follow this up to see if further support is required and/or make sure the task has now been completed.

What does the Work Coach need to consider?

Answer A

**The work coach needs to consider:**

- if the task is not already a requirement, making it a requirement
- if it is already a requirement what was the agreed date for completion – is DMA referral required?
- does the claimant need to be referred to suitable provision?

## Review Evidence of Work Search and Work Preparation Activity

All claimants in the All Work Related Requirements Conditionality group will have Work Search and Work Preparation activities set on their Claimant Commitment, usually for 35 hours of activity per week.

All of the Work Search and Work Preparation activities that are expected to have been undertaken are reviewed with the Claimant and compared against their Claimant Commitment. This is to determine whether they have undertaken sufficient and appropriate activity to meet their weekly requirements.

If the claimant has granted DWP access to their Universal Jobmatch Account, you will review the evidence held on Universal Jobmatch against the actions, steps and activities on their Claimant Commitment.

If the claimant has not given DWP access to their Universal Jobmatch Account, or the evidence held on Universal Jobmatch is not sufficient, you will ask them to provide evidence to show that they have met the actions, steps and activities on their Claimant Commitment.

Check if there are any Work Preparation Activities outstanding at or past, their review date. If the Claimant has not completed these without good reason, there may be a need to raise a doubt for consideration by a Decision Maker.

**It is important that the claimant is aware of the opportunity to provide their reasons for failure (good reason) at the point of failure.**

**The learner will cover ‘good reason’ later in their routeway.**

## Review Evidence of Other Work Related Activities

You will now review evidence of **Other Work Related Activities** (OWRA) on the Claimant Commitment.

These OWRAs are not mandatory and therefore are not subject to the Universal Credit sanction regime. This section may also include aspirational goals which may cover future events.

OWRA activities can be taken into account (in full or part), as part of the agreed hours for work related activities; for example where the claimant works eight hours per week as a voluntary worker.

**Show Slide 21 – Compliance Confirmation or Sanction Doubt.**

**This slide is interactive, there are further details below to support each element on the slide.**

# Compliance Confirmation or Sanction Doubt

Once you have reviewed all the evidence you will make a decision on whether the claimant has met all the requirements based on what is in their Claimant Commitment and all the sources of evidence available. Based on the claimant capability and circumstances you will need to decide whether:

- the claimant was engaged in work related activities as detailed in the Claimant Commitment. If not you will question why and challenge the explanation. You need to decide if it is acceptable and whether an alternative action/activity has been carried out instead. Evidence of this should be provided by the claimant
- a life event has occurred/personal circumstances have changed, the claimant can no longer reasonably be expected to have met current requirements, and a change to special arrangements/Claimant Commitment is required because of this
- everything the claimant has done amounts to what would be reasonably expected, in line with the hours detailed in their Claimant Commitment (35 hours per week for full-time activity)

- If it does not, is it because the Claimant Commitment did not set out enough activity?
- If the first two bullet points are not met, consider making a referral to a Decision Maker to decide if a Sanction should be applied

**Hold a discussion with the group around what they think the Work Coach should be explaining to the claimant when a referral to a decision maker is due to be made.**

**Allow 10 minutes for this discussion**

**Answers should include:**

- why the referral is being made
- good reason
- how long before the claimant will hear
- what are the possible results of the decision
- if a penalty is decided how much this will be
- how long the penalty will last, taking into account links to previous sanctions
- process for reconsideration

Activity

**We will now look at 3 scenarios to see whether a claimant has met their work related requirements and a referral to a decision maker is required. Each scenario is detailed on slides 22, 23 and 24. The suggested answers are detailed below and on the slides.**

PowerPoint

**Show Slide 22 – Scenario 1**

Discussion

**"The claimant was engaged in work related activities as detailed in the Claimant Commitment. If not you will question why and challenge the explanation."**

**Consider this scenario:**

A claimant presented no evidence of, and when questioned told you they did not carry out, a work search requirement to 'cold-call' on 3 employers per week.

Further questioning and challenging the explanation has revealed the claimant usually does cold-calling on a Monday each week but as it was a bank holiday the claimant took the day off.

Is the claimant allowed to 'take a day off' from meeting Work Related Requirements on a bank holiday or a day of religious observance/celebration?

**Scenario Answer:**

The claimant can organise their Work Related Activity to suit themselves. If the claimant decides not to carry out activity on a particular day they must ensure they meet all of their requirements during the rest of the week. Not carrying out an activity because a Bank Holiday falls on the day the claimant usually carries out this activity is not acceptable.

If further questioning had revealed the claimant sent speculative letters to employers rather than 'cold-calling' during the Christmas/New Year period when some types of employer close for a 2-week period, and had presented evidence of this, the replacement activity could be treated as acceptable activity to help meet requirements.

**Show Slide 23 – Scenario 2**

**"A life event has occurred/personal circumstances have changed". This may occur when the interview has been booked as a result of the claimant ringing the Service Centre to report a Change of Circumstances.**

**Example 1: the claimant has commenced participation in a structured recovery programme for alcohol or drugs misuse.**

**Example 2: the claimant has become the main carer for a child aged between 5 and 12.**

Scenario answer:

The Work Coach will need to be aware that (from the date of the Change in Circumstances) the Claimant Commitment might contain requirements which are no longer reasonable for the claimant’s new circumstances. Raising a sanction doubt for this period would be unreasonable.

**Show Slide 24 – Scenario 3**

What does the Work Coach need to consider if the activities recorded on the Claimant Commitment are not taking up the required hours of work related activity?

**Scenario answer:**

If the activities recorded on the Claimant Commitment are not taking up the required hours of work related activity (e.g. 35 hours) but the claimant has carried out all activities listed on the Claimant Commitment (e.g. in 15 hours each week) the claimant cannot be referred to a Decision Maker as all requirements on the Claimant Commitment have been met. The Work Coach will need to set more appropriate activities.

**Learners will cover raising a doubt/Sanctions in more detail in DMA 19 Sanctions and WS001 Work Related Sanctions.**

# Topic Summary

**Show Slide 25 – Topic Summary**

In this topic you have learned how to :

- discuss outstanding actions
- review evidence of compliance with Work Search Activity, Work Preparation Activity and Other Work Related Activities with your claimant
- consider compliance confirmation or raising a Sanction doubt

# Topic 4- Claimant Reports a Change of Circumstances

**Show Slide 26 – Claimant reports a change of circumstances**

**Show Slide 27 – Topic Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

This topic aims to explain the actions to take when a claimant reports a change of circumstances.

## Objectives

By the end of this topic, with the aid of any reference material, you will be able to:

- identify who is responsible for taking action when a claimant reports a change of circumstances
- explain how a change of circumstances or life event may impact on a claimant's conditionality/work search requirements
- identify situations when a claimants work search requirements can be reduced/switched off

**Handout 01 – Action the Change gives a list of changes of circumstances, the likely changes required and which job role is responsible for undertaking the initial action.**

**This list is not exhaustive and is intended as a guide only. Further details can be found in Knowledge Management.**

**Show Slide 28 – Impact Changes. This slide is interactive. By selecting enter it will show the next area to consider**

**Circle 1** - changes in personal circumstances/life events You will need to consider whether the claimant has had any changes in personal circumstances/life events that have increased or decreased their hours of availability for work and consider whether the work related requirements set are consistent with their current personal circumstances.

If a claimant becomes temporarily unavailable for more than 5 days you will receive a task from an Account Developer as follows:

“Temporary unavailability due to temporary child care responsibilities/ domestic emergency/ funeral arrangements or other temporary circumstance from dd/mm/yy (to dd/mm/yy if known). As this is more than 5 days please review Claimant Commitment and consider setting work related requirements.'

If the temporary unavailability is for 5 days or less the Account Developer will undertake any action.

**Circle 2** – increase or decrease in hours of availability - Any new increase or decrease in hours of voluntary work, part time employed work or self-employment the claimant may be undertaking, will not have an effect on the Availability for Work hours, but you should consider allowing a reduction to the number of hours spent on work related requirements to take into account the voluntary, part time or self-employed work. This is at the discretion of the Work Coach and should be recorded on the Claimant Commitment.

The claimant must be prepared to give up the voluntary work/part time work/self-employment to take up employment to move them over their individual earnings threshold.

**Circle 3** - Increase or decrease in hours spent in paid or self-employment or voluntary work - The claimant could combine their part time work/self-employment with another job or increase the hours of their current work to move them over their individual threshold or into Gainful Self-employment.

The term self-employment is used here for a claimant who is carrying out some self-employed work but who has been deemed NOT to be Gainfully Self-employed. There is a specific interview carried out by a Work Coach to make this decision which is covered in Module CS003 Impacting a Change of Circs on Conditionality Self-Employment.

Where a claimant has increased hours of self-employed work you should consider whether an interview is required to decide if the self-employed work can be deemed to be Gainful Self-Employment.

**Circle 4** – Change in skills or abilities - Has there been a change in skills/abilities? – the claimant might have completed an IT or language course or registered with a professionally recognised organisation which will improve their employability/work search skills.

## Life Event

**Show Slide 29 – The Work Coach Impacts a Change of Circumstances on a Claimants Work Related Requirements**

Refer back to Handout 01 -Action the Change. As a Work Coach you are responsible for certain changes which you will receive in the form of a task or an appointment from the AD in WSP.

On receipt of the task, you must identify the impact of the change on the claimant’s current Work Related Requirements and if they are in the correct Conditionality Group. You will use discretion to determine where requirements will not be applied.

The Work Coach will need to be aware that (from the date of the Change in Circumstances) the Claimant Commitment might contain requirements which are no longer reasonable for the claimant’s new circumstances and raising a sanction doubt for this period would be unreasonable.

Activity

**Using 'Claimant reports a temporary/permanent health condition' as an example, discuss the changes you may make to the work search/prep activities and identify any additional support available to the claimant.**

**Remember from an earlier topic, a claimant reporting a period of sickness doesn't automatically mean that they cannot do anything at all towards returning to work. Your Adviser Skills training will have covered methods for having these discussions and the additional support that you can use to help claimants re-evaluate their capabilities.**

Designers Note

**For this activity you may want to split the learners into groups. Using the District Provision tool/local knowledge and experience and with reference to About Universal Credit, ask one group to consider what support to offer a claimant with a temporary illness and the other group to consider actions for a claimant with a permanent change to their capabilities. What reasonable work search/work prep activities can be asked of each scenario?**

**Allow 25 minutes including feedback.**

**Key points you are looking to get are:**

- the variety of local provision available based on the health condition
- Work Choice
- short skills courses e.g. to improve IT skills/learn new skills

Note

**The last date you can make a Work Choice referral will be either 1//11/17, 1/12/17, 15.12.17 or 1.2.18.**

**The date you can make a final referral to Work Choice will be determined by the date the Work and Health Programme (WHP) goes live in your area.**

**Check this when you go back to your office.**

The Work Coach should set whichever appropriate requirements will support the claimant into work or towards work.

When considering reducing or temporarily "switching off" work related requirements the Work Coach should decide whether the claimant is still able to attend for WSIs at the Universal Credit outlet. Where this is not practical for the claimant's circumstances you should consider amending the Claimant Commitment to allow telephone WSIs for a temporary period.

Work Related Requirements include: Work Search, Work Preparation, Other Work Preparation, Availability (including attending Employer Interviews/starting work), and attending/taking part in WSIs. Throughout the learning you should keep in mind previous generic learning about equality and diversity.

**Refer learners to Knowledge Management to locate information regarding Temporarily switching off work search requirements for claimants.**

## Topic Summary

**Show Slide 30 – Topic Summary**

In this topic you have learned to:

- identify who is responsible for taking action when a claimant reports a change of circumstances
- explain how a change of circumstances or life event may impact on a claimant’s conditionality/work search requirements
- identify situations when a claimants work search requirements can be reduced/switched off

# Topic 5 - In Work Progression

**Show Slide 31 – In Work Progression (IWP)**

**Show Slide 32 – Topic Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

This topic aims to provide you with the skills and knowledge to enable you to take the relevant action when a claimant is part of the Universal Credit In Work Progression (IWP) Trial.

## Objectives

By the end of this topic, with the aid of any reference material, you will be able to:

- describe the key messages and benefits of IWP for Universal Credit claimants
- state how claimants will be allocated to the correct IWP group and how interviews are booked for each group
- describe how IWP interviews will be conducted for each of the three Groups
- describe how an IWP claimant commitment is different
- explain the responsibilities of the claimants in the IWP trial and the consequences if these responsibilities are not met
- explain the circumstances when IWP will be marked as completed
- describe the action to take on WSP to record IWP is completed

In Work Progression (IWP) is a randomised, controlled trial. IWP claimants are in work and have taken the first step to financial independence and we need to look at ways to help them progress further.

**Show Slide 33 – IWP Support**

This may be through:

- career progression
- additional jobs
- increased hours in their current job
- a completely new job

The Work Coach will find the most effective ways to help Universal Credit claimants on low earnings, who can reasonably be expected to do more, to progress in work to increase their earnings and achieve financial independence.

IWP interviews are about sustaining earnings, earnings progression through progress in work, better work or more work.

A Work Coach should discuss work progression with the claimants without focussing solely on the claimant's work / work search up to the remaining hours available, and offer additional support if needed.

**What are the benefits for an in-work claimant of receiving IWP help?**

**By delivering this support you will be helping Universal Credit claimants in low earning households to take steps to increase their earnings, which will make them more financially independent, self-sufficient and ultimately give them greater independence from benefit.**

**What are the benefits for the country of an in-work claimant receiving IWP help?**

**Helping people progress and earn more will help reduce poverty and in-work poverty and contribute to the growth of the economy.**

Note

**If the claimant's circumstances trigger a change of conditionality regime the Account Developer (AD) will receive a CAMLite task. If on actioning this CAMLite task the AD determines that the claimant has moved into the AWRR Light Touch Regime a WSP task will be created for the owning Work Coach.**

If the WSP 'Contact Claimant' task is received up to and including 31 March 2017 the appropriate action will be taken to allocate the claimant to one of the IWP trial groups.

The first action to take will be to determine if the claimant should be excluded from the trial.

## Claimant Excluded from the Trial

If the claimant is excluded from the trial they will remain in the light touch regime.

You will update the IWP Status on WSP to ‘Excluded’.

**Show Slide 34 – Updating the IWP Status on WSP to ‘Excluded’**

- select the **IWP Status** icon on the claimant’s general screen
- select **IWP Excluded** from the drop down list
- an **IWP Reason** field will be displayed

When the IWP Reason field is displayed, select the appropriate option from the list.

**Show Slide 35 – Excluded Groups**

**Refer the participants to Knowledge Management ‘Conditionality Task received – Excluding Claimants from the In Work Progression Trial for the list of exclusion reasons.**

If the claimant is excluded from the IWP trial they will follow the current AWRR Light Touch Regime.

**Eligible DWP employees are not excluded from these trials and will be treated the same as any other Universal Credit claimant.**

**Show Slide 36 – Allocating Claimant to an IWP Group**

**New claimants will not be included on the trial from 1st April 2017 Only claimants identified as eligible up to and including 31st March 2017 will go through the following process.**

## Claimant Allocated to an IWP Group

If the claimant is not excluded, the Work Coach:

- selects the **IWP Status** icon on the claimant's general screen
- selects **IWP Eligible** from the drop down list

**When the Work Coach selects IWP Eligible, WSP will randomly allocate the claimant to an IWP group. This allocation will only happen once. The group the claimant has been assigned to will be displayed as read only and cannot be altered by the Work Coach.**

**Show Slide 37 – IWP Groups**

Claimants will be randomly allocated to 1 of 3 groups

- IWP Group 1 – 8 weekly Work Search Reviews
- IWP Group 2 – 2 weekly Work Search Reviews
- IWP Group 3 – current Light Touch Regime

## Initial appointment – Group 1and 2

For claimants in groups1 and 2 the initial appointment is booked for 40 minutes. This is to allow the Work Coach time to conduct the interview and complete the IWP Data Gather Tool.

## Claimants working and in Group 1 or 2

If the claimant is working and allocated to IWP Group 1 or 2, the Work Coach books the claimant a 40 minute face to face appointment for an on-going Work Focussed Interview. The Work Coach must take into consideration the claimants' individual circumstances and consider flexible ways of working together. This could be conducting the interview by phone.

The Work Coach then issues a UC325 IWP Initial appointment (for face to face appointments only).

## Claimants not working and in Groups 1 or 2

From 1st April 2017 the Work Coach must treat any non-working partners allocated to either Group 1 or 2 the same as those in Group 3

## Claimants in Group 3

Claimants in IWP Group 3 are treated as the current Light Touch group. See KM ‘Supporting Claimants in the Light Touch Group.

Activity

**In small groups talk about what you can discuss with the claimant during their IWP Work Search Review to help them to sustain or increase their earnings?**

Take back answers onto wipe board or flip chart. Allow 15 minutes for this activity.

Expected answers may include:

- focus on sustaining or increasing earnings rather than increasing hours
- sustaining or increasing earnings in their current job could be through:

    - weekend work
    - later or earlier start/finish
    - taking on a role which pays a supplement for example key holder, first aider
    - upskilling within current job role to earn more. for example, in some hospitality sector roles this can include learning a new role making cocktails, using specialist machinery
- look at other sectors available within the labour market
- look at other sectors and careers that give opportunity for progression
- get help from provision for example National Careers Service, Money Advice Service
- explore any funding options
- discuss how the claimant can develop work skills, confidence and experience
- talk about career planning
- carry out work searches for a variety of vacancies including long and short term
- discuss the benefits of earning more

- help the claimant to increase their skills/qualifications
- provide additional support with CVs and application forms
- help the claimant to identify transferable skills and how they can market these to prospective employers
- if the claimant has recently started work they may need supporting in this employment before setting any further requirements

The claimant’s availability to look for work and carry out any work preparation activities must be considered. If the claimant is doing any work these hours must be taken into account, the remaining time is the amount of work search that should be undertaken.

## IWP Set on-going work search reviews

Following an initial IWP interview for claimants in Group 1 or 2 the Work Coach needs to set on-going work search reviews according to the Group requirements and inform the claimant of the interview dates.

**Refer the participants to Knowledge Management – In Work Progression – Set on-going work search reviews**

**What support will IWP Group 3 claimants receive?**

**The IWP Group 3 mirrors the All Work Related Requirement (AWRR) Light Touch Regime.**

**Show Slide 38 – Non WSP IWP Claimant Commitment**

The Work Coach will create the appropriate non WSP IWP Claimant Commitment. This will be one of the following:

- IWP Working claimant Group 1 & 2
- IWP Working Claimant U18 Group 1 & 2
- IWP non-working claimant Group 1, 2 & 3
- IWP non-working claimant U18 Group 1, 2 & 3

All work search and work preparation activities should be recorded on the Claimant Commitment. Remind the claimant that these actions are mandatory and a sanction will be given if they are not met.

# IWP Data Gather Tool

The IWP Data Gather Tool collects information about the claimant's current circumstances and how they view their job prospects. It should not be seen as an extra step to complete or add on at the end of the interview. It is suggested that the tool is completed after the Claimant Commitment conversation.

When the Data Gather Tool is opened you will be asked to confirm whether the claimant consents to have additional information collected about them.

The claimant's consent is needed to collect the additional information. Information is included in the tool to help you explain what it is all about and get the claimants consent to this.

Within the IWP Data Gather tool there are questions for the claimant and the Work Coach to complete.

The individual answers that the claimant and the Work Coach give will not be linked to them personally. This information will only be used for analysis, no benefit decisions will be made on the basis of it.

The computer screen should be turned away from the claimant when the questions are being answered so that the Work Coach can answer these questions about the claimant confidentially.

The answers need to be as honest as possible, and if the claimant can see the screen the Work Coach may feel under pressure to answer the questions in a certain way.

Designers Note

**The Data Gather Tool is accessible on the agents desktop.**

## In Work Progression Completed

When a claimant has completed the IWP trial an Account Developer is required to update the claimant's record on WSP.

PowerPoint

**Show Slide 39 – IWP Completion**

The IWP will complete when:

- the Universal Credit claim is closed
- the claimant has not been receiving Universal Credit for a period of 6 months due to earnings
- the claimant requests claim closure as they no longer wish to claim

**Show Slide 40 – Update IWP Status on WSP**

If the claimant has an IWP status of **Started** or **Excluded** this will need to be updated. To update the IWP status on WSP the Account Developer will:

- select **IWP Status** on the general screen
- select **IWP Completed** from the drop down
- select **IWP Reason** the options available are:
    - UC claim closure
    - UC nil entitlement (6 months due to earnings)
- select the calendar icon and inputs today's date
- select **Save**
- update general notes with **IWP action taken**

Where the previous IWP status was **started** the AD issues a UC251 to the claimant to confirm that they are no longer in the IWP trial.

## Case Studies

**Show Slide 41 – Case Studies**

Prior to completing the following activity, it would be useful to first refer delegates to the IWP Support Pack Part 1 – Claimant Case conferences'. To do so, should help them when you work through the case studies, as described below.

There are three case studies, ranging in complexity, which are designed to prompt discussion. (Further Case Studies can be found in UC121 if you feel they are required)

They are:

- Case Study 1, Rebecca IWP Group 2
- Case Studies 2 and 3, Jack IWP Group 1 Parts 1 & 2. Jack Part 2 demonstrates follow up WSR after 8 weeks

**The facilitator case studies outline the discussion points and expected responses.**

**This topic is the core of the learning, as the learners demonstrate their interviewing skills, through discussion.**

**Listen for and highlight where learners demonstrate positive ways to communicate the message about helping and supporting claimants to find work, more work, better work – helping claimants progress in work through increased earnings so they eventually become independent of benefit reliance.**

**Work Coaches should understand that these claimants have taken the first step on that ladder so they should focus more on the help & support.**

**Explain that while they work through the case studies you would like to hear how the learners would say things to the claimant, so if they have a message to give to the claimant in the case study they should speak to you as though you were that claimant, for the purposes of this exercise.**

**As a group they will use the communication skills they have learned in previous events and apply them to the In Work Progression process.**

## Topic Summary

**Show Slide 42 – Topic Summary**

In this topic you have learned how:

- to describe the key messages and benefits of the IWP for Universal Credit claimants
- claimants will be allocated to the correct IWP group and how interviews are booked
- to describe how IWP interviews will be conducted
- to describe how an IWP claimant commitment is different
- to explain the responsibilities of the claimants in the IWP trial and the consequences if these responsibilities are not met
- to explain the circumstances when IWP will be marked as completed

to describe the action to take on WSP to record IWP is completed

# Topic 6- The Benefit Cap or Grace Period Support

**Show Slide 43 – The Benefit Cap or Grace Period Support**

**Show Slide 44 – Topic Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

The aim of this topic is to provide you with a summary of knowledge about Benefit Cap and the action to take when a claimant is subject to Benefit Cap or Grace Period.

## Objectives

By the end of this topic, with the aid of any reference material, you will be able to:

- describe what Benefit Cap is
- describe the aims of Benefit Cap
- explain what benefits are included in the Benefit Cap
- explain Benefit Cap eligibility
- explain Benefit Cap exemptions
- describe what a Grace Period is and how to qualify
- explain how to engage in discussion for Benefit Cap

## What is the Benefit Cap?

## Introduction

The policy rationale:

The Benefit Cap was one of the policies announced by the Government in the 2010 Spending Review as part of its strategy to reform welfare for people of working age.

Work is the best route out of poverty. Income is important, but poverty is about more than income alone; it is also about a lack of opportunity, aspiration and stability.

Results from the evaluation reports of the Benefit Cap show evidence of behavioural change. The movement into work for those households affected by the Benefit Cap is higher than movement into work by a comparable group of households not affected by the cap.

The Benefit Cap policy aims to strike the right balance across the main objectives of increasing incentives to work, introducing greater fairness and making financial savings while continuing to protect vulnerable claimants for whom work is not currently a viable option.

## Definition of the Benefit Cap

A cap will be applied to the total amount of benefits that claimants who are not in work can receive and will reduce the amount of Universal Credit that would otherwise be payable.

The total amount of certain benefits will be added together and capped at around the median earned income level (after tax and National Insurance) for working families.

**Show Slide 45 – Introduction**

**Select in turn to reveal each of the 5 text boxes to support the items in bold and reflect the content below.**

In **April 2013**, the Government introduced a cap on the total amount of benefit that working age people can receive.

**The Government's specific aims in introducing the Benefit Cap were to:**

- increase incentives to work by **limiting the amount of benefit** that households on out-of-work benefits can receive so that they will be better off on entering work

- introduce greater fairness in the welfare system between those receiving out-of-work benefits and taxpayers in employment by preventing households on out-of-work benefits from receiving a greater income from benefits than the average weekly wage; and

- make financial savings where the Benefit Cap applies and, more broadly, help make the system more affordable by incentivising behaviours that reduce long-term dependency on benefits

The official statistics published in November 2015 show that since the introduction of Benefit Cap from April 2013 to August 2015:

- 66.9 thousand households have had their Housing Benefit capped

- 45 per cent of households affected by the Benefit Cap were in London

Of data extracted in August 2015:

- 23.4 thousand households had their Housing Benefit capped. 83 per cent of households were capped by £100 or less a week. 1 per cent of households were capped by more than £300 a week
- 43.5 thousand households (65 per cent) who have previously had their Housing Benefit capped are no longer subject to the cap as at August 2015

**Source: Benefit cap Quarterly Statistics: GB households capped to August 2015 available from www.gov.uk website.**

**The Benefit Cap will limit the total household welfare payments to £500 per week (£2167.00 per month for Universal Credit) for couple and lone parent households and £350 per week (£1517.00 per month) for single person households where no children are present.**

It is likely that some claimants will be faced with unexpected income changes. In these cases they should be signposted to suitable support. Support can be found on the district provision tool and features such help as:

- Court Claims Debt and Bankruptcy (accessed via Gov.Uk
- Money Advice Service
- Credit Union factsheet
- National Debt line
- Payplan

**Show Slide 46 – What is the Benefit Cap?**

**Select to reveal each text box in turn to reflect the content of the three bullets below.**

The Benefit Cap is a maximum amount of benefit a household is entitled to.

The definition of a household for the purpose of applying the Benefit Cap is:

- a single adult
- a couple and
- a child or qualifying young person for whom that adult or couple are treated as responsible for the provision of Universal Credit

## Benefits Included

**Show Slide 47 – Benefits Included in the Benefit Cap**

**Refer the participants to Handout 02 – Benefits Included in the Benefit Cap**

The benefits that are included in the Benefit Cap are:

- Bereavement Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Child Benefit / Child Tax Credits
- Employment Support Allowance (contribution based and income related) except where it's paid with the support component
- Guardians Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Incapacity Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Jobseeker's Allowance (contribution based and income based)
- Income Support

- Maternity Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Widowed Parent's Allowance
- Widowed Mother's Allowance
- Widows Pension

Any other benefits the claimant may receive will not be taken into account when calculating the level of the cap.

## Eligibility

PowerPoint

**Show Slide 48 – Benefit Cap Eligibility**

Tip

Select to reveal each text box in turn to reflect the content of the 3 bullets below.

Claimants/households will be affected by the Benefit Cap if the following applies:

- they reside in England, Scotland or Wales
- are in receipt of a benefit included in the Benefit Cap
- the total household weekly benefit income (for benefits included in the cap) exceed either £1517 per month (for single claimant households) or £2167 per month (for couple or lone parent households)

**Refer learners to About Universal Credit, Universal Credit – Changes to the Benefit cap or www.gov.uk/benefit-cap for current amounts.**

Select to reveal each text box in turn to reflect the content of the 2 bullets below.

Single claimants or lone parents will be affected if they:

- are aged 16 or over but have not yet reached the age for Pension Credit
- have reached the age for Pension Credit but are in receipt of a working age income-related benefit

For couple households, where one adult has reached the age for Pension Credit and one adult has not reached the age for Pension Credit, the Benefit Cap will apply provided that one adult is receiving a working-age income-related benefit.

In the case of a couple where one or both have reached the age of Pension Credit and neither are in receipt of a working age income-related benefit, the Benefit Cap will not apply.

Pension Credit age is equal to the State Pension Age for women. This will increase in stages from 60 to 65 between 2010 and 2018.

From 2018 the State Pension age will continue to increase for both men and women.

**Show Slide 49 – Benefit Cap Exemptions**

The claimant/household will be exempt from the Benefit Cap if the claimant or their partner are in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Personal Independent Payment
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Employment and Support Allowance where the support component has been awarded

An exemption will apply if any children or qualifying young person for whom they are treated as responsible, are in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Personal Independent Payment
- Disability Living Allowance

Some qualifying exemption payments cannot be viewed in the Customer Information System (CIS) and the claimant's CAMLite history may determine if any of the following have been reported:

- Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (Guaranteed Income Payments)
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- War Pension Scheme including War Widows and War Disablement Pension

Note

**Those claimants living in supported exempt accommodation, that is either a resettlement place or accommodation provided by a county council, housing association, registered charity or voluntary organisation, will receive housing support outside of Universal Credit. These payments will not be included within the Benefit Cap.**

**Non-complex decisions on whether a claimant qualifies for an exemption from the Benefit Cap will be made by Account Developers.**

## Deductions

**Show Slide 50 – Benefit Cap and Deductions**

**Select in turn to display each of the 4 text boxes to reflect the content of the 4 paragraphs below.**

Benefit Cap will be applied to the applicable amount of Universal Credit prior to any third party deductions, recoveries for overpayments or sanctions for any full or part period.

Calculation of the benefits received will not include the localised replacement for Council Tax Support.

Benefit Cap will not take into account State Pension Credit and State Retirement Pensions.

Benefit Cap will not affect any payments of Universal Credit made to help a benefit unit pay for childcare.

## Grace Period

**Show Slide 51 – What is a Grace Period?**

**Select to reveal each text box in turn to reflect the content of the 6 paragraphs below.**

A Grace Period has been put into place whereby the Benefit Cap will not be applied for 9 months to those who have been in work continuously for the previous 12 months.

In all circumstances, Grace Periods will be for a consecutive 9 months irrespective of breaks in claims.

To qualify for a Grace Period a claimant or partner must have earned a minimum of £430 per month in each of the months in the prior 12 month period.

For those who have been working but not claiming Universal Credit, the Grace Period will begin the day after the last day of employment.

For those who have been working and claiming Universal Credit it will start on the first day of the Assessment Period (AP) in which their earnings fall below the in-work exemption threshold.

If the end date falls part way through an assessment period, the Grace Period is extended to the end of the assessment period in which it falls.

The Grace Period remains the same even if there are any breaks in the Universal Credit claim. Once the Grace Period has been applied, it remains fixed, even if two claimants in a joint claim separate after it's been applied.

There is no right of appeal against a Grace Period however if a claimant has new evidence they can complete a further UC46 - Grace Period declaration for an AD to consider.

## Work Coach Discussion

When Benefit Cap or Grace Period is applied, a Work Services Platform (WSP) task is set by the AD.

**Type: Immediate, Notes: claimant is subject to Benefit Cap discuss support available.**

The task is a prompt for the Work Coach to engage in conversation with the claimant to discuss available support and options that are available following the Benefit Cap being applied or during a grace period. This can be face to face or over the telephone depending on the claimant's circumstances.

The conversation will focus on helping the claimant to increase household income by securing work, more work or better paid work.

After the initial Benefit Cap/Grace Period discussion, the Work Coach will record notes of the conversation and action taken on WSP. Additionally, the Work Coach should consider any future contact and book an appointment on WSP if appropriate.

PowerPoint

**Show Slide 52 – Benefit Cap or Grace Period Support Discussion**

The aim of the discussion is to help the claimant to become financially independent of benefits and can include:

- a focus on developing skills and relevant experience in current or new sectors of work
- considering wider sectors available within the labour market
- career planning – not limited to immediate opportunities within the labour market but must be viable options for the claimant
- identifying sectors and careers in the labour market that offer realistic opportunities for progression
- work search around a variety of vacancies (long and short term)
- identifying skills and opportunities for progression that can be incorporated into a career plan and actions for the claimant commitment
- engagement with National Careers Service and other local provision to identify skills and opportunities
- exploration of funding options when applicable
- consideration of financial status – for example signposting to the Money Advice Service and local authority

- highlighting attractiveness of earning more and becoming financially independent

Further information regarding interviewing a claimant to offer additional support, is offered in the following KM article:

‘Action when a claimant is subject to the benefit cap’.

## Topic 12 Summary

**Show Slide 53 – Summary**

In this topic you have learned:

- what the Benefit Cap is
- the aims of the Benefit Cap
- what benefits are included in the Benefit Cap
- Benefit Cap eligibility
- Benefit Cap exemptions
- what a Grace Period is and how to qualify
- how to engage in discussion for Benefit Cap

# Topic 7 Review and Update a Claimant Commitment

**Show Slide 54 – Review and Update a Claimant Commitment**

**Show Slide 55 – Topic Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

This topic aims to explain the process of reviewing and updating a claimant commitment.

## Objectives

By the end of this topic, with the aid of any reference material, you will be able to:

- explain how to create and issue a revised Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack
- explain the consequences to the claimant of not complying with the agreed Claimant Commitment

You have checked the claimant's compliance with requirements and reviewed the requirements of their Claimant Commitment. You have recorded updates, new requirements and referrals to providers on WSP.

You are now at the point where you need to produce a new Claimant Commitment if required.

The Claimant Commitment will reflect the new/updated work related activities the claimant will undertake.

Your role is to ensure that on completion of the interview, the claimant fully understands the expectations of them in order to receive their Universal Credit payment. The claimant must be completely aware that they must commit to undertake these activities.

You should print and issue the Claimant Commitment, and ensure the claimant accepts and signs it.

The Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack provide details of how a claimant's Universal Credit will be affected if they fail to comply.

Reference

**The simulation for completing the WSP screens, printing off and recording claimant acceptance of the Claimant Commitment is covered in the simulations for WS017.**

**If it is necessary to view the simulations again, refer the participants to the Universal Credit and WSP Simulations intranet page which is within the Learners Support Site and allow 10 minutes for learners to complete.**

**Show Slide 56 – Communicating Consequences of Non compliance**

When issuing the Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack ensure the claimant is clear about their individual requirements and meeting conditionality. You will ensure the claimant understands what this means.

**The Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack sets out the 'contract' and expectations between the claimant and DWP. It must be completed so that the requirements and sanctions are clearly understood by claimants but written in a way that encourages the right behaviours around compliance.**

**You must be clear when communicating to claimants the difference between mandatory requirements and voluntary requirements. A delicate balance is needed to ensure the claimant is clear what is mandatory but we also want to encourage claimants to undertake the voluntary activities.**

**During this conversation what will you need to explain or remind the claimant of?**

PowerPoint

**Show Slide 57 – Answers**

When issuing the Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack you should include the following in your conversation with the claimant:

- confirmation of action completed
- their present or future work objectives and goals
- their required ongoing actions to obtain work
- the required actions to improve their job prospects
- their work availability requirements
- protocol regarding attending the Jobcentre or contacting DWP
- voluntary actions agreed
- the importance of reporting change of circumstances information; and
- the consequences of not meeting the requirements of the Claimant Commitment

If the Claimant Commitment has been changed or updated during the WSI, it will need to be accepted and signed by the claimant.

If the claimant will not accept their Claimant Commitment, you must explain the consequences of this and the next steps (Originally covered in WS017 Initial Work Search Interview).

## Topic Summary

**Show Slide 58 – Topic Summary**

In this topic you have learned:

- how to create and issue a revised Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack
- explain the consequences to the claimant of not complying with the agreed Claimant Commitment

# Topic 8 Next Steps

**Show Slide 59 – Next Steps**

**Show Slide 60 – Topic Aims and Objectives**

## Aims

This topic aims to explain the next steps to take to complete the Work Search Interview.

## Objectives

By the end of this topic, with the aid of any reference material, you will be able to:

- explain what to put into the notes on WSP
- take the correct action to close the interview on WSP

# End of Interview Action on WSP

At the end of each subsequent WSI, you should update the claimant notes and end the Interview on WSP.

Your WSP notes should include:

- a summary of the Claimant Commitment activities that have taken place
- that you have updated the Claimant Commitment/Pack if applicable
- if applicable, that you have referred the case to a Decision Maker

**Creating a note in the claimant record of WSP was covered in WS017 Initial Work Search Interview.**

To close the appointment record on WSP:

- Select **Complete Appointment** button on the Ribbon. The status of the appointment is set to complete and the **Actual End date** and time will be populated automatically. The **Actual Duration** will also be calculated by WSP and displayed in minutes
- Select **Save and Close** button on the Ribbon

Update claimant special arrangements if appropriate and finally, book the next appointment for a WSI.

**The learners will have already covered Booking an Appointment earlier in their Routeway. If needed, refer them back to WS006a Universal Credit Managing Appointments in a UC Outlet and select the See It, Try It or Know It links for Book WFI.**

## Simulation – Booking a Subsequent WFI

**Show Slide 61 – Simulation – Book WFI**

# Topic Summary

**Show Slide 62 – Topic Summary**

In this topic you have learned:

- explain what to put into the notes on WSP
- take the correct action to close the interview on WSP

# Module Summary

**Show Slide 63 – Module Summary**

In this module you have learned how to:

- explain the purpose of a subsequent WSI
- preview appointments on Work Services Platform (WSP)
- describe how to review evidence of work search and work preparation activity carried out by a claimant since last attendance
- consider the impact of a change of circumstances on the claimants conditionality and the support available
- explain IWP
- explain the Benefit Cap and any effect it will have on a Universal Credit claim
- explain how to create and issue a revised Claimant Commitment and Commitment Pack
- explain how to book the next appointment