**New measures introduced for ‘pre-Work Programme’ JSA claimants**

The DWP is bringing in new conditionality measures for ‘pre-Work Programme’ jobseeker’s allowance (JSA) claimants.

The new rules – that will require jobseekers to show that they are taking ‘positive steps’ to find work – were agreed in the government’s 2013 spending review, and include –

From 28 April 2014 –

- mandatory English language requirement – claimants in England whose English skills are below Entry Level 2 will be mandated to attend training to improve their English language skills; and

- quarterly work search interviews – claimants will have to attend a 20 minute interview every 13 weeks to review the quarter’s activities and their jobseeker’s agreement/claimant commitment, as well as to widen the scope of their work search.

To be phased in between 28 April and October 2014 –

- day one conditionality – people who claim online will be asked to set up an email address, prepare a suitable CV and to register on Universal Jobmatch, and jobseekers who do not claim online will be helped to complete these requirements by their work coach; and

- weekly work search reviews – these will be phased in between April and October for 50 per cent of claimants.

*Source: DWP’s ‘Touchbase’ (April 2014)*.

**Long term unemployed could be required to attend a jobcentre every day**

New ‘Help to Work’ rules will also provide scope for claimants to have to undertake unpaid work placements

Long term unemployed claimants could be required to attend a jobcentre every day or undertake a 6 month unpaid work placement, under the government’s new ‘Help to Work’ scheme.

Launched on 28 April 2014, the new scheme will involve those jobseeker’s allowance claimants who remain unemployed after finishing on the Work Programme being required to take up one of three different types of ‘support’ –

- attending a Jobcentre every day – ‘The daily meeting with their adviser would include discussing the progress made in looking for work, such as the number of job searches or applications made, or new activity to improve their skills base.’

- community work placements – ‘Claimants who lack work experience – and where this is felt to be holding them back from finding a job – may...

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**Increased conditionality for lone parent claimants**

New regulations have been issued that introduce increased conditionality for certain lone parent claimants.

In force from 28 April 2014, the *Income Support (Work-Related Activity) and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2014* (SI.No. 1097/2014) principally –

- introduce changes to the lone parent regime so that the frequency and timing of income support work-focused interviews (WFIs) for lone parents with a youngest child aged 1–4 years can be determined at the discretion of an employment adviser instead of conducted at fixed points in the claim;

- provide for employment advisers to be able to require lone parents with a youngest child aged 3 or 4, who are on income support or ‘old style’ employment and support allowance (ESA) and in the work related activity group, to undertake mandatory work-related activity; and

- provide for lone and responsible nominated carers in universal

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- **Income Support & income-based JSA**
  - **Personal allowances**
    - Single – under 25: 57.35
    - 25+: 72.40
    - Lone parent – under 18: 57.35
    - 18+: 72.40
    - Couple – both under 18: 57.35/86.65
    - one under 18: 57.35/72.40/113.70
    - both aged 18+: 113.70
    - Dependent child: 66.33
  - **Premiums**
    - Carer: 34.20
    - Disability – single: 31.85
    - couple: 45.40
    - Disabled child: 59.50
    - Enhanced disability – single/person/one parent: 15.55
    - couple: 22.35
    - child: 24.08
    - Family: 17.45
    - Pensioner – single (JSA only): 75.95
    - couple: 112.80
  - **Severe disability – per qualifying person**: 61.10

- **Employment and Support Allowance**
  - **Basic Allowance**
    - Single: 72.40
    - couple: 72.40/113.70
  - **Support component**: 35.75
  - Carer, enhanced disability, pensioner and severe disability premiums paid at the same rate as Income Support/income-based JSA

- **Pension Credit**
  - **Minimum guarantee**
    - Single: 148.35
    - Couple: 226.50
  - **Additional amounts**
    - Severe disability (per qualifying person): 61.10
    - Carer: 34.20
  - **Savings Credit**
    - Threshold – single: 120.35
    - couple: 192.00
    - Maximum – single: 16.80
    - couple: 20.70

- **Universal Credit**
  - **Standard allowances**
    - Single – under 25: 249.28
    - 25+: 314.67
    - Couple – both under 25: 391.29
    - one or both aged 25+: 493.95
  - **Child elements**
    - Only/eldest child: 274.58
    - Other children: 229.17
  - **Disabled child elements**
    - Lower rate: 124.86
    - Higher rate: 362.92
  - **Limited capability elements**
    - For work: 124.86
    - For work and work-related activity: 311.86
  - **Carer element**
    - 148.61
  - **Childcare costs elements**
    - Maximum: 532.29
    - 2+ children: 912.50

- **Housing Benefit**
  - **Personal Allowances**
    - Single person/one parent – aged 65+: 165.15
    - Couple – both under 18: 86.65
    - one under 18: 113.70
    - one or both aged 65+: 247.20
  - **Premiums**
    - Family – lone parent rate: 22.20

- **Working Tax Credit**
  - **Basic element**: 1,940.00
  - Couple/one parent: 1,990.00
  - 30 hours element: 800.00
  - Disability element: 2,215.00
  - Severe disability element: 1,255.00
  - Childcare costs (70% of up to)
    - 1 child (weekly rate): 175.00
    - 2+ children (weekly rate): 300.00

- **Child Tax Credit**
  - Family element: 545.00
  - Child element: 2,750.00
  - Disabled child: 3,190.00
  - Severely disabled child: 1,255.00

- **Attendance Allowance**
  - Lower rate: 54.45
  - Higher rate: 81.30

- **Bereavement Benefits**
  - Bereavement Allowance
    - aged 45–54: 33.36–103.42
    - standard rate: 111.20
  - Widowed Parent’s Allowance: 111.20
  - child dependant: 11.35

- **Carer’s Allowance**
  - Adult dependant: 61.35
  - Child dependant: 11.35

- **Child Benefit**
  - Only/eldest child: 20.50
  - Other children: 13.55

- **Disability Living Allowance**
  - Care component
    - lower rate: 21.55
    - middle rate: 54.45
    - higher rate: 81.30
  - Mobility component
    - lower rate: 21.55
    - higher rate: 56.75

- **Employment and Support Allowance**
  - Basic allowance:
    - Standard rate: 72.40
  - Support component: 35.75

- **Guardian’s Allowance**: 16.35

- **Incapacity Benefit**
  - Long term addition:
    - under 35: 104.10
    - aged 35–44: 11.00
  - Adult dependant:
    - (with Cat A): 60.45
    - child dependant: 11.35

- **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit**
  - Standard rate: 33.20–166.00

- **Jobseeker’s Allowance**
  - Under 25: 57.35
  - 25+: 72.40

- **Maternity Allowance**
  - Standard rate: 138.18

- **Personal Independence Payment**
  - Daily living component
    - standard rate: 54.45
    - enhanced rate: 81.30
  - Mobility component
    - standard rate: 21.55
    - enhanced rate: 56.75

- **Retirement Pension**
  - Cat A: 113.10
  - Cat B late spouse’s or civil partner’s NI: 113.10
  - Cat B spouse’s or civil partner’s NI: 67.80
  - Cat D non contributory, aged 80 or over: 67.80
  - Age addition (aged 80 or over): 0.25
  - Adult dependant (with Cat A): 64.90
  - Child dependant (with Cat A and B): 11.35

- **Severe Disablement Allowance**: 73.75
  - Age addition
    - under 40: 11.00
    - 40–49: 6.15
    - 50–59: 6.15
    - 60+: 36.30
  - Child dependant: 11.35

- **Statutory Adoption, Maternity and Paternity Pay**: 138.18

- **Statutory Sick Pay**: 87.55

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(a) Paid at a reduced rate to certain claimants during 13 week assessment phase.

(b) Reduced where claimant entitled to ESA component.

(c) Monthly amounts. Universal credit benefit cap applied at £2,167 for couples and lone parents.

(d) Where different to Income Support, income-based JSA, ESA or Pension Credit. Housing benefit cap applied at £500/week for couples and lone parents; and £350/week for single people.

(e) Reduced for an eldest/only child where CB is payable.

(f) Reduced for an eldest/only child where CB is payable.
Welfare benefit related highlights in Budget 2014

Benefits and tax credits measures announced by Chancellor George Osborne in the Budget on 19 March 2014 included –

- a cap on overall welfare spending – the cap – which excludes cyclical unemployment benefits, related housing benefit and state pensions – has been set at £119.5bn in 2015–2016; £122.0bn in 2016–2017; £124.6bn in 2017–2018; and £126.7bn in 2018–2019;

- carer’s allowance income disregard – the government will increase the earnings limit in carer’s allowance to £102 per week from May 2014;

- support for mortgage interest (SMI) – temporary measures to increase the support provided by the SMI scheme are extended for working-age claimants – the waiting period will remain at 13 weeks and the working-age capital limit will remain at £200,000 until 31 March 2016;

- employment and support allowance (ESA) – a 7-day waiting period will apply to new claims for contributory and income-related ESA from October 2014;

- tax-free childcare – the government has confirmed that all universal credit claimants will be able to receive up to 85 per cent of their childcare costs – an extension of the original proposal that only those claimants who paid income tax would be eligible for the 85 per cent rate, with other claimants continuing to receive the current rate of up to 70 per cent;

- direct recovery of debts – the government will strengthen HMRC’s powers to recover tax and tax credit debts directly from debtors’ bank and building society accounts, including ISAs, focusing on debtors who owe at least £1,000 and have been contacted multiple times by HMRC to pay. (Although a minimum aggregate balance of £5,000 will be left across all accounts, including ISAs, after the debt is recovered.) The government says that it will consult on the implementation of the measure ‘shortly’;

- strengthening compliance checks for EEA migrants – the government will increase compliance checks on EEA migrants’ claims for child benefit or child tax credits to establish whether they meet the entitlement conditions to receive them – the checks will be applied to both new claims and to existing awards; and

- increasing maximum recovery rates from ongoing tax credit awards – from April 2016, the rate of tax credits debt recovery from ongoing awards will increase from 25 per cent to 50 per cent for households with an income of over £20,000 a year.


For more information on all these changes see –

www.rightsnet.org.uk

the welfare rights website for advice workers

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Long term unemployed could be required to attend a jobcentre every day

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be asked to undertake a placement, which will also benefit their local community. The placements will be for up to 6 months for 30 hours a week and will be backed up by at least 4 hours of supported job searching each week to help turn the experience into full time employment.”

- intensive Jobcentre support – “For jobseekers with multiple or complex barriers to work the Jobcentre Plus advisers will spend more time with the claimant looking at how to tailor back-to-work support, with more flexibility to send people on intensive training schemes, ad hoc funding to overcome issues blocking a return to work such as initial travel costs or suitable clothes for a job interview, and referrals to work experience opportunities with local organisations.”

NB – Help to Work will be mandatory and those who fail to participate could lose their jobseeker’s allowance for 4 weeks for a first failure and 13 weeks for a second failure.

Increased conditionality for lone parent claimants

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credit and ‘new-style’ ESA with a youngest child aged 3 or 4 to be able to be required to prepare for work, in addition to being required to participate in a WFI.

The new rules take effect from 28 April 2014 for all new and repeat lone parent and nominated carer claimants in scope of the change and, for existing claimants, from the date of their next scheduled WFI.

SI.No.1097/2014 is available from legislation.gov.uk.