

# **Childcare Barriers to Work and Dependant Children**

## **Guidance Queries and Help**

1. If you are unable to find an answer to a particular question within this guide you must contact the DWP Advice Line. Do not give the DWP Advice Line number to customers or outside bodies under any circumstances.
2. The 'E-mail page owner' and 'Page information' links at the bottom of each page of guidance should only be used to report broken hypertext links.

## **Policy Intent**

3. The commitment to end child poverty by 2020 is now enshrined in law through the Child Poverty Act 2010.
4. Jobcentre Plus has a major role to play if the 2020 target is to be realised by supporting customers into sustainable employment; as worklessness is one of the largest causes of child poverty.
5. LMS is able to provide a wealth of information that will help Jobcentre Plus contribute effectively to tackling child poverty locally.
6. The Children Marker on LMS enables Jobcentres to have an accurate understanding of their customers to: facilitate informed decisions on the extent of partnership working; the extent to which it must contribute to local child poverty needs assessments undertaken by Local Authorities; and the formulating of strategies to tackle child poverty locally. The Childcare Barrier to Work functionality on LMS enables Jobcentre Plus to:
  - Fulfil its statutory duties (in England only) under the Childcare Act 2006 by supporting Local Authorities (LAs) and other childcare partners to develop sufficient formal childcare by:
    - Identifying the actual childcare barriers faced by Jobcentre Plus customers and work with childcare partners seek to address these;
    - Improving the fit of childcare provision to the needs of workless parents (by working with childcare partners) to encourage growth of provision where it is needed;
    - Maximising the flow of information about childcare to Local Authorities, advisers, parents and employers (including increasing the extent to which unemployed parents are willing to seek work and/or attend training, by addressing their concerns about using childcare).
  - Help advisers address customers' childcare barriers to work and/or training leading to work.

## **Performance Management Framework**

7. Management Information (MI) drawn from the Children Marker and the CBW hotspot on LMS shows how Jobcentre Plus:
  - Contributes to the Government's objective to help tackle the cause of child poverty.
  - Can effectively work in partnership to tackle child poverty locally.

## Requirements – ‘Must Do’

8. Full and accurate completion of the Children Marker and the Childcare Barriers to Work (CBW) hotspot must be undertaken. This action is mandatory.

9. Every customer who is in receipt of a benefit must have the Children Marker on their LMS record displaying a value which reflects their current parental status as defined by the Parent Status marker.

10. Every customer who has the Children Marker set to ‘Yes’ **and** is looking for work; ready to look for work, or ready to enter training leading to work’ must also have the Childcare Barriers to Work (CBW) hotspot set to ‘Yes’, ‘No’ or ‘Not Disclosed’.

**Note:** Dependant children are those under 16 years of age or under 18 years of age where the child has a Special Education Need (SEN), an Additional Support Need (ASN) (Scotland’s equivalent of a SEN) or a disability.

11. When a customer’s record becomes dormant any CBW hotspots set to ‘YES’ must be altered to ‘NO’. This is to ensure that MI pulled from LMS and shared with local authorities is accurate.

## Process

12. Creating and regularly reviewing Children Marker and CBW hotspot is essential.

## Recording dependant children

13. To record whether the customer has dependant children follow the steps below:

| Step | Action  |
|------|---|
| 1    | On the customer detail screen, select the ‘Other Function’ drop-down list from the menu bar   |
| 2    | From the drop down menu select ‘Child Details’ and the ‘Child Details’ window will be displayed.  |
| 3    | A screen message will appear ‘This option will create Child Details. Do you wish to continue?’ select ‘Yes’ to the screen message   |
| 4    | Select the appropriate option i.e. Yes, No, Not Disclosed and save.<br><b>Note:</b> You must save the details at this point as you will be unable to enter any further information regarding dependant children until you have saved. |
| 5    | When the ‘Dependant Child Status Field’ is saved as ‘No’ or ‘Not Disclosed’ no further information is required.   |
| 6    | If the customer has dependant children you must continue to record the details of that child and any childcare barriers to work by following the steps in the table below.  |

## Recording child details

14. When the Children Marker is set to ‘Yes’ ensure that the appropriate information is recorded for each child. It is possible to record the details of eight children.

| Step | Action  |
|------|---|
| 1    | Enter the child's date of birth (DOB) and<br><b>Note:</b> In the unlikely event the customer does not know their child's exact DOB, check other benefit systems to obtain it. |
|      | Whether that child has a SEN and or a ASN   |
| 2    | Whether the customer has a childcare barrier to work for that child. Select the drop-down menu and record ('Yes' 'No' 'Not Disclosed')  |
| 3    | For customers who have more than one child select the 'AdChd' tab and repeat the steps for each individual child.   |

### Recording childcare barriers to work

15. When a customer states they have a childcare barrier to work you must record for each individual child:-

| Step | Action   |
|------|--|
| 1    | The reason for the customer's childcare barrier to work; for instance- cost, transport.  |
| 2    | The type of childcare the customer would need to enter work.<br><b>Note:</b> it is possible to record more than one type   |
| 3    | If no suitable option is available select 'Other'. You must record the barrier reasons and/or childcare type in the Notes Box.   |
| 4    | If customers have not gathered information about the availability / affordability of suitable childcare you must refer them to a Childcare Partner Agency (CPA) (for instance Families Information Service; Children's Centre). Select the 'CPA' tab and record the referral |
| 5    | Referrals to a CPA must be followed up with the customer at the next adviser intervention. This follow-up is essential in order to determine the exact nature of the customer's childcare barrier. The CBW status must be amended if appropriate.                            |
| 6    | Use the 'Notes' box in each child tab to record as much extra information as possible, such as why more than one barrier exists; outcome of a Better Off Calculation (BOC) and the date it was undertaken.   |

### Removing childcare barriers to work hotspot on dormant records

16. When a customer's LMS record becomes dormant; action must be taken to alter CBW hotspot status of 'Yes' to 'No' by:

| Step | Action  |
|------|---|
| 1    | In the 'View Client Details' window click on the [CBW] hotspot, this will open the 'View Child Details' window. Select the first child tab. |
| 2    | Click [Amnd] and select 'No' from the 'CBW Status' drop down list.  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 3 | The following message will be displayed “This option will clear CBW Details. Do you want to continue?” Select ‘Yes’  |
| 4 | Choosing [Yes] will close the message, and remove any ‘Notes’, ‘Childcare Barrier Reasons’ and ‘Childcare Types’.  |
| 5 | The ‘Date of Birth’, Special Educational Needs and Disability (where recorded) will be retained. Any relevant information can be recorded in the ‘Notes’ field if necessary. |
| 6 | Record a destination reason from the ‘Reason’ drop down list and save.   |
| 7 | You must repeat this process for each child.   |

17. Child Details information can be recorded / updated at any time either within or outside an interview.

18. It is permitted to obtain this information over the telephone.

19. For full details on how to set the marker and hotspot refer to the LMS User Guide Chapter H

### **Restrictions ‘Can’t Do’**

20. It is important to remember that although it is mandatory to ask customers about any dependent children they may have, it is not mandatory for them to provide it.

21. If a customer declines to clarify whether they have dependent children LMS should be updated with “Not Disclosed”. This is the only time ‘Not Disclosed’ should be selected.

22. You must not record perceived childcare barriers. A customer may state that they have a childcare barrier to work but they may have not actually looked into it. This is a perceived barrier and a referral to their local Families’ Information Service or Children’s Centre may be appropriate.

23. A perceived childcare barrier should be recorded as ‘No’.

24. Following a referral to a Family Information Service or Children’s Centre arrange to speak to the customer either by telephone or in person to determine what the outcome was.

25. Amend the CBW hotspot if required.

### **Additional Information**

#### **Children Marker displays ‘Not Known’**

26. When a customer’s ‘Parent’ status is recorded as either ‘Lone’ or ‘Parent’ and the Children Marker displays ‘Not Known’, immediate action is required to update the Marker appropriately.

#### **Change of Circumstances**

27. If a customer declares that they no longer have a dependant child(ren) you will need to remove that child(ren) from their Child Details record on LMS by selecting the appropriate child tab then select the ‘DelCh’ button on the View Child Details screen. This will automatically update the Children Marker on the client record to ‘No’ and remove any CBW marker that was displayed on the record.

### **Dependant Child reaches the age of 16 (or 18)**

28. When a dependant child reaches 16 years old (18 years old with a SEN or disability) LMS automatically removes the Child Details for that child from the customer's LMS record and the 'Dependant Child Status Field' will automatically update to 'No'; unless the customer has other dependant children recorded on LMS.

### **Recording CBW Status for JSA customers with restricted availability**

29. In discussing customers individual circumstances you should determine whether the customer has restricted their availability by choice or by necessity because of their children and this will determine whether they have a childcare barrier to work or not. For example:

- A customer wishes to look after their own children and work around their caring responsibilities. In these situations the customer **would not** have a childcare barrier to work and the CBW status field should be set to 'No'.
- If a customer has a permitted restriction on their availability but they would like to work additional hours if they were able to secure childcare (e.g. they are restricting the hours they can work because they can't find/afford suitable childcare etc) then they **do** have a childcare barrier to work, and the CBW status field should be set to 'Yes'.

For full details on JSA customers, including lone parents and permitted restrictions to their availability for work can be found in the Jobseekers Allowance Labour Market and Conditions Guide, Chapter 2

30. Where the barrier is set to 'Yes', advisers should also record full details of the restriction in the notes box, so that partnership managers and other staff are aware of the circumstances. It also avoids customers having to continually repeat information they have already discussed.

### **Dormant LMS Records**

31. It is good practice for offices to carry out regular housekeeping on dormant LMS records in order to identify any that still show 'Yes' on the CBW hotspot. This helps to ensure accurate and more reliable MI.

### **Childcare Barriers Desk Aide**

32. A desk aide is available to aid with the accurate completion of the CBW hotspot and the Children Marker.