

## Jobsearch Reviews

### Guidance Queries and Help

1. If you are unable to find an answer to a particular question regarding policy within this guide you must contact the Jobcentre Plus Live Support Advice Line. Do not give the Advice Line number to claimants or outside bodies under any circumstances, it is for the use of Jobcentre Plus staff only. Details of how to contact them can be found by clicking on the following hyperlink, Advice Line Home Page.
2. Please do not use the 'E-mail page owner' and 'Page information' links at the bottom of each page of guidance to raise policy queries. These should only be used to report broken hyperlinks.

### Introduction/Purpose

3. The primary purpose of every review is to talk with the claimant about what they have done to look for work in each week since their last Jobsearch Review. This is to:
  - see if the claimant is available for and actively seeking employment and therefore entitled to any Jobseeker's Allowance and National Insurance Credits due. **The claimant must do all that is reasonable to look for work that week. The minimum number of steps will be specified within the 'my responsibilities' section of the Jobseeker's Agreement;**
  - identify claimants who appear not to be doing all they should to actively seeking work for each week of the review period and refer to a Labour Market Decision Maker (LMDM), having consulted with a Personal Adviser or team leader, if necessary;
  - identify any additional support needed; and
  - follow-up activities agreed previously with a Personal Adviser.
4. Jobsearch Reviews are undertaken as part of the Assistant Advisers job role and are a key part of the back to work support we provide.

### The importance of Jobsearch Reviews

5. Research shows that fortnightly face-to-face Jobsearch Reviews help people move from benefit into work more quickly than would otherwise have been the case.
6. Building upon this success, Assistant Advisers must work closely with Personal Advisers to deliver a more personalised and seamless claimant focused service. This means understanding what has been agreed previously and making sure that Jobsearch Reviews add value to the overall back to work process, by building upon previous contacts.
7. This approach works best where Personal Advisers and Assistant Advisers are co-located but where this is not possible, it can also operate remotely through good telephone or email liaison. This facilitates a wider team approach to

delivering good quality personalised interventions and enhanced Jobsearch Reviews that will:

- enable Assistant Advisers to conduct flexible and meaningful discussions with claimants about their jobsearch activities and capabilities;
- enable Assistant Advisers to review claimant activity between Personal Adviser contacts and monitor the follow through on agreed actions – feeding back to Personal Advisers as appropriate;
- enable regular updates to Personal Advisers, so the level of support and timing of interventions remain relevant to a claimant's individual needs, as skills are developed or circumstances change; and
- ensure there is a smooth handover to a Personal Adviser when the need for additional work related provision/support is identified, or a doubt arises concerning the claimant's benefit entitlement.

8. Carrying out good quality Jobsearch Reviews and following-up on all agreed actions before the next scheduled Personal Adviser contact plays a key part in helping Personal Advisers to effectively manage their Flexible Interventions.

### **Timing of Jobsearch Reviews**

9. Unless the claimant has been excused attendance, or has been granted Postal Status, Jobsearch Reviews must be face to face and carried out at least fortnightly.

10. Some claimants may benefit from more frequent Work Search Reviews. In certain circumstances, they may be required to attend Weekly Work Search Reviews or, for those who have completed the Work Programme, Daily Work Search Reviews.

11. Claimants will continue to be paid fortnightly, even if attending more frequently.

12. When arranging weekly attendance, claimants should be told:

- that the aim is to provide extra help and support;
- that failure to attend may lead to a sanction and loss of benefit;
- when they are required to attend. The requirement to attend is formally notified to claimants by the completion of an ES40 label (ES40L) and it being attached to their ES40 booklet;
- that they will be reimbursed travel expenses for attending the extra reviews; and
- when weekly attendance will end.

13. The requirement may also be included within the Jobseeker's Agreement.

14. At each interview, the claimant will sign a labour market declaration, if they have not already done so on that day. This must be for the period from the day after they last made such a declaration, until the date of this declaration. The only exception to this is any period where the claimant has been treated as Available and ASE.

15. Arrangements should be made to reimburse claimants their travel expenses for weeks where they would not normally have attended the office, regardless of whether they ask for them or not.

## **Jobsearch Reviews for Lone Parents**

16. All Jobsearch Reviews for Lone Parents should be conducted by dedicated Jobsearch Review staff who have received training to deal with Lone Parents, or a Lone Parent Adviser, if resources permit.

## **Jobsearch Reviews for claimants participating in sector-based work academies**

17. Claimants participating in sector-based work academies are required to be actively seeking work and available for work. The exception to this is where pre-employment training is between 16 and 30 hours a week. In these cases the claimant is not required to be actively seeking work or available for work during the time they are undertaking the training element of sbwa. However, policy intent is that claimants should still attend Jobsearch Reviews to show that they are taking steps towards gaining employment. The sector-based work academies guidance details the action to take.

## **JSA Full-Time Training Flexibility (England only)**

18. Claimants participating in JSA Full-Time Training Flexibility are not required to be actively seeking work or available for work. However, policy intent is that claimants should still attend Jobsearch Reviews to show that they are taking steps towards gaining employment. The Skills Guide details the action to take.

## **Pre-review preparation**

19. Prior to each Jobsearch Review LMS must be checked, including LMS conversations, to see if anything was agreed previously and what might need to be discussed or followed-up within the review. This could include specific actions agreed with a Personal Adviser, submissions to jobs and other opportunities, or to remind the claimant of forthcoming adviser appointments.

## **Undertaking the review**

20. The following must always be undertaken:

- An introduction to the claimant;
- Confirmation of the claimant's identity;
- A check that the claimant has attended at the correct time and day;
- A check of claimant markers on LMS, such as Child Barriers to Work and the appropriate action taken;
- A check of whether the claimant is on the Work Programme;
- A check of the claimant's method of payment;
- The identification and arrangement of any Flexible Interventions due; and
- An update of the claimant's LMS record with the intervention type by using the "JS Rev" button.

## **Reviewing jobsearch activity**

21. A discussion with the claimant must always take place, to find out what they have been doing to look for work each week within the payment period in

question. This is to confirm the claimant has been actively seeking work, by undertaking all that can be reasonably expected and can therefore be paid any Jobseeker's Allowance/National Insurance credits due.

22. The Jobseeker's Agreement will contain detail about the type and level of activity the claimant has agreed to undertake. This information should be used to inform the Jobsearch Review.

23. In terms of actively seeking work, each week, claimants are expected to undertake all that can be reasonably expected to give themselves best prospects of employment. The level of activity expected will have been agreed with a Personal Adviser at the New Jobseeker Interview and detailed within the Jobseeker's Agreement, which will contain (within the 'my responsibilities' section) how many things (steps) a week should be undertaken.

24. When discussing what the claimant has done to seek work, probing questions should be used to verify what is being said. For example:

- if the claimant has looked online, they should be asked to provide details of the websites and what they found;
- if the claimant has looked in newspapers, which ones, on which days and what was found?;
- if the claimant has visited potential employers, when did they visit and to whom did they speak?; and
- if the claimant has sent speculative CVs, when was this? Have they heard anything and, if not, have they followed up with a phone call?

25. The more detail a claimant is able to give about their jobsearch activity, the less doubt there is as to whether the claimant has carried out the required number of steps in the week, as agreed in the Jobseekers Agreement.

### **Doubt regarding claimant's jobsearch activity / availability**

26. If there is a clear doubt as to whether the claimant has carried out the required number of steps each week or been available for work, as agreed in the Jobseeker's Agreement, the claimant should be formally told about the doubt and the details should be immediately referred to a Decision Maker. If further consideration needs to be given before the case can be referred to a LMDM a Personal Adviser or Team Leader should be consulted.

27. If it is determined that a referral to a LMDM is appropriate:

- a labour market declaration is taken, either on the appropriate form ES24 or on Signature Capture Service;
- dialogue 470 is input in JSAPS, unless this is automatically done via Signature Capture Service;
- the claimant's benefit payment is suspended on JSAPS; and
- a referral is made using LMS and DART.

### **Decision made by LMDM**

28. Details of the action taken when a LMDM has made a decision can be found in the Labour Market Conditions Guide.

### **Claimant attends a Jobsearch Review following a suspension**

29. When the claimant attends a Jobsearch Review following a suspension and there is no longer a doubt regarding their availability or actively seeking, a labour market declaration is taken for the period following the suspension up to the date they attend.

### **Updating LMS**

30. The outcome of the review must always be recorded on LMS. That is, confirmation that the Jobseeker's Agreement is still current (if not, the case should be referred to a Personal Adviser) and that the claimant has met or not met the actively seeking employment condition.

**Note:** Failure to do so will incur an official error for Monetary Value Fraud and Error purposes.

### **Universal Jobmatch**

31. As part of making use of the resources available to them to look for work, we can reasonably expect most claimants to make best use of Universal Jobmatch.

32. However, there will be instances where claimants are not able to use Universal Jobmatch or may not appear to be using Universal Jobmatch to their best advantage. In these instances the Adviser may need to search for suitable vacancies on behalf of a claimant and in some instances formally require claimants to apply for these jobs. For example:

- the claimant is not yet able to make best use of self-help vacancy channels (if this is the case, support should be provided to address the need); or
- there are doubts about the activities the claimant says they are undertaking. For example, they claim to be going online, but say that no suitable vacancies are available.

33. Further information about how to require claimants to apply for jobs can be found in Chapter 3 of the Universal Jobmatch Toolkit.

34. The Adviser must follow-up on any jobs the claimant has been required to apply for to identify whether Refusal of Employment action needs to be taken. That is, where the claimant has failed, without good reason, to apply any vacancies that they have formally been told to apply for.

### **Referring to a Personal Adviser for more help**

35. There may be circumstances that arise during the Jobsearch Review that require a discussion with, or a referral to a Personal Adviser. For example:

- additional jobsearch support is needed;
- the claimant has questions that cannot be responded to within the confines of the Jobsearch Review; or
- Refusal of Employment action is required.

36. Locally arranged steps should be in place to conduct this referral.

## **Provision referrals**

37. Referrals to provision must always be made by a Personal Adviser and in response to a clearly diagnosed need. Failure to do so runs the risk of inappropriate and wasteful referrals. If a potential need for specific support is identified at a Jobsearch Review, the claimant must be referred to an adviser for further consideration before any referral to provision is made.

## **In-work financial advice – Tax Credits, etc**

38. General information may be provided during the review but only a Personal Adviser should provide more in-depth advice, including a personalised In-work Better Off Calculation.

## **Part-time work and or Reported Changes of Circumstances**

39. Appropriate action must be taken if the claimant declares that they have undertaken part time work or a change of circumstances.

40. It is important to note that if the claimant records a change of phone number **only** during the Jobsearch review, LMS conversations should be updated with the date of the change. This ensures that users are always using the latest phone number notified.

## **Labour Market Declaration**

41. The claimant must be invited to **read** the Labour Market declaration, either on the appropriate ES24 or on the Signature Capture Service pad, before signing it.

## **JSAPS**

42. Where entitlement to benefit has been confirmed and clerical ES24JP forms are being used, dialogue JA470 is updated to confirm their attendance in JSAPS and if appropriate, dialogue JA504 checked, to confirm payment details are held.

## **Additional Action**

43. Some claimants may require additional consideration at their Jobsearch Review. If the claimant falls within one of these categories, additional guidance is available as appropriate:

- Drug and/or alcohol dependency;
- Potentially Violent claimants;
- Claimant is homeless/a person without address;
- Lone Parent restrictions;
- Volunteers;
- Import and Export of Benefit;
- Restrictions for Claimant's with caring responsibilities for children; and
- Disabled claimant with more complex support needs arising from their disability - see ES18 page 2

## **Quality standards**

44. Quality standards should be set and monitored using the Work Search / Jobsearch Review Quality Assurance Framework.