

Labour Market Conditions Guide (Extract)

Claimants engaged in other activities

Volunteering

1. A volunteer is defined as a person who:
 - is engaged in voluntary activity for someone who is not a member of the claimant's family; and
 - receives only payments to refund expenses reasonably incurred by them in connection with their volunteering.
2. Most volunteering will be undertaken with organisations whose activities are not for profit, for example national and local charities, but it can also be carried out in any business including the public sector.
3. When a claimant declares they or their partner are participating in volunteering:

Step	Action
1	ask them to complete form Volwork 1;
2	when the partner is the volunteer ask them to return the completed Volwork1 to the Jobcentre so you can check all questions are complete before sending to the Benefit Centre;
2	record on LMS that the claimant is doing volunteering;
3	It may also be useful to note the Jobseeker's Agreement;
4	ensure ALL the questions on form Volwork 1 are completed;
5	check whether <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the claimant is still available for work; and• the claimant is still actively seeking work; if there are doubts on any of these questions refer to a LMDM;
6	complete the official use box on form Volwork1 to show whether or not the volunteering will affect availability or actively seeking work;
7	send a copy of the Volwork 1 to the Benefit Centre;
8	do not give an opinion on whether the claimant's JSA will be affected by volunteering. Explain that he will hear from the Benefit Centre if his benefit will be affected by volunteering.

Meaning of family

4. A family is:
 - a couple
 - a couple and any child or young person who is
 - a member of the same household **and**
 - the responsibility of either or both members of the couple

- a person who is not a member of a couple (this will usually be a lone parent) and any child or young person who is
 - a member of the same household **and**
 - the responsibility of that person.
5. In the case of a polygamous marriage, the claimant's family includes:
- any partner and
 - any child or young person who is
 - a member of the claimant's household **and**
 - treated as the responsibility of the claimant or one of the partners.

Volunteering and availability

6. A claimant who wishes to undertake volunteering must be available for work of at least 40 hours each week, unless they have restricted their availability for some other reason, for example caring responsibilities. Availability can be accepted providing the claimant is willing and able to:
- attend a job interview on being given 48 hours notice; or
 - start work on being given a weeks notice; or
 - rearrange or give up their volunteering to start a job if it overlaps with their pattern of availability ; or
 - attend an interview in connection with their jobsearch;
7. You do not need to take the type of work or hours spent on volunteering into account when considering their availability.
8. If the claimant's agreed pattern of availability does not overlap with any of the hours they are engaged in volunteering their availability for work can be accepted provided they are willing and able to give up or re arrange the hours in which they are engaged in volunteering, on being given one weeks notice to start work and 48 hours notice to attend a job interview.
9. The claimant may be participating in training as part of a volunteer's programme, for example, working towards an NVQ. See Training Courses within the Full and Part Time Study chapter for further information.
10. The claimant must remain available and actively seeking employment and attend fortnightly wherever possible. In exceptional circumstances postal declarations may be appropriate.

Volunteering and actively seeking employment

11. Claimants must take steps to seek work in any benefit week in which they are undertaking volunteering. The activity undertaken through volunteering can enhance a claimant's prospects of securing suitable employment although, by itself, it may not constitute an actively seeking 'step' into paid work.
12. When deciding whether the steps a claimant has taken in a week are sufficient to meet the actively seeking employment condition, you should take into account any time during which they were doing volunteering and the extent to which it may have improved their prospects of securing employment.
13. For example, a claimant who has undertaken volunteering on 3 days every alternate week must take sufficient steps to find work in each week. However,

it would be acceptable for them to take fewer steps during the weeks in which they are engaged in volunteering than during weeks when they are not.