

In-Work Emergency Payment for Lone Parents

Comment [S1]:

Comment [S2]: This section will be moved to a generic chapter.

Overview

1. The aim of In Work Emergency Payments is to provide support to eligible lone parents who experience a financial emergency in the first 26 weeks of work, enabling them to remain in work.
2. Lone parents should be encouraged to contact their Personal Adviser if they encounter problems during the first 26 weeks of work. Personal Advisers should maintain contact with the lone parent during this period so that they are able to react quickly to requests for help and advice.

Eligibility

3. At the point of starting work, the claimant must:
 - be a lone parent
 - have a dependent child(ren) under the age of 16 living in the household
 - be working and receiving pay for 16 hours or more per week
 - have been in work for 26 calendar weeks or less from the day work commenced (This is a 26 week calendar period in work, and does not relate to the actual number of days a lone parent has worked within those 26 weeks. LMS automatically calculates the 26 week eligibility period when the In Work Start Date is entered in the IWI window) **and**
 - be working in a job that is expected to last at least 26 weeks.
4. Additionally the lone parent, at the point of starting work, must have:
 - been accessing work focused support through JCP **or**
 - been in continuous receipt of one or a combination of qualifying benefits for 26 weeks or more immediately prior to starting work. The Lone Parent may have been in receipt of a qualifying benefit as part of a couple claim for part of the 26 weeks but must be a Lone Parent immediately prior to starting work.

The qualifying benefits are:

- Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) (both contributory and income based)
- Incapacity Benefit/Employment Support Allowance (IB/ESA)
- Income Support (IS)
- Carers Allowance (CA)
- Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)
- Bereavement Benefit (BB)

Breaks in the receipt of a qualifying benefit

5. A break in their benefit claim producing a gap of even one day will mean a lone parent is not eligible to apply for an award from the FSF.
6. In cases where a lone parent has successfully appealed against a decision to disallow benefit and would subsequently have been entitled to benefit for the period in question, benefit will be treated as continuous and eligibility will be re-instated.

Limits to how much can be paid.

7. Each lone parent has access to financial assistance up to a maximum of £300 within the 26-week eligibility period and can access the fund more than once during this period.
8. You have discretion, in exceptional circumstances, to award larger, one off, amounts. Local practices may require you to complete a business case in support of such a request and authorised by a manager with the correct level of delegated budgetary authority.
9. Receipts and/or invoices must be provided to prove the expense.
10. Only make a payment if the award will result in the lone parent remaining in work.

Process

Step	Action
1	Use form FSF1 for requests for travel expenses, FSF2 for all barrier requests and FSF3, FSF4 and FSF5 for care requests.
2	Ensure FSF form is fully completed and signed by the lone parent. See information that must be recorded on Form FSF1 and FSF2 at part 3.
3	Record the request in LMS conversations.
4	Ensure the lone parent indicator is set. This is essential to enable the capture of management information.
5	Record all actions through the LMS In Work Initiatives (IWI) window. See LMS Action for details of how to record the end-to-end application process. The in work start date must be recorded in order to access the IWEDF tab contained within the IWI window. Please note that the reminder letter is automatically printed through the LMS action.
6	If you decide that an award is appropriate and the eligibility criterion is met, select the appropriate payment method. All payments must be authorised by a member of staff with the correct level of delegated budgetary authority.
7	Use form IPF1JP for invoice payments and RM1 for all other payment types. (RM6 if payment is urgent) Use FSF3, FSF4 and FSF5 for care payments.
8	Take follow up action when appropriate.

Completion of Form FSF1 and FSF2 part 3

11. Complete the FSF1 and FSF2 at part 3 as follows: -
 - Indicate the payment is an IWEF award.
 - Enter details of the emergency.
 - Enter Job Start Date
 - If lone parent is making a part payment towards the total cost, include this information here.
 - Include the lone parents last benefit claimed prior to work, address (this may have changed since the benefit claim was closed) and telephone contact details.
 - Enter the date that the receipt is due to be received by JCP (14 days from award date).
12. You are responsible for recommending the amount of the award.
13. For further guidance to complete forms FSF1 and FSF2, see 'Annex 1 Notes for completing FSF forms' in the 'Forms and letters' chapter

Award is not Appropriate

14. If, after checking the lone parent's eligibility and considering their request for an award, it is decided that an award is not appropriate, you should:

- inform the lone parent of the reason for the decision
- take appropriate LMS action .

Lone parent disagrees with decision

15. Although the lone parent has no right of appeal, a reconsideration process has been adopted for lone parents who are not satisfied with the decision they receive.

Payment methods

16. The primary method of payment for IWEP awards is the Retail Trade Framework (RTF).

17. Where goods or services cannot be obtained through the RTF the method of payment is by the RM1 process.

18. Payments can be made: -

- On receipt of an invoice – paid retrospectively or in advance (receipts must always be provided)
- To the lone parent or the supplier
- For pre-agreed care or childcare costs not covered by Tax Credits – always paid retrospectively to the provider.

19. Where exceptional circumstances warrant a faster payment, consider: -

- RM6
- LPS using the IWEDF option, or
- Cash (as a last resort)

Proof of Purchase follow up action

20. Proof of purchase is not required for items purchased through the Retail Trade Framework (RTF). Proof of purchase is provided through an electronic feeder file and reconciled by a nominated follow-up officer.

21. Proof of purchase is required for all other payment methods. Failure to provide the appropriate receipts/proof within 21 days of the award will result in overpayment action.