

Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

Please Note: Referrals to this programme ended on 31 March 2017. This guidance is for existing Work Programme participants only

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An introduction to Work Programme Provider Guidance

1. The Government has been clear that it expects a step change in the delivery of Welfare to Work support, with much greater emphasis on personalisation and results. As such we are giving you far more freedom to innovate and design your services in the most effective and efficient way possible. To help you do this, we have kept required processes to a minimum.
2. This programme-specific guidance sets out the essential things you need to know and do in order to meet the Government's expectations. We have also included background information to help inform your delivery model.
3. In addition to this programme-specific guidance it is important that you follow the revised [Generic DWP Provider Guidance](#) which applies to all of our provision and ensure that European Social Fund (ESF) requirements are adhered to. Further information regarding ESF requirements can be found in [Generic Provider Guidance Chapter 11 – ESF requirements](#).

Overview of the Work Programme

4. The key purpose of the Work Programme is to support participants into employment that lasts, and the payment model reflects this aim. Further information regarding the payment model can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 9 – Financial procedures](#).
5. All claimants due to join the Work Programme will be referred to you by Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches will determine a claimant's eligibility for the Programme and, where claimants have the option to volunteer, will determine whether the Work Programme is the most appropriate option for that person.
6. Jobcentre Plus will randomly allocate all claimants to Work Programme Providers based on your market share of each claimant group and from this point of referral claimants will be deemed participants.
7. You are responsible for engaging with all participants and conducting attachment activity within 15 working days of the participant being referred by Jobcentre Plus. You will have 104 weeks to work with each participant, unless they complete the programme early. Further information regarding participants who complete early can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 10 – Completing the Work Programme](#). The 104 weeks includes periods where a participant is off benefit.
8. While participants are on the Work Programme, Jobcentre Plus will continue to see them to check that they are meeting their conditions for claiming benefits (if applicable). For example Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) participants will continue to be required to attend Jobsearch Reviews and demonstrate that they are actively seeking and available for work. Jobcentre Plus will be mindful that you may have discussed and agreed appropriate activities to help secure employment and these activities may be used by participants to demonstrate meeting their actively seeking work conditions.
9. Jobcentre Plus remains responsible for the overall participant experience and will collect any informal feedback that participants volunteer about their provision. This will be passed to your performance managers on a regular basis.
10. Additional ESF funding in England allows Work Programme providers in England the freedom to directly market to Income Support and incapacity benefits claimants, to encourage them to volunteer for the Work Programme. Any claimants interested in the Work Programme will be signposted to Jobcentre Plus, according to locally agreed arrangements, so that Jobcentre Plus can ensure that referrals are apportioned according to your market share of each claimant group.

Key responsibilities

Whilst participants are on the Work Programme you are responsible for:

- completing attachment activities with participants within 15 working days
- helping participants to find and stay in sustainable work by providing services to participants in line with your minimum service offer as set out in your delivery model
- raising compliance doubts with Jobcentre Plus Labour Market Decision Makers, and notifying us when participants subsequently re-engage
- notifying Jobcentre Plus when a JSA participant needs to be moved to Training Allowance
- reporting specified changes in participants' circumstance to Jobcentre Plus
- producing an exit report, when a participant completes the Work Programme, within 10 days of Jobcentre Plus requesting it
- ensuring that ESF requirements are adhered to. Further information regarding ESF requirements can be found in [Generic Provider Guidance Chapter 11 – ESF requirements](#).

Duration of the Work Programme

11. Once Jobcentre Plus refers a participant to the Work Programme, you have 104 weeks to work with that participant to help them into sustained employment.
12. Unless a participant completes early, you will be expected to deliver 104 weeks of continuous support regardless of whether a participant changes benefits, or moves into employment. Further information regarding participants who complete early can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 10 – Completing the Work Programme](#).
13. This means that:
 - you remain responsible for ensuring that participants get the right support for the whole 104 week period. For example, you will remain responsible for the participant if they move out of your Contract Package Area, if there has been a breakdown in relations between you and the participant, or if the participant is imprisoned. It will be for you to determine the appropriate course of action, which might include using other parts of your supply chain, changing your method of delivery, or making arrangements with other providers to deliver support

- where a participant changes benefit or leaves benefit their participation requirements may change. However, their 104 week support period will continue
- participants cannot be re-referred to the Work Programme within their 104 week support period.

Referral

14. Participants will be referred by Jobcentre Plus at a Work Programme referral interview, where they will be given information about their rights and responsibilities and the minimum service standards that they can expect from you. Jobcentre Plus will randomly allocate participants, according to market share arrangements, and will supply you with information about each participant.

The customer experience

15. You have flexibility to design an innovative and personalised approach to help an individual back to work. You are expected to ensure participants are fully informed about the minimum service offer that you put in place, as well as your complaints process. In order to prepare the participant for a positive start on the Work Programme, this information will be issued to participants by Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches at their referral interview.
16. You are required to deliver your minimum service offer to all referred claimants whilst they remain attached to the Work Programme provided it is both feasible and reasonable in the participant's circumstances. Where it is not possible to deliver your minimum service because of a participant's circumstances you are expected to look to alternative approaches to satisfy this requirement.
17. We expect you to have effective processes in place to ensure you deliver your minimum service and are able to demonstrate how you fulfil this requirement or where appropriate, how and why alternative approaches were required or why it was not feasible to do so. For example, where a voluntary participant has disengaged, where an Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) participant is abroad, or where a participant has been imprisoned.
18. You are only expected to deliver those elements of your minimum offer which are reasonable to deliver (for example, where an ESA participant is abroad we would not expect you to meet face to face but would expect you to continue to help the participant towards sustained employment).

Travel costs and additional costs

19. Participants should not be worse off by virtue of attending the Work Programme.

20. Providers are responsible for travel, childcare, replacement care and additional support costs whilst the participant is on the Work Programme. See ITT for further information.

Key interactions with Jobcentre Plus

21. While the participant is on the Work Programme, you will need to work together with Jobcentre Plus in the following ways:
- Jobcentre Plus will notify you about any relevant changes in the participant's circumstances. There are also some changes we expect you to inform us about. Further information can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 5 – Change of Circumstances](#)
 - you are expected to facilitate the sanctions process by engaging promptly with Jobcentre Plus Labour Market Decision Makers when participants have not complied with mandatory activity
 - where JSA participants are undertaking certain kinds of full-time training, you will be expected to notify Jobcentre Plus that they need to be moved onto Training Allowance. Further information regarding Training Allowance can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 17 – Training Allowance](#)
 - some participants may be required to attend mandatory interventions with Jobcentre Plus. For example, JSA participants will be required to attend their Work Search Reviews and other mandatory interventions at Jobcentre Plus. You should ensure that nothing you require of participants prevents them from attending these appointments.
22. You will be required to supply an Exit Report to Jobcentre Plus for those participants who complete the Work Programme and return to Jobcentre Plus. This will help Jobcentre Plus make a decision on the appropriate next steps for that participant. Further information regarding Exit Reports can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 10 – Completing the Work Programme](#).