

## Chapter 2: Work Programme Claimant Groups

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

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### Overview of Work Programme claimant groups

1. The Work Programme will support a wide range of different claimants, in receipt of different benefits. As such, claimants who join the Work Programme will have a wide range of different circumstances and requirements. The nature of their participation, entry point to the Work Programme and payment group will be determined by their claimant group.
2. Jobcentre Plus will randomly allocate claimants to you by claimant group and payment group, according to your market share. Further information regarding market share can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 11 – Market share shift](#).

### Claimant eligibility and entry points

3. Eligible claimants will be claiming:
  - [Employment and Support Allowance](#) (ESA)
  - [Jobseekers Allowance](#) (JSA)
  - [Income Support \(IS\)](#) (in England only). New referrals ceased after 2 March 2015
  - [Incapacity benefits](#) (in England only). New referrals ceased after 2 March 2015
  - [Pension Credit](#)
  - [Universal Credit](#) (UC).
4. Further information regarding these benefits (for example differences between ESA Work Related Activity Group and ESA Support Group

claimants) can be found at the links provided in paragraph 3 or at <https://www.gov.uk/>.

5. Claimants will have different entry points to the Work Programme, and different participation requirements, depending on their circumstances (such as age, benefit type and availability to seek work). There is a summary of the payment groups and participants' entry points and participation requirements in [Annex A](#).

## Claimant Participation Requirements

6. The participation requirements of claimants depend on whether they are:
  - **Mandatory JSA participants** – all [JSA participants](#) (regardless of whether they have opted for entry early) will be required to participate, and can be mandated to apply for or take up work if it is reasonable. The only exception are JSA participants in receipt of Credits Only, see [voluntary JSA participants](#)
  - **voluntary JSA participants** – only [JSA participants in receipt of Credits Only](#) who can opt to join the Work Programme and participate on a voluntary basis
  - **Mandatory ESA participants** – all [mandatory ESA participants](#) (regardless of whether they have opted for early entry) can be required to undertake work-related activity that is reasonable in their circumstances. You can support ESA participants to apply for and take up work, but you **cannot** mandate these participants to apply for jobs, undertake medical treatment, take up work or unpaid work experience
  - **Voluntary ESA participants** – [voluntary ESA participants](#) have optional entry into the programme. Once on the programme, for some participation becomes mandatory, whilst for others participation remains entirely voluntary. For those that are entirely voluntary, you **cannot** mandate these participants to undertake activity.
  - **IS Lone Parent participants** – [IS Lone Parents](#) are no longer referred to the Work Programme (since 2 March 2015). For those who voluntarily move to IS during their time on work programme, they will remain voluntary until their youngest child reaches age 3 when they will become a mandatory participant. You can support IS participants to apply for and take up work, but you **cannot** mandate these participants to apply for jobs, undertake medical treatment, take up work or unpaid work experience.

- **Other voluntary participants** – [voluntary participants](#) are not required to take part and their participation remains on an entirely voluntary basis. You **cannot** mandate voluntary participants to undertake any activities.

## **Participant changes in circumstances during the Work Programme**

7. During their 104 weeks on the Work Programme, some participants will have changes in their circumstances, and some may change benefit. Further information regarding participant changes of circumstance can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 5 – Change of circumstances and notification](#).
8. You remain responsible for supporting these participants regardless of these changes but the nature of their participation may change. You should ensure that the activities that you require of a participant are in line with the participation requirements defined by their current claimant group.
9. All payments are based upon the original claimant group regardless of any changes.

For example: a claimant joins the Work Programme as an ESA participant in the Work-Related Activity Group (WRAG). You help them find a suitable job that lasts for six months. They have to leave their job as their family circumstances change and they become a full-time carer. You support them in finding another job which fits their new caring responsibilities and they stay in that job. This participant had joined the Work Programme as an ESA WRAG participant and their participation was mandatory. Once they became a full-time carer and returned to benefit their participation was no longer mandatory. All the outcomes you claim continue to be paid at the original claimant group rates.

10. A detailed description of each claimant group is attached at [Annex A](#).

## **Universal Credit (UC)**

11. UC will rollout on a progressive basis through to 2017. During this time the transferred group of participants may include UC claimants, or you may receive new referrals for UC claimants from Jobcentre Plus.

## Annex A: Work Programme Claimant Groups

You will receive referrals for claimants in the following groups which will relate to the detailed corresponding Payment Group (PG), entry point and conditions of participation. The 'Opportunity/Claimant Group' information shows what will be displayed on the Provider Referrals and Payments (PRaP) system when the referral is made.

### Mandatory JSA Participants

Please see [JSA participants appealing fit for work decision](#) for additional information where a JSA participant is appealing their fit for work decision.

Please see [Mandatory participant moves from JSA to ESA](#) for additional information where a mandatory JSA participant claims ESA and is awaiting their WCA.

Please see [Joint claim partners](#) for additional information where a participant's Work Programme eligibility may affect their partner's referral.

Participant	Entry/Access Point	Opportunity/Claimant Group	PG	Participation
JSA claimants aged 18 to 24	Mandatory from 9 months of pre-Work Programme (WP) activity	WP JSA 18-24	1	Mandatory
JSA claimants aged 25 and over	Mandatory from 12 months of pre-WP activity	WP JSA 25+	2	Mandatory
<a href="#">JSA 18 year old NEET claimants</a>	Mandatory from 3 months of pre-WP activity	WP JSA NEET	3	Mandatory
<a href="#">JSA repeaters</a>	Mandatory from 3 months of pre-WP activity	WP JSA Claiming 22 of 24Mths	3	Mandatory

<a href="#">JSA Ex-IB claimants</a>	Mandatory from 3 months of pre-WP activity	WP JSA Ex-IB	4	Mandatory
<a href="#">JSA prison leavers</a>	Mandatory from Day One of prison release or first date of claim if made within 13 weeks of release	WP JSA Prison Leaver	9	Mandatory
<a href="#">JSA Early Access claimants</a>	Voluntary from 3 months of pre-WP activity	WP JSA Early Access	3	Mandatory
<a href="#">JSA Early Access claimants – care leavers aged 18-21</a>	Voluntary from Day One of claim			
<a href="#">Benefit Cap</a>	Voluntary from 3 months of pre-WP activity	WP JSA Benefit Cap	3	Mandatory

### **JSA 18 year old NEET claimants**

JSA claimants aged 18 years old who have completed three months of pre-Work Programme activity and:

- were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) for a six month period directly prior to their benefit claim
- become NEET during their current claim to benefit, or
- have previously received hardship payments when 16 or 17 years old.

### **JSA repeaters**

Claimants who have previously claimed JSA for 22 out of the last 24 months will be referred after three months of pre-Work Programme activity.

### **JSA Ex-IB claimants**

JSA claimants previously in receipt of incapacity benefits will be referred after three months of pre-Work Programme activity.

### **JSA prison leavers**

Work Programme access from Day One for JSA claimants making an advance claim prior to leaving prison, and those prison leavers making a claim to JSA within 13 weeks of their release.

**Please note:** From 1 May 2015 prison leavers can have their referral to Work Programme deferred by Jobcentre Plus for up to 13 weeks – see [para 31 Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 4 – Accepting referrals, initial participant engagement and registering an attachment](#) for further information.

### **JSA Early Access claimants**

JSA claimants who have completed three months of pre-Work Programme activity and have opted to enter the Work Programme early (before reaching another eligibility point) due to being one of the following:

- an ex-offender (someone who has completed a custodial sentence or a community sentence) or offender (someone who is completing a community sentence)
- a disabled person (under the Equality Act definition)
- a carer in receipt of JSA
- an ex-carer
- a homeless person
- an ex-HM Armed Forces personnel claimant
- an HM Armed Forces reservist claimant
- a partner of current or former Armed Forces personnel
- a person for whom a drug/alcohol dependency (including a history of) presents a significant barrier to employment.

### **JSA Early Access claimants – care leavers aged 18-21**

JSA claimants aged 18-21 who are care leavers have optional entry from Day One of their claim and thereafter until required entry from nine months.



### **Benefit Cap**

JSA claimants in PG1 and PG2 can choose to access the Work Programme on a mandatory basis after three months if they are likely to be affected by the Benefit Cap. Where they meet no other early entry criteria (for example, ex-IB) they will be referred as this claimant group.

### **Joint Claim Partners**

JSA joint claim partners require referral from the point at which their partner enters the Work Programme. This is not a specific group of participants and each partner will be referred according to their own claimant group. However, as they are required to enter the Work Programme at the same time as their partner, they may be referred earlier than their claimant group would normally dictate.

For example, where a 'WP JSA 18-24' claimant is referred after nine months of pre-Work Programme activity and has a joint claim partner who is 'WP JSA 25+', the partner would also be referred at this point, even though they may not have completed twelve months of pre-Work Programme activity.

### **JSA participants appealing their fit for work decision.**

Where a JSA participant disagrees with their fit for work decision following a mandatory reconsideration, they can lodge an Appeal to HMCTS. They will remain on Work Programme but **cannot** be mandated to undertake Work Programme activity **until** their fit for work Appeal has been resolved. Further information can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 5 – Change of Circumstances and Notifications](#).

## Mandatory participant moves from JSA to ESA

Where a JSA participant makes a claim to ESA and is awaiting the outcome of their WCA, they will remain on Work Programme but **cannot** be mandated to undertake Work Programme activity **until** the outcome is known. Further information can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 5 – Change of Circumstances and Notifications](#).

## Voluntary JSA participants

Participant	Entry/Access Point	Participation
<a href="#">JSA Credits Only claimants</a>	Voluntary from the appropriate access point	Voluntary

## JSA Credits Only claimants

JSA Credits Only claimants have optional entry from the point at which they reach their eligibility point to the Work Programme. Where a JSA Credits Only claimant opts to join the Work Programme, the Jobcentre Plus Work Coach will annotate the action plan with 'JSA Credits Only – Voluntary Referral' to help you identify these participants. On point of referral the participant will take part on an entirely voluntary basis and mandated activity is not appropriate.

**Please Note:** There is not a separate Opportunity/Claimant Group or Payment Group on PRaP for JSA Credits Only referrals. They will be referred according to their own claimant group.

## Mandatory ESA participants

Please see [Lone Parents](#) for additional information on ESA lone parent participants.

Please see [ESA WRAG Appeals](#) for additional information where an ESA WRAG participant is appealing their WCA outcome.



Please see [ESA participants appealing their fit for work decision](#) for additional information where an ESA participant is appealing against their fit for work decision following a WCA.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Entry/Access Point</b>	<b>Opportunity/Claimant Group</b>	<b>PG</b>	<b>Participation</b>
<a href="#">ESA (IR) WRAG with 3 month prognosis</a>	Mandatory from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 3/6 Mth Mandatory	6a	Mandatory
<a href="#">ESA (IR) WRAG with 6 month prognosis</a>	Mandatory from WCA outcome			
<a href="#">Existing ESA (IR) WRAG with 3 month prognosis</a>	Mandatory from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 3/6 Mth Mandatory	6a	Mandatory
<a href="#">Existing ESA (IR) WRAG with 6 month prognosis</a>	Mandatory from WCA outcome			
<a href="#">ESA (IR) WRAG with 12 month prognosis</a>	Mandatory from WCA outcome	WP ESA Mandatory (IR) WRAG 12M	6b	Mandatory
<a href="#">ESA (IR) WRAG with more than 12 month prognosis</a>	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 18/24Mth Mandatory	5	Mandatory
<a href="#">ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG with 3 month prognosis</a>	Mandatory from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 3/6 Mth Mandatory Ex-IB	7	Mandatory
<a href="#">ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG with 6 month prognosis</a>	Mandatory from WCA outcome			
<a href="#">ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG with 12 month prognosis</a>	Mandatory from WCA outcome	WP ESA Mandatory (IR) WRAG 12M Ex-IB	7	Mandatory
<a href="#">ESA (C) WRAG</a>	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (c) WRAG Mandatory	5	Mandatory



### **ESA (IR) WRAG with 3 or 6 month prognosis**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants who as a result of their WCA have been given a prognosis of three or six months will be required to enter the Work Programme from their WCA outcome.

### **Existing ESA (IR) WRAG with 3 or 6 month prognosis**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants who have an initial WCA decision that is prior to the end date for referrals to Pathways to Work and have been given a prognosis of three or six months will be required to enter the Work Programme from their WCA outcome.

### **ESA (IR) WRAG with 12 month prognosis**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants who as a result of their WCA have been given a prognosis of 12 months will be required to enter the Work Programme from their WCA result.

### **ESA (IR) WRAG with more than 12 month prognosis**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants who as a result of their WCA have been given a prognosis of more than 12 months have optional entry to the Work Programme from the outcome of their WCA . Where they volunteer to join the programme, their participation becomes mandatory.

### **ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG with 3 or 6 month prognosis**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants who were previously receiving incapacity benefits and as a result of their WCA have been given a prognosis of three or six months will be required to enter the Work Programme from their WCA outcome.

### **ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG with a 12 month prognosis**

This applies to ESA (IR) WRAG claimants who were previously receiving incapacity benefits and received a WCA decision post 12 November 2012.

### **ESA (C) WRAG**

ESA (C) WRAG claimants have optional entry from the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known. Where they volunteer to join the programme, their participation becomes mandatory.

### **ESA WRAG appeals**

Where an ESA WRAG participant feels they should be in the Support Group and disagrees with the outcome of their WCA, they can appeal. During the appeal process and until it is concluded, they will remain on Work Programme and can be mandated to undertake Work Programme activity. Further information can be found in [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 5 – Change of Circumstances and Notifications](#) and [Work Programme Provider Guidance Chapter 3a – Mandation](#).

### **ESA participants appealing their fit for work decision**

Where an ESA participant has been found fit for work as a result of their WCA they can appeal against that decision. During the appeal process and until it is concluded, they will remain on Work Programme but they **cannot** be mandated during the appeal period.

## **Voluntary ESA participants**

### **ESA Lone Parents**

The participation requirements of ESA Lone Parents are dependent on date of referral to the Work Programme.

If the claimant volunteered for the Work Programme before 28 April 2014 they will remain on the Work Programme on a voluntary basis, until the child reaches aged 5 at which point participation becomes mandatory.

If the claimant volunteered for the Work Programme on or after 28 April 2014 they remain a voluntary participant until their child reaches age 3 at which point participation becomes mandatory.

ESA Lone parent on the Work Programme with a child or children under the age of 13 can only be required to participate in the Work Programme during the child's normal school hours or in the care of an adult (not including healthcare). It is important to ensure that you have regard to this restriction when mandating them to an activity. They cannot be mandated to carry out Work Related Activity outside of the child's normal school hours.

**Please Note:** When deciding the time at which an ESA participant must undertake work-related activity, you must also consider if it is reasonable, having regards to the participant's personal circumstances.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Entry/Access Point</b>	<b>Opportunity/Claimant Group</b>	<b>PG</b>	<b>Participation</b>
<a href="#">ESA (IR) WRAG Lone Parent with 3 month prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer</a> See <a href="#">Lone Parents</a> for additional information	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 3/6 Mth Voluntary	6a	Voluntary
<a href="#">ESA (IR) WRAG Lone Parent with 6 month prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer</a> See <a href="#">Lone Parents</a> for additional information	Voluntary from WCA outcome			
<a href="#">ESA (IR) WRAG Lone Parent with 12 month prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer</a> See <a href="#">Lone Parents</a> for additional information	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 3/6 Mth Voluntary	6a	Voluntary
<a href="#">ESA (IR) WRAG Lone Parent with 12 month plus prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer</a> See <a href="#">Lone Parents</a> for additional information	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 18/24 Mth Voluntary	5	Voluntary
<a href="#">ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG Lone Parent with 3 month prognosis</a>	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 3/6 Mth Voluntary ExIB	7	Voluntary

<a href="#">with youngest child under 5 or full time carer</a> See <a href="#">Lone Parents</a> for additional information				
<a href="#">ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG Lone Parent with 6 month prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer</a> See <a href="#">Lone Parents</a> for additional information	Voluntary from WCA outcome			
<a href="#">ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG Lone Parent with 12 month prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer</a> See <a href="#">Lone Parents</a> for additional information	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 3/6 Mth Voluntary ExIB	7	Voluntary
<a href="#">ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG Lone Parent with 12 month plus prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer</a> See <a href="#">Lone Parents</a> for additional information	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) WRAG 3/6 Mth Voluntary ExIB	7	Voluntary
<a href="#">ESA (C) WRAG Lone Parent with youngest child under 5 or full time carer</a>	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (C) WRAG Voluntary	5	Voluntary
<a href="#">ESA (IR) Support Group</a>	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) Support Group	6a	Voluntary

<a href="#">ESA (IR) Ex-IB Support Group</a>	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (IR) Support Group ExIB	7	Voluntary
<a href="#">ESA (C) Support Group</a>	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (C) Support Group	6a	Voluntary
<a href="#">ESA (C) Ex-IB Support Group</a>	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA (C) Support Group ExIB	7	Voluntary
<a href="#">ESA Credits Only</a>	Voluntary from WCA outcome	WP ESA Credit Only	5	Voluntary

**ESA (IR) WRAG Lone Parent with 3 or 6 month prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants with a 3 or 6 month prognosis who have a youngest child under 5 or full time carer have optional entry from the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known.

**ESA (IR) WRAG Lone Parent with 12 month prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants with a 12 month prognosis who have a youngest child under 5 or full time carer have optional entry from the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known.

**ESA (IR) WRAG Lone Parent with 12 month plus prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants with a 12 month plus prognosis who have a youngest child under 5 or full time carer have optional entry from the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known.

**ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG Lone Parent with 3 or 6 month prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants with a 3 or 6 month prognosis who were previously receiving incapacity benefits and have a youngest child under 5 or full time carer have optional entry at the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known.

### **ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG Lone Parent with 12 month prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants with a 12 month prognosis who were previously receiving incapacity benefits and have a youngest child under 5 or full time carer have optional entry at the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known.

### **ESA (IR) Ex-IB WRAG Lone Parent with 12 month plus prognosis with youngest child under 5 or full time carer**

ESA (IR) WRAG claimants with a 12 month plus prognosis who were previously receiving incapacity benefits and have a youngest child under 5 or full time carer have optional entry at the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known.

### **ESA (C) WRAG Lone Parent with youngest child under 5 or full time carer**

ESA (C) WRAG claimants who have a youngest child under 5 or are a full-time carer have optional entry at the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known.

### **ESA (IR) Support Group**

ESA (IR) Support Group claimants have optional entry from the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known. You **cannot** mandate these participants to undertake any activity.

### **ESA (IR) Ex-IB Support Group**



ESA (IR) Support Group claimants who have previously received incapacity benefits have optional early entry from the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known. You **cannot** mandate these participants to undertake any activity.

### **ESA (C) Support Group**

ESA (C) Support Group claimants have optional entry from the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known. You **cannot** mandate these participants to undertake any activity.

### **ESA (C) Ex-IB Support Group**

ESA (C) Support Group claimants who have previously received incapacity benefits have optional early entry from the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known. You **cannot** mandate these participants to undertake any activity.

### **ESA Credits Only**

ESA Credits Only claimants have optional entry from the point at which the outcome of their WCA is known. You **cannot** mandate these participants to undertake any activity.

### **JSA Lone Parents**

A JSA Lone Parent who has a child aged 12 or under may restrict their availability for work to school hours if they wish.

They may restrict their availability to normal school hours only, for example 9am to 3.15pm subject to a minimum of 16 hours per week.

If a Lone Parent has more than one child aged 12 or under, they may restrict their availability in line with the school hours of all of their children.



## Other Voluntary Participants

Participant	Entry/Access Point	Opportunity/Claimant Group	PG	Participation
<a href="#">IS participants (pre 2 March 2015)</a>	Referrals ceased 2 March 2015	WP IB and IS Volunteers	8	Voluntary
<a href="#">IB participants (pre 2 March 2015)</a>				
<a href="#">Pension Credit claimants</a>	Optional from 12 months of benefit claim	WP Pension Credit	2	Voluntary
<a href="#">Pension Credit claimants with health conditions</a>	Optional from benefit entitlement	WP Pension Credit – Health Issues	5	Voluntary

### IS participants (pre 2 March 2015)

The participation requirements of ESA and IS Lone Parents are dependant on date of referral to the Work Programme.

If the claimant volunteered for the Work Programme **before** 28 April 2014 they will remain on the Work Programme on a voluntary basis, regardless of the age of the child.

If the claimant volunteered for the Work Programme **on or after** 28 April 2014 and their youngest child is aged 3 or 4 they will become a mandatory participant.

If the claimant volunteers **on or after** 28 April 2014 and their youngest child is under 3, and during the two-year period their child turns 3, their participation becomes mandatory.

An IS Lone Parent can be mandated to undertake mandatory work-related activity during their child's normal school hours or in the care of an adult (not including health care). However, they may also be mandated to undertake mandatory work-related activity at any other time, unless the participant has chosen to restrict their availability for this period.

**Please Note:** When deciding the time at which an IS/ESA participant must undertake work-related activity, you must also consider if it is reasonable, having regards to the participant's personal circumstances.

### **IB participants (pre 2 March 2015)**

IB participants referred before 2 March 2015 will be referred as voluntary participants, **unless** the referral was made on or after 28 April 2015. A participant referred on or after 28 April 2014 because they are receiving IS solely on the grounds that they are a lone parent with a child aged 3 – 4 years old and living in England is a mandatory participant. You will need to check the information on the action plan to confirm whether the referral is mandatory or voluntary.

### **Pension Credit claimants**

Pension Credit claimants have optional entry to the Work Programme from 12 months of claiming.

### **Pension Credit claimants with health conditions**

Pension Credit claimants with health conditions have optional entry to the Work Programme from day one of benefit entitlement.