

Mandatory Work Activity

FAQs

What is Mandatory Work Activity (MWA)?

You may be referred to a MWA if your Jobcentre Plus work coach thinks you'll benefit from the additional support of a short work placement. The aim is to help you develop the skills and behaviours employers are looking for and to help you get into the habit of attending work on time and every day.

You will be referred to an organisation called a provider that will find you a work placement or a series of placements for up to 30 hours per week. The hours you need to attend will reflect any restrictions on your claimant commitment. You'll need to attend the placement for four consecutive weeks.

You may be referred to MWA if you are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit (UC) (and expected to look for work).

What kind of work will I be doing?

All work placements must benefit the local or wider community. Organisations can't use placements to fill existing or expected vacancies for paid work.

You could be placed in a variety of roles within the voluntary and community sector. You could also do a placement in the private sector, but your role will directly benefit the community. Placements may include:

- work for an organisation which is regenerating, renovating or restoring public areas, buildings, houses and amenities; promoting or supporting recycling or energy efficiency and conservation
- work for a charity
- working on a project to improve access to opportunities for vulnerable or marginalised groups; or to encourage or promote understanding between different communities and / or generations.

How long does MWA last?

You'll be expected to participate for up to 30 hours per week over four consecutive weeks, while also fulfilling your claimant commitment obligations. The hours of attendance will reflect any restrictions in your claimant commitment.

Will I still be expected to search for permanent employment when doing MWA?

Yes. You'll need to continue attending job search reviews, any other meetings at the Jobcentre, and be available for and actively looking for work. However, your work coach will take into account the amount of time you spend participating in and travelling to your placement when reviewing your work search. You must meet all of the usual conditions to get JSA or UC.

Will I earn a wage for doing a MWA?

No. However, you'll continue to receive your JSA or UC benefit whilst on the placement.

You should never be financially worse off because you attend a placement.

Therefore, providers will:

- meet travel costs for attending the placements and meetings with the provider, and help with childcare costs if this is required to attend the placement
- assess and meet, where appropriate, other costs you may need help with to participate fully in the placement (e.g for appropriate clothing or specialist equipment).

You'll still be responsible for paying travel costs to attend your Jobsearch reviews.

If you need help with travel expenses to go to a job interview, you may be able to access the Flexible Support Fund. You should speak to your JCP work coach to discuss this before you travel.

What happens if I don't complete my MWA?

If you fail to attend or fully participate in your MWA work placement(s) without good reason, then you could have your benefit stopped (sanctioned).

Can I appeal against a sanction?

Yes. If you think this decision is wrong, you can appeal within one month of your benefit being stopped. Explain why you think the decision is wrong and provide as much information and evidence as you can to support your reasons for not attending or participating fully in the placement. The decision will be looked at again by a DWP decision maker, rather than your work coach or employment scheme provider. We'll send you a letter to let you know what has been decided and why.

If you still disagree, you can appeal to a Tribunal. Download [full guidance](#) on this process.

If your benefit payment is stopped, and you don't have enough money to live on, you may be able to get a hardship payment.

Is MWA displacing people from jobs by providing 'slave labour' to employers?

No. MWA is not slave labour and does not displace people from jobs. All placements benefit the community and can't be used to fill existing or expected vacancies for paid work.

MWA is a supportive scheme designed to help claimants develop employable skills and behaviours.

How are MWAs delivered?

MWAs are delivered by contracted providers, who work with a range of organisations to source placements of community benefit across a range of employment sectors.

How many people have been referred to MWA?

Between May 2011 and August 2014, 251,200 referrals were made to Mandatory Work Activity.

Is MWA going to be extended passed 31 March 2015?

Yes. We have renewed contracts with providers to extend the scheme until 31 March 2016.