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Community Work Placements

Background

Most people move off Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) quickly, with over three in every four people ending their claim within six months. Less than 3% of people making a claim for JSA have a claim that lasts for three years.

People at risk of long-term unemployment get two years of help from the Work Programme. The programme has so far seen almost 640,000 people start jobs since June 2011, with around 348,000 in work for six months or more.

People who have completed the Work Programme and not yet found a job are referred to the Help to Work programme. Jobcentre Plus work coaches will work with claimants to identify the additional Help to Work support that will help them find a job. This will be based on an exit report from their Work Programme provider and discussions with the claimant about the particular barriers still stopping them from finding work. Work coaches will refer claimants to one of the following:

Mandatory Intervention Regime Intensive (Jobcentre support)

This is for those with multiple or complex barriers to work.

The Jobcentre Plus work coach will spend more time with the claimant looking at how to tailor back-to-work support. They will have more flexibility to:

- send people on intensive training schemes and work experience
- cover costs to remove barriers to finding work, such as initial travel costs or suitable clothes for a job interview.

Daily Work Search Reviews (attending the Jobcentre every day)

This is for claimants who would benefit from regular support with looking for jobs. The claimant will attend their Jobcentre every day for a meeting with their work coach. The meeting will look at:

- progress made in looking for work
- how they can improve their skills.

The daily meetings could last for up to three months.

Community Work Placements

This is for claimants whose lack of work experience may be holding them back from finding a job. Their work coach may ask them to take part in a work placement that will also benefit the local community. The purpose is to give the claimant skills and experience within the work place.

The placements will be for up to six months for 30 hours a week.

The claimant will also receive at least four hours' job searching support from their work coach each week to help turn the experience into full time employment.

Claimants who complete their three months of Daily Work Search Review / six months Community Work Placement and who still have not found work will be referred to the Mandatory Intervention Regime for the remainder of their claim.

Claimants who do not take part in the Help to Work scheme when asked to by their work coach could [lose their benefits for a period of time](#).

FAQs

What are Community Work Placements (CWPs)?

If you haven't found a job when you complete the Work Programme, you'll be referred to the Help to Work programme. As part of this, your work coach might refer you to CWP. This is a mandatory, intensive, 26-week work placement alongside supported job search activities that will give you experience and skills to increase your chances of finding work.

The job search support is also provided by the CWP providers, and may include help with job applications and preparing for interviews.

You may be referred to CWP 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 may be working for a charity or a voluntary organisation. You could also be placed within a profit-making organisation but your role will be of direct benefit to the community. Your tasks will vary, but each placement will give you experience and skills to help you to improve your CV and find employment.

Placements are sourced by contracted providers and they need to ensure, wherever possible, that you are given a placement which matches your skills and interests.

Placements will give you experience of work, help strengthen your CVs and enable you to compete more effectively in the job market.

Providers must also take into account any restrictions on the hours and type of work you may be seeking in your claimant commitment.

How long will I spend on CWP?

A placement will last for 26 weeks (six months). You'll attend the placement for up to 30 hours a week (or fewer if you have any restrictions in your claimant commitment). You'll also be required to do at least four hours a week dedicated job search activities with support from the CWP provider. The sort of support you'll get could help you tailor your job applications or prepare for interviews.

How am I referred to CWP?

If you haven't found a job when you complete the Work Programme, you'll be on the Help to Work Programme. CWP is part of the Help to Work programme package of support. You will be referred to CWP if your Jobcentre Plus work coach feels that an extended period of work experience will help you improve your CV and get a job.

Does part time and voluntary work count towards CWP?

Yes. If your work coach feels that the voluntary work is helping you increase your chances of finding employment, then it will count towards your allotted time for CWP. If you have a part time job, that will also count towards your hours on CWP.

Will I still be able to search for a permanent job while doing a CWP?

Yes. You are required to spend at least four hours a week on the job search activities your provider sets out. They'll let you know in writing how many hours of job search activity you need to do in addition to the hours you spend on the work placement.

Will I earn a wage for doing a CWP?

You will continue to receive your JSA or UC benefit whilst on CWP.

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

Therefore, providers will:

- meet your travel costs for attending the placement 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).

What happens if I don't complete my CWP?

If you fail to attend or do not participate fully with the requirements, your benefits could be 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 CWP displacing people from jobs by providing 'slave labour' to employers?

No. CWP is not slave labour or displacing people from jobs. All placements benefit the community and can't be used to replace paid jobs or fill existing or expected vacancies.

The placements help claimants gain valuable work experience and skills to gain employment.

How is CWP delivered?

CWP is delivered by providers contracted to DWP. The providers work with a range of organisations to source placements that benefit communities across a range of employment sectors and also provide claimants with support for jobsearch activities. CWP helps long term unemployed claimants gain work experience, skills and confidence, which are vital in helping them to find permanent employment.