

Withdrawn

This publication is withdrawn.
The publication is no longer current.

Section 04 (2017)

Stage Two – Module One

Work Choice Pre-Employment Support Module

This Section pertains to all referrals to Work Choice during the contracts' extension period in England and Wales effective from April 2017; specifically from 25th April for contracts originally awarded in 2010, and from 7th April for Remploy.

For guidance pertaining to all referrals to Work Choice made prior to this extension period please see the previous version of Work Choice Provider Guidance which has been retained on GOV.UK for reference:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dwp-provider-guidance>

4.1. This Section covers:

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Introduction

4.2. It is essential that you read and note the contents of DWP Generic Provider Guidance including [Chapter 2 - Delivering DWP Provision](#), which contains a comprehensive guide to standards required from DWP Provider e.g. Induction Standards, Quality, Health and Safety, Legal requirements, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups etc.

Module One –

Work Choice Pre-Employment Support Module

4.3. Entry to Work Choice is always via Module One, Work Choice's Pre-Employment Support Module. In Module One you must provide a range of support tailored to the needs of the individual participant and, depending upon their circumstances, this will include some, most or all of the following:

- individually tailored vocational guidance and development planning to help identify and address support needs (both disability related and any social or personal support);
- a choice of job seeking activities;

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- personal and job-skills support, confidence building, and capacity building to ensure that the goal of a minimum of 16 hours work per week is attainable;
- job-search support – advice, appropriate signposting to online jobsearch sites e.g. <https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch>, job matching of individuals to identified vacancies, active sourcing of suitable jobs, and advising employers on opportunities for ‘job-carving’;
- job application support – including managing disclosure of health/disability information, CV and interview preparation, skills development, advocacy to the employer if needed, e.g. working with the employer to amend recruitment procedures as appropriate for participants with learning disabilities;
- labour market advice and support including:
 - providing Better Off In Work calculations;
 - promoting in work benefits; and
 - assisting (or sourcing assistance) with tax credit applications;
 - see <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-adviser>;
- close working with employers to help them see beyond pre-conceptions or perceptions of a person’s disability and help them focus on abilities and strengths;
- brokerage between employers and participants – analysing the support needed with the participant prior to the support being put into place including assessing Access to Work needs;
- an explanation to both the participant and the employer of the appropriate types of adjustment or customisation on the workplace and the wider support available from DWP and beyond;
- knowledge of support available within the local area that helps the participant manage any personal circumstances relevant to their job aspirations; NOTE: if your participant is unsure (or appears distressed) about their benefit entitlement position you must refer them to Jobcentre Plus for clarification of their entitlement and, if necessary, advice about appeals procedures;
- help for participants wanting to enter self-employment - [see Section 12](#) for further information.

Note: this list is for guidance and is **NOT** exhaustive.

- 4.4. In advance of participants entering paid employment you must:
- plan to obtain assurance that the individual has settled into their workplace;
 - ensure that their transport arrangements appear workable;
 - ensure that the individual will receive appropriate in-work benefits e.g. by using <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-adviser> or signpost the participant to Jobcentre Plus;
 - with the help of the individual and employer, put into place an agreed support plan that indicates how the support they receive will change over time;

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- help the employer make suitable independent adjustments for the individual and where appropriate, offer advice to the employer and colleagues;
- be available to provide advice and support where, for example, an unexpected issue occurs;
- where the person is claiming Jobseekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance etc. signpost to expert sources of help with any benefit regime requirements; and
- be clear that Work Choice participants entering Work Choice's In-Work Support Module should have the same pay and conditions as other, non-supported, employees newly recruited into similar jobs. You will aim to ensure that participants have the same access to training and development opportunities as other employees.

This list is for guidance and is **NOT** exhaustive.

Universal Credit.

Your Work Entry Support (as described above) may also include ensuring that your disabled participant understands how to find the online Universal Credit gateway to submit a Universal Credit claim;

As part of your normal Work Choice service you should assist or signpost participants who cannot get online, or who cannot use a computer, to complete their online claim for Universal Credit, particularly where this forms part of their preparations to begin supported work.

You should also be aware, and assist your participants to understand that, if eligible, **new** claims for help with their rent will be paid through Universal Credit, rather than Housing Benefit.

You will know that there are 'Digital Champions', in every Jobcentre, whose role it is to help support claimants to take their first steps online and see the benefits of being able to use the internet.

Full information about UC for Providers of DWP Programmes is to be found on DWP's Universal Credit Toolkit page for Partner Organisations: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit-toolkit-for-partner-organisations>

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Duration of Work Choice Pre-Employment Support Module

- 4.5. The Work Choice programme design-expectation is that, normally, up to **six months** in Module One, Work Choice's Pre-Employment Support Module, should be adequate for most participants, however, should you believe that an individual participant would benefit from extra time in Module One, you may allow up to a further six months – i.e. **up to a maximum of twelve months in total**.
- 4.6. This extension is entirely at your discretion, you are not required to consult your DWP Performance Manager.
- 4.7. The aim of this flexibility is to avoid disadvantaging participants with fluctuating health conditions or other extenuating circumstances, for example where a job start date has been secured but is delayed in order for reasonable adjustments to be put in place. Other cases may also be appropriate.
- 4.8. In cases of absence known to be due to health conditions, Module One places should remain open for up to a maximum of eight calendar weeks from date of last attendance, but this may not extend past the 12 months maximum total allowable period. Note: This flexibility is not a tracking period, but a measure designed to help participants with fluctuating health conditions avoid leaving the programme early without achieving a job outcome.
- 4.9. You are also permitted to use this extension to capture a confirmed Job Outcome, supported or unsupported, which might otherwise occur outside the normal tracking period, provided this does not extend past the maximum 12 months total allowable period.
- 4.10. You must, however, remain mindful of your Module occupancy and throughflow when deciding to extend Module One for an individual participant, and must also ensure that any additional resources committed would not result in a reduction in support for your other programme participants.
- 4.11. As is usual, you must record the rationale for your decision to allow an extension in the participant's Development Plan, which must be available for inspection by DWP Performance Managers. You should indicate what additional support you intend to give to the participant and the reason why this would enhance their prospects of obtaining employment.
- 4.12. You should also read [Section 7, Returning to the Programme](#) in this context.
- 4.13. It is expected that some participants will move directly into unsupported employment following completion of Module One. This will vary according to your performance offer. Please see Schedule 2 of your contract.

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- 4.14. Any participant who fails to secure employment following completion of Module One may be signposted back to the DEA or Statutory Referral Organisation responsible for the original introduction, **if the participant wishes**. (Also see [Section 9, Leaver Reports](#).)

Participation Hours and Levels of support in Work Choice Pre-Employment Support Module

- 4.15. Work Choice is designed to be an individualised, customer-focussed programme. Your support in Module One should reflect the needs of each participant. This being so, there are no minimum hours of attendance or minimum levels of support stipulated. You must ensure that the support you give fully reflects the development plan that was agreed at your initial in-depth assessment; that your ongoing support flexes to encompass your participant's changing needs throughout their time in your programme; addresses all barriers that will impact on your participant's capacity to return to work in a timely and orderly way; and your participant's engagement (to the best of their ability) is facilitated by the most appropriate means.
- 4.16. You must continue to maintain a record of your participant's activity, including a description of the nature of the support you have given them (direct or more advisory), and how this contributes to the achievement of the participant's objectives as set out in their Development Plan. You should aim to ensure that the level of active participation throughout the duration of Module One (up to a maximum of 12 months) is sufficient to allow the customer's objectives to be addressed and achieved.
- 4.17. The sufficiency of the support you give will be judged by evidence that the participant is demonstrably and productively engaged in the activities agreed in their Development Plan. More guidance on maintaining records of support and development activity will be found in [Section 9](#).

Note: Although there are no minimum hours of support or participation in Module One, there are minimum levels of support required in Module Two, Work Choice's In-Work Support Module, see [Section 5](#) .

- 4.18. In either module your participant's support should usually be delivered by either yourself, as the Prime Provider, or by your formally established Sub-contractor(s). This will, ideally, ensure your participant can be allocated one adviser / support worker who should become their regular contact. However, 3rd Tier support, when utilised to address specific barriers or bring valuable expertise to a participant's delivery plan, is perfectly acceptable on occasion and will be viewed as a valid contribution to the programme. Examples of this might include one-off consultation with local experts e.g. debt counselling, housing support, disability-specific support groups etc.

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- 4.19. Your participant's goals, the activity undertaken to achieve them, together with a note of the support you provided must be logged on their development plan, for inspection by Performance Managers if required. Support will usually be evidenced over a monthly period.

Universal Credit.

For information only

You should be aware that certain Work Choice participants who are Universal Credit claimants may be required to comply with the requirements of a **Claimant Commitment**. The job search activity stipulated in this document will depend on the claimant's personal circumstances and potential to earn, and aims to encourage independence.

For claimants with no restrictions the Claimant Commitment usually requires a 35 hour work-related activity commitment.

A Work Choice participant will have an adjusted Claimant Commitment, indicating that active participation in Work Choice will be accepted as meeting the requirements of their Universal Credit work search activity.

You will not receive a copy of your participant's Claimant Commitment, and you are not required to play any part in enforcing its requirements.

We expect that the normal Work Choice support you give each of your participants will enable them to meet the requirements of their Claimant Commitment, i.e. as usual, your support will:

- fully reflect the development plan that was agreed at your initial in-depth assessment;
- engage your disabled participant in work related activity to the best of their ability; and
- your on-going support will flex to encompass your participant's changing needs throughout their time in your programme.

As normal, you should ensure your participant's Development Plan accurately reflects their achievements to date, agreed actions/targets etc. and they have a fully up-to-date copy to evidence their jobsearch activity.

Permitted Work in Work Choice Pre-Employment Support Module

- 4.20. Permitted Work Rules support the government's commitment to removing barriers to work for people with long term health problems who want to take steps back to work.
- 4.21. Participants in receipt of certain incapacity benefits may be permitted to undertake some part-time work to help with the transition into long-term work. If, in Module One, you are assisting a participant who is in receipt of a qualifying benefit, you and your participant may wish to consider a period of part time Permitted Work as an interim step to achieving their goal of working 16 hours per week.
- 4.22. Please see [Annex 5](#) for further information about Permitted Work.

Universal Credit.

Note: There is no concept of Permitted Work under Universal Credit. Instead there are enhanced work allowances or earnings disregards which become applicable under certain circumstances.

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