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Department for Work and Pensions

Work Programme Live Running Memo

To: Work Programme Providers

Cc: Category Managers
Senior Performance Managers
Performance Managers

From: Work Programme Team

Memo Serial Number: WP184

Date: 30 March 2015

Subject: Extended Period of Sickness (EPS) - JSA participants only

Action: For Information and action

Timing: 30 March 2015

Background

Currently, participants claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) are allowed two periods of sickness of up to 14 days per job-seeking period.

If the participant subsequently reports a further period of sickness or a longer period of sickness their claim to JSA is terminated and they are advised to claim Employment Support Allowance (ESA).

Summary and action

From 30/03/15 if a JSA participant suffers a third or a longer period of sickness, they can volunteer to stay on JSA for up to 13 weeks in a rolling 12 month period on an Extended Period of Sickness (EPS) rather than claim ESA. The EPS is one continuous period of 13 weeks or less and cannot be split into separate periods. The 12 month rolling period is calculated from the first date of the EPS.

The choice to take an EPS is voluntary, but if they do decide to stay on JSA, participants are expected to remain close to the labour market, with personalised conditionality and support tailored to their health condition or illness. The Jobcentre Plus (JCP) Work Coach will agree with them their temporary conditionality.

An EPS can last for up to 13 weeks and the participant must provide supporting medical evidence, for example, a Statement of Fitness for Work (known as a Fit Note) from their GP.

You will be notified of an EPS by the Jobcentre Plus Work Coach using form WP07b. The WP07b will include details of:

- confirmation that the participant is on an EPS;
- the start and end dates of the EPS;
- details of their conditionality (whether No conditionality or Limited conditionality); and
- start and end dates of each conditionality period.

On receipt of the WP07b, you should note your records of the dates of the EPS period and tailor your engagement with the participant taking into consideration any conditionality notified by the Jobcentre Plus Work Coach.

Full details of the process are detailed in Chapter 5 of the Work Programme Provider Guidance.

Further information and contact details

All enquiries on the subject of this memo should be raised with your Performance Manager in the first instance.

Regards

Work Programme Team