

Claimants who need help in using our services

1. This guidance aims to help staff identify and make judgements about those claimants for whom it would be more appropriate to deliver services face to face, particularly where it appears the claimant is in need of additional support.
2. Claimants who need help in using our services are those who have difficulty in coping with the demands of our processes when they need to access a service. As a result, they are unlikely to be able to use normal access channels and are likely to benefit from face to face support.
3. For further guidance on dealing with claimants who need our support to use our services, see the Vulnerability Hub

Identification of Claimants who need our help to use our services

4. When considering whether a claimant needs our help to use our services, it is important to talk with them. Vulnerability is not a static state associated with a particular circumstance or situation, it is determined as part of a measured assessment, which may need to be conducted in a matter of seconds.
5. When talking to the claimant assess whether they are, for example:
 - Distressed
 - Not understanding
 - Giving monosyllabic answers
 - Upset
 - Frustrated
6. Use the skills acquired from the learning and development events you should have attended. Focus on your questioning and listening techniques and avoid making assumptions about the claimant.
7. Your experience of dealing with claimants will inform your opinion but ensure this is based on behavioural evidence, which shows the claimant is unlikely to be able to use self help services. Some claimants have disabilities that may need extra personal support or adjustments to enable them to access services. Others may have less obvious conditions.
8. The following may be relevant to identifying vulnerable claimants where they have/are (not an exhaustive list):
 - Mental health conditions
 - Sensory impairments
 - Drug/alcohol dependency
 - Physical disabilities
 - Learning disabilities
 - Diagnosed as Terminally Ill
 - Literacy Levels
 - Language Skills
 - Difficulty in communicating
 - Just left prison
 - Just left hospital
 - Homeless
 - Recently bereaved

- Behaviour that might be a risk to the health and safety of other claimants and/or staff
 - Claimants who have suffered domestic violence or threats
 - Claimants who have recently been a victim of crime
9. We also have legal responsibilities to ensure our services are accessible to people needing language support because of limited English/Welsh.

16/ 17 Year Olds

10. Do not automatically deem 16/17 year old claimants as claimants who need our help to use our services but be sensitive to the needs of this client group, as many young people may need treating as vulnerable. As with other claimants, those who are considered to need our help to use our services, is a matter of judgement, and all staff irrespective of their role must be aware of the help that is available for this particular claimant group.
11. The process which has been agreed for engaging with 16-17 year old ESA claimants is as follows:
- Agent gathers data over the phone.
 - During call wrap up Agent advises the claimant that they have the option to see a Specialist Adviser in their local Jobcentre to discuss their personal circumstances
 - If the claimant's parents are in receipt of Working Tax Credit, this discussions would include working out whether they might be "better off" allowing their parents to continue claiming it.
 - Agent transfers ESA claim to BC for processing.
 - [Optional] Claimant contacts local CSD to discuss personal circumstances with Specialist Adviser.
 - Depending on the outcome claimant may opt to withdraw ESA claim in favour of Working Tax Credit (payable to parents).
 - Learning Focused Interview (LFI) carried out by local Connexions/Careers Service at or after week 9.

(Also see Work Focused Interviews)

Handling Contacts with Claimants who need our help to use our services

12. We have to ask our claimants and their representatives very personal questions at times, and need to do so in a sensitive way. The type of question you ask determines how useful the answer is. The skill is to use/ask the correct type of question to obtain the information you need.
13. When giving information present it in a clear, concise way and ensure the claimant is clear about what they have been told and what to do next. Consider their reactions to be sure they understand what you are saying to them. Use language they can understand, and pitch what you say at a level that suits them without being patronising.

Note: See the Vulnerability Hub for further guidance on the DWP approach to vulnerability.

ESA50 completion for claimants who need help to use our services or claimants requiring additional support

14. When assisting claimants requiring additional support with the completion of an ESA50, it should be made clear that all we can offer is a 'transcribing' service, literally writing down exactly what the claimant replies to the questions asked. Staff should be aware that some claimants may be accompanied by a friend, relative or representative.

Note: The ESA50 transcribing service is available to all claimants on request not just vulnerable claimants.

15. The following Dos and Don'ts should be followed when helping to complete the ESA50:

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| Do | Complete the ESA50 on the claimant's behalf if you have received a request from a contact centre to provide help to the claimant in the completion of the form |
| Do | Read the exact wording of the questions to the claimant |
| Do | Write down the exact wording of the claimants answer |
| Do | Ensure that you read through all the answers and confirm the claimant understands the content |
| Do | Ensure the claimant signs and dates the form |
| Do | Advise the claimant that they may be required to attend an assessment(do not use the word examination) |
| Do | Advise the claimant of the consequences of failure to attend the assessment |
| Don't | Reword the questions on the ESA50 |
| Don't | Prompt the claimant or give advice on what to say on the form |
| Don't | Paraphrase the answers |
| Don't | Let the claimant submit the form unless they fully understand the form and agree the content |
| Don't | Sign the form on the claimant's behalf |
| Don't | Refer claimants to advisory organisations as no agreements are in place with Jobcentre Plus. |

Unexpected ESA50 received

16. Where a completed Limited Capacity for Work Questionnaire (ESA50) is received in a Benefit Centre the following actions should be taken:

- check if there is a live WCA referral in existence via MSRS
- where a live referral exists, forward the ESA50 to the Health Assessment Provider
- if the ESA50 is received within seven days of expiry of the allowable 28 days for return, telephone the Health Assessment Provider to advise them it is on its way.

No live claim exists:

17. Where no live claim exists, take the following actions:

- telephone the claimant to establish if they wish to make a new claim for ESA
- undertake a warm handover to CCD to take the claim if appropriate

- where telephone contact with the claimant is unsuccessful, send a SMS message requesting the claimant to make contact
- where no telephone contact details are available, write to the claimant to establish the reasons for completion of the ESA50 or
- where the claimant is vulnerable, request an immediate home visit.

Live ESA claim exists

18. Where a live ESA claim exists, take the following action:

- check for the previous FTRQ status and take action as instructed.

Providing Extra Support

19. For claimants who are unable to use our preferred channel and need face to face assistance, ensure that you take into account their individual needs. Generally, the claimant knows best what these are so ask them rather than assume what they might need. Offer or arrange another appropriate service as appropriate.
20. Where the claimant has a known background of mental illness there are minimum requirements that Jobcentre Plus should be adopting to ensure that we are not found to be neglectful in our duty of care towards these claimants. The minimum requirements are:
 - Where the claimant has been attending a Psychiatric Unit, a liaison officer should be appointed to maintain good communications between Jobcentre Plus and the Patients Affairs Officer.
 - Where it is known that the claimant has a social worker designated to them we should liaise closely with Social Services Department.
 - All cases, where there is a known history of mental illness, should be referred to a manager before a decision is made to withdraw benefit. The definition of a manager is Band C or above.
21. For claimants who have physical disabilities or sensory impairments, take account of their relevant health/disability issues or other individual needs.
22. See further guidance in Claimant Needs Details Applet.
23. Some claimants are capable of using our preferred channels but choose not to. It is important to stress to these claimants the simplicity and advantages of using preferred channels. Explain the use of the Internet and the telephone services. If the claimant still insists that they require face to face services try to establish why this is necessary before booking an appointment with the relevant team/colleague.

Useful Information/ Links

- Access to Jobcentre Plus Services
- Blind or Visually Impaired Claimants
- Hearing Facilities
- Jobcentre Plus Diversity & Equality - Reasonable Adjustments
- Claimant service – helping you to deal with claimants with different needs
- Hidden impairments
- Vulnerability Hub
- Dealing with Text Phone Calls

24. Text phones have been developed for use by speech and hearing impaired people for whom the voice telephone may be of little value.
25. Text phones (often referred to as 'Minicomms') incorporate a keyboard and a digital visual display. They enable two people, both using text phones, to communicate by exchanging typed messages which are displayed on the text phone's visual display facility and, usually, on a print facility.
26. The text phone model most commonly used by Jobcentre Plus is the 'Minicom 7000+'. It features an integrated printer that enables the user to print a copy of any conversations, if and when required.
27. If the claimant wishes to make a new claim over a Textphone, signpost them to the CC and provide the relevant textphone number using Contact Centre User Enquiry Service (FIND).
28. If the claimant is not comfortable making the claim by Textphone in English, issue an ESA1 claim form to the claimant to complete and sign.
29. If the claimant is reporting a change of circumstance, enquiring about an appeal or making a case specific enquiry proceed with the enquiry. If required printed copies of the conversation can be passed to the appropriate person for reply or can be forwarded for filing in the claimant's documents.
30. If the claimant has difficulty using the textphone and is likely to benefit from face-to-face support, signpost them to the Jobcentre Vulnerability Hub . If the call is relevant to another BC, signpost them to the correct BC and provide them with the relevant textphone number by using Benefit User Enquiry Service (FIND)
31. Enquiries not relevant to Jobcentre Plus (e.g. those related to other Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) benefits, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and/or Local Authority (LA)) should be signposted to the relevant organisation.
32. If the claimant needs to contact another government department, use the Intranet link to CLUES. Then provide the claimant with the textphone number so that they can contact them directly.
33. For more information on using the 'Minicom' 7000+ Text Phone see:

Procurement, Installation and Use of Textphones (includes 'Operational Problems')

Dealing with Welsh Speakers

34. If the claimants preferred language is Welsh advise the claimant to re-dial 0800 01 21 888.

Dealing with Non-English Speakers

35. The Inbound Call SmartScript contains the salutation to the claimant and the first questions asking the claimant if they are able to continue the conversation in English. If the claimant indicates that they are not comfortable with English the next question in the SmartScript asks the claimant their preferred language of contact.
36. If the claimant is unable to speak English attempt to find a suitable in-house interpreter to whom the call can be transferred – your team leader will tell you about agents who can take calls in languages other than English and the procedure for this.

37. The inbound-call SmartScript allows you to put the claimant on hold whilst searching for an available agent with the appropriate language skills to take the call.
38. If no 'in-house' translation is available, you should use interpreting services to bring a translator on to the call.
39. When the call is transferred to another agent with the appropriate language skills or an interpreting services translator is brought onto the call the claimant **MUST** be advised that their call will be recorded for claim purposes as well as language in their preferred language.
40. See the bigword guidance for information about using the service.

| Step | Action |
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| 1 | <p>Ask the claimant which language they wish to use.</p> <p>Explain to the claimant that they need to wait a moment whilst an interpreter is made available, and put them on hold using the icon on the Siebel CTI Communication Toolbar.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Use the three way call functionality (see Handling Conference Calls) and contact interpreter services on 0800 321 3015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the buttons on the handset, enter “99” followed by your 6 digit cost centre code. The “99” is the DWP’s access number into the system. Your cost centre code verifies your authorisation to access the system. • Using the buttons on your handset, enter your 8 Digit Staff Number. Your Staff Number is the final part of the authorisation process. • Using the buttons on your handset, enter the Language Code to take you to Language code page required. Each language you wish to communicate with has a unique language code. If you have a desktop reference chart – this also lists the main languages. You may also listen to the menu of frequently requested languages and select the required code. • Using the buttons on your handset, press “0” to connect to a Claimant Care Representative for assistance, at any time. They can help with any queries or assist you in the process. • Using the buttons on your handset, press “700” for a Language Identify Agent. After listening to your claimant, the Agent will put you through to the required language. |

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| 3 | <p>Wait on the line, you will then be put through to an interpreter and then outline the nature of your call. If an interpreter is available, click the Hold button to bring the claimant into the conversation and continue the call as normal. Speak to the claimant rather than addressing the interpreter during the rest of the call. When the interpreter joins the call it will be necessary to advise the claimant that their call will be recorded for claim purposes as well as language in their preferred language.</p> <p>When the call is complete, click the <i>call wrap up</i> button to take the claimant through the call wrap up script with the interpreter on the line – do not click the <i>release call</i> button to end the call with thebigword until you no longer require the interpreter.</p> <p>Where the claimant requires the use of an interpreter, note the details of the interpreter and how to contact them on the claimant's record in Labour Market System (LMS) using Notes (see 'Notes' in LMS Data Standards Directory) and in CAM (see Claimant Needs Screen in CAM System Reference Guide). This is to assist with any future contact with the claimant.</p> |
| 4 | <p>If interpreter services are unavailable or if it is not an appropriate time for the call (e.g. if interpreter services do not have a translator with the required language at that time, or the claimant requires/requests a call back) attempt to resolve the situation in consultation with the Team Leader and depending on the individual circumstances e.g. if the claimant can speak enough English to understand the details of a call back, toggle to the Call Booking System (CBS) , agree a slot for a call-back with the claimant and assign the case to the 'Outbound Call Queue', see: Outbound Contact – Call Handling.</p> <p>To connect back to the claimant and complete the call, click the <i>release call</i> button on the toolbar.</p> |