

Core Visit Referral Guidance

DWP Visiting – Who are we and what do we do?

1. DWP Visiting help those customers/claimants who are unable to complete their business transaction through any of the other channels. This may be due to their vulnerability or the complexity of the transaction required, or may be driven by a legislative requirement that some activities MUST be handled face to face. DWP Visiting will support the customer/claimant by undertaking home visits

What is the difference between Customer Compliance and DWP Visiting?

2. Responsibility for undertaking Core Visits transferred from Customer Compliance to DWP Visiting in February 2011.

3. Local Services Compliance undertake robust office interviews and visits with customers in order to:

- ensure their benefit is correct
- uncover irregularities
- prevent possible future fraud and
- encourage customers to report changes promptly

They look at all types of fraud in respect of all benefits, for example 'working whilst in receipt', 'doubtful disability' and 'living as a couple', this list is not exhaustive.

4. For information on visits undertaken by Customer Compliance Officers (CCO) see the **Local Services Compliance Instructions**. DWP Visiting only undertake these visits when requested by the Local Services Compliance team and should not be referred direct.

5. DWP Visiting carry out all other visits. See **Overview of Core Visits** (link is external below, it details a set of scenarios where a core referral is appropriate, and where relevant benefit processing instructions identifies the need for a visit, However, it cannot identify every scenario where a visit would be the best approach, and for this reason you should apply a degree of judgement to each situation and consider whether a referral to DWP Visiting may be the best approach.

Overview of Core Visits

1. As Core Visit involves vulnerable customers/claimants. The Core Visits type list indicates when a Core Visit is appropriate however referrals may be applicable for other customers/claimants and scenarios (see Non Core Visits).

2. Due to the vast range and technicality of the benefits and services dealt with by the Department and the requirement to keep abreast of all changes, it is not possible for Visiting Officers to deliver all services at a home visit. They will deliver certain key services which are described in the guidance for each Core Visit type.

3. If the visit is to a vulnerable customer/claimant or a customer/claimant with a mental health or learning difficulty, two attempts at an effective visit is made. In all other cases, one attempt.

Core Visit types

4. The following list shows the different types of Core visit that DWP Visiting will undertake, however remember this list is not exhaustive. For further information click on the appropriate link:

- Benefit Cap
- Benefit Integrity Cases (BIC) for ESA and IS
- Bereavement Benefit
- Civil Penalty (Overpayment)
- Delivery of Overpayment Recoverability Notification
- Employment and Support Allowance
- ESA 50
- Habitual Residence Test
- Incapacity Benefit (including IB (IS) reassessment)
- Income Support
- Industrial Injuries and Disablement Benefit
- Learning Focused Interviews
- Lone Parents
- Lone Parent Obligation Changes
- Safeguard visits
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Universal Credit FTA a WCA
- Universal Credit FTA or participate in a mandatory appointment
- Universal Credit other scenarios
- Work Focused Interviews ESA claimants
- Work Focused Interviews Lone parents
- Work Focused Interviews partners

5. A desk aid containing a brief summary of the following is available – Core Visit Referral Desk Aid(link is external)

Benefit Cap

Where appropriate: Visits to vulnerable claimants to:

- answer Benefit Cap questions following a Benefit Cap being applied,
- signposting to the any relevant organisation and
- to assist with the completion of "Grace Period declaration" where requested

Aim of visit: To explain the impact the Benefit Cap has or has had (if the Benefit Cap has been applied) on their benefit claim, signposting to the any relevant services and to assist with the completion of "Grace Period declaration"

Benefit Integrity Cases (BIC) for ESA and IS

Where appropriate: Visit to vulnerable claimants who fail to respond to a benefit integrity case review letter. The definition of a vulnerable claimant is determined by the benefit type.

Aim of visit: To find out why the claimant has not responded to the review letter; to ensure the claimant understands their obligations in complying with the review; to carry out a full review and complete either ESA2 or A2.

Bereavement Benefit

Where appropriate: Visit to vulnerable customers/claimants who are not collecting their payments; all Habit and Repute cases (applies to Scotland only); all verification of a marriage (referrals made by the Relationship Validation Unit.

[Habit and Repute cases (applicable to Scotland only) may require up to 4 visits per case, as the customer/claimant and up to three witnesses will need to be visited. See the Habit and Repute guide(link is external) for information on dealing with these cases.]

Aim of visit: To assist the customer/claimant as requested in the visit referral.

Civil Penalty (Overpayment)

Where appropriate: To visit vulnerable claimants identified as having an overpayment caused by claimant error where more information is required from the claimant to determine whether a Civil Penalty will apply.

Aim of visit: To gather information for the Decision Maker to determine whether a Civil Penalty will apply.

Delivery of Overpayment Recoverability Notification

Where appropriate: To visit vulnerable customers/claimants due to receive an overpayment recoverability notification.

Note: Although the customer/claimant's claim may be dormant they are still a customer of DWP and a visit still applies.

Aim of visit: To issue the overpayment recoverability notification and to ensure that:

- the customer/claimant is made aware of the overpayment in a sensitive manner
- the customer/claimant is not alone when learning of the overpayment
- to discuss the subject of the expected repayment

Employment and Support Allowance – Legislation Changes: entitlement due to exhaust

Where appropriate: Visit to ESA claimants with a mental health condition or learning difficulties, whose ESA (C) case is due to exhaust.

Aim of visit: To check their potential entitlement to ESA (IR). If it is considered that the claimant may be entitled to ESA (IR) after their ESA (C) exhausts, help the claimant complete an ESA3.

Employment and Support Allowance – Failed to Attend Work Capability Assessment

Where appropriate: Visit to ESA claimants with a mental health condition or learning difficulties, who have failed to attend or participate in their WCA which may result in a full disallowance or sanction of their ESA.

Aim of visit: To ensure the claimant fully understands their obligations to satisfy the conditions of entitlement to benefit and the implications of not attending/participating in their WCA, including recording good cause for non attendance/participation reasons. Appointments for WCA are issued directly to the claimant by the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA).

Employment and Support Allowance – Failed to Attend Work Focused Interview

Where appropriate: Visit to ESA claimants with a mental health condition or learning difficulties, who have failed to attend or participate in a mandatory WFI and may also have failed to undertake work related activity.

Aim of visit: To ensure the claimant fully understands their obligations to satisfy the conditions of entitlement to benefit and the implications of not attending/participating in their WFI, including recording good cause for non attendance/participation reasons and the implications of not undertaking Work Related Activity when directed to do so.

Employment and Support Allowance – other scenarios

In addition to the above the following visit types are appropriate for claimants with mental health conditions or learning difficulties who need help with any of the following –

- Appeals(link is external)
- Appointee action(link is external)
- Claim form enquiries
- Customer/claimant complaints
- MP enquiries
- Misdirection cases(link is external)
- SDP awards
- Security visits (For example: Lost papers/documents or valuables reported as not received by Jobcentre Plus)

ESA 50

Where appropriate: Visit to vulnerable claimants needing help to complete an ESA50 (Consideration before making a referral(link is external)).

Note: Make the claimant aware that the Visiting Officer will provide a transcribing service only to help manage their expectations of the Visiting Officers role in supporting them.

Aim of visit: to provide a transcribing service to complete an ESA50 recording exactly what the claimant says in response to the questions as worded on their questionnaire. Refer to the Baseline Core visit guidance- ESA50(link is external)

Habitual Residence Test

Where appropriate: Visit to vulnerable customers who are unable to complete the eHRT without support and are unable to attend the office.

Aim of visit: To support the customer in completing the eHRT by telephone and/or gathering information for the Decision Maker.

Incapacity Benefit

Where appropriate: Claimants with a mental health condition or learning difficulties and who need help with any of the following –

- Appointee action
- Claim form completion
- Customer/claimant complaints
- MP enquiries
- Misdirection cases;
- Security visits (eg lost case papers)
- Conditionality visits (eg where Claimant fails to comply with process)

Income Support

Where appropriate: All IS claimants who require appointee action, and vulnerable claimants who need help with any of the following -

- Appeals
- Customer/claimant complaints
- Misdirection cases
- MP enquiries
- Security visits (eg lost papers/documents or valuables reported as not received by Jobcentre Plus)
- SDP awards

Industrial Injuries and Disablement Benefit

Where appropriate: Visit to claimants diagnosed as suffering from Mesothelioma (Prescribed Disease (PD) D3) or Asbestosis/lung cancer caused by Asbestos (Prescribed Disease D8/D8A)

Aim of visit: To ascertain entitlement to Constant Attendance Allowance (CAA). [All PD D3 and many D8/D8A cases become entitled to IIDB without the need for a medical examination because of their short life expectancy. Those who become entitled to IIDB without an examination will require a visit to ascertain CAA entitlement.]

Learning Focused Interviews - 16/17 year olds, non-JSA Claimants

Where appropriate: Visit to vulnerable claimants who have failed to attend one appointment for their initial or life event trigger Learning Focused Interview (LFI), and all claimants who have failed to attend one appointment for their initial or life event

trigger Learning Focused Interview and have not had the LFI conditionality requirements explained to them.

Aim of visit: To take action as detailed in the 16/17 Year Old ESA Claimants Guidance(link is external). In addition if during the course of a LFI visit the claimant agrees to attend a LFI, the visiting officer will attempt to telephone the referring section to arrange an appointment for the LFI and will issue the appropriate letter to the claimant at the visit to confirm the appointment.

Lone Parents

Where appropriate: Visit to Lone Parent claimants on Income Support who have not attended a WFI, have not attended an Options and Choices Event or have failed to attend a voluntary interview.

Aim of visit: To ensure the claimant understands their obligations in satisfying the conditions of entitlement to benefit and the implications of not attending the interview.

Lone Parents Obligation (LPO) Changes

Where appropriate: All Lone Parents whose benefit is due to cease within 4 weeks, and where there have been at least two attempts to contact the claimant

Aim of visit: To ensure the claimant fully understands the Lone Parent Obligation changes, what it means for them and to prevent the inappropriate termination of their benefit and to explain to the Claimant that their Income Support is coming to an end because of the changes to the law in respect of the age of their youngest child and that they should contact their Advisor at the Jobcentre for more details or for further help and support.

Safeguard Visits

Where appropriate: To ensure that vulnerable claimants have the opportunity to be seen face to face to have the implications of failing to comply with the health journey medical evidence requirements and WCA requirements fully explained.

Aim of visit: To ensure that the claimant fully understands the requirements placed on them by Universal Credit and the implications of not attending or complying with the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) requirements, including the provision of medical evidence until the WCA outcome decision is made, and including where appropriate, recording good reason for non attendance.

Also if during the course of a WCA visit the claimant agrees to attend or comply with a WCA appointment, to advise the claimant they may be referred for further assessment.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Where appropriate: All claimants in receipt of SDA where appointee action is being considered

Aim of visit: Refer to Agents Appointees Attorneys and Deputies Guide(link is external)

Universal Credit – Failed to attend Work Capability Assessment

Where appropriate: UC claimants with a mental health condition, learning difficulties or are deemed vulnerable, and have failed to attend all or part of their WCA which could result in the claimant leaving the health journey and affect their conditionality.

Aim of Visit: To ensure the claimant fully understands the requirements placed on them by Universal Credit and the implications of not attending their WCA, including recording good reason for non attendance. Appointments for WCA are issued directly to the claimant by the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA).

Universal Credit – Failed to attend or participate in a mandatory appointment

Where appropriate: UC claimants with a mental health condition, learning difficulties or who are deemed vulnerable, and have failed to attend all or participate in any mandatory appointments and may have failed to meet their work related requirements.

Aim of visit: To ensure the claimant fully understands the requirements placed on them by Universal Credit and the implications of not attending appointments with their work coach, including recording good reason for non attendance and the implications of not meeting their work related requirements.

Universal Credit – Other Scenarios

In addition to the above the following visit types are appropriate for claimants with mental health conditions, learning difficulties or deemed vulnerable and need help with any of the following:

- Appeals
- Appointee Action
- Customers complaints
- MP enquiries
- Misdirection
- Claim information gathering
- Security visits (e.g Lost papers/documents or valuables reported as not received by Jobcentre Plus)
- UC Claim Issue

Universal Credit – Help to complete UC50

Where appropriate: Vulnerable claimants who need help to complete an UC50 (Consideration before making a referral)

Note: Make the claimant aware that the Visiting Officer will provide a transcribing service only.

Aim of visit: To provide a transcribing service to complete an UC50 recording exactly what the claimant says in response to the questions as worded on their questionnaire.

Work Focused Interviews – ESA Claimants

Where appropriate: Visit to all ESA claimants who have failed to attend or failed to participate in a mandatory WFI (either a New Joiner's Work Focused Interview (NJWFI) or a Flexible Intervention) and have not had the requirement to attend WFIs explained to them verbally, or claimants with mental health conditions or learning difficulties who have failed to attend or failed to participate in a mandatory WFI, even if there has been verbal contact at the pre WFI contact stage.

Aim of visit: To ensure the claimant fully understands their obligations to satisfy the conditions of entitlement to benefit and the implications of not attending their WFI, including recording good cause for non attendance and the implications of not undertaking Work Related Activity when directed to do so.

Also where the claimant agrees to do so, to arrange and agree a new WFI.

Work Focused Interviews – Lone Parents

Where appropriate: All Lone Parents who have failed to attend their initial WFI and have not had the requirement to attend a WFI explained to them and vulnerable Lone Parents who fail to attend a subsequent WFI

Aim of visit: To ensure the claimant understands their obligations to satisfy the conditions of entitlement to benefit and the implications of not attending the interview. (See Lone Parent WFI(link is external) guidance)

Work Focused Interviews – partners

Where appropriate: Visit to all claimants with partners who have failed to attend their initial WFI and have not had the requirement to attend WFIs explained to them, and vulnerable claimants with partners who have failed to attend a WFI.

Aim of visit: To ensure that the partner understands the obligations to satisfy the conditions of entitlement to benefit and the implications of not attending the interview. (See Failed to Participate Process for WFI(P)(link is external) and Vulnerable Partners(link is external))

Non Core Visits

6. Details of when a Core Visit is appropriate is covered above however, not every scenario where a visit would be the best approach is covered, and for this reason

you should apply a degree of judgement to each situation and consider whether a referral to DWP Visiting may be the best approach.

Considerations before making a referral

7. Before making a non-core referral to DWP Visiting consider whether you have taken all reasonable action to assist the customer/claimant:

- have you attempted to clear the query by correspondence or by phone
- could the customer/claimant be supported using preferred existing customer/claimant support channels in a Jobcentre with a face to face appointment, or telephony support
- are there any other channels of support available to assist this customer/claimant's needs for instance do they have a family member, support person or carer who can help
- is it safe for a Visiting Officer (alone or accompanied) to carry out a home visit

If you have tried or considered all of these and a home visit is the only remaining (and safe) option to support the customer/claimant refer to DWP Visiting following the Referral Guidance.

Making the referral

1. Make a referral to DWP Visiting where it is appropriate and where it is safe to do so and there is no perceived or identified risk to the Visiting Officer.

2. Use the DWP Referral tool(link is external) to make all referrals for a Core Visit.

3. Before completing the template you must check the Staff protection list/Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB) list to confirm any special interest markers.

4. The check for UCB may identify that the claimant's records are restricted due to having a Special Customer Record(link is external) (SCR).

5. The claimant's LMS or Work Services Platform (WSP) record may be noted in accordance with Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) rules. (link is external)

6. To prevent unnecessary visits check before making a referral that:

- all approved methods of contact have been tried/considered
- Legacy systems and LMS/WSP hold up to date addresses and telephone numbers

Completing the template

1. To make a Core Visit referral see How to make a referral to DWP visiting - Completion of template(link is external) which explains:

- how the template must be completed and
- the referral includes all relevant information

2. Open the template and save a copy of the form.

3. Ensure all mandatory boxes are completed fully, including any appointee or prospective appointee details, as the referral will be returned if the form is incomplete.

4. It is essential that prior to referral the referring officer identifies any special indicators, including SCR(link is external) and MAPPA(link is external) cases and completes the special indicator tick box. LMS and the SPL(link is external) (Staff Protection List) should be checked for any evidence that indicates potential risk to the safety of a home visiting officer. This may include reports of erratic behaviour or unacceptable behaviour that have not been logged on the Staff Protection List. Identify and advise Visiting of potential risk, Visiting will determine, based on a risk assessment, how to conduct the visit.

5. Send completed templates to the DWP Visiting Team, for more information on how to do this refer to Making the electronic referral

Completeness

6. Definition: Sufficient information to confirm the identity of the claimant or prospective appointee, establish the reason for the visit and sufficient information to be able to book and perform the visit with all the required outcomes

Contact Details

7. It is essential that the telephone number included in the referring officer contact details section is one that will be manned at all times as the visiting officer may need to use this during the visit to rearrange an office interview.

8. It may be necessary, in exceptional circumstances, for the visiting officer to give this number to the claimant when

- it is not possible to arrange the appointment at the time of the visit or
- the claimant contacts the visiting officer by telephone after two ineffective visits to discuss re-engagement

Customer Condition

9. Provide details of the claimant's condition in the template Notes box. If details are not available, for example because the referring officer is unable to access clerical papers held in remote storage, complete the field with 'Information not available'.

10. If the referral is not for a vulnerable customer or an ESA claimant with a mental health or learning difficulty or UC claimant with complex needs it must be made clear on the template why a visit is required.

Misdirection

11. If the visit is required following the claimant making an allegation of misdirection by the department. The referring officer must forward:

- a copy of the letter from the Claimant alleging misdirection

- a summary of the background issues from the benefit sections
- guidance on the questions to be asked at the visit, to provide a structure to obtain the relevant information.
- all documentation relevant to the referral, by courier, to the appropriate Booking Centre on the same day as the electronic referral is made.

12. The documentation must be clearly marked with:

- the claimant's details, and
- the date of the referral

Appeals Visits

13. Occasionally, a visit is required to resolve an issue in order for an appeal to proceed satisfactorily. The referring officer will set out the specific purpose, aims and objectives of the visit on the referral template. The referral will be returned if the purpose of the visit is not clear.

Appointee Visits

14. A visit to the claimant may be required to establish that an appointee is required. Refer to the Agents Appointees Attorneys and Deputies Guide(link is external).

15. The referring officer completes a referral template, including if required, the request for the Visiting Officer to carry out a review of the current claim, and forward it electronically to DWP Visiting requesting that a visit is made to establish whether an appointee is required by taking the following action:

16. The referral must contain full details of any prospective appointee including name, Nino. address, contact details and relationship to claimant. If these are not available the referrer must include an explanatory note in the referral.

Step Action

1. emailing the template to DWP Visiting, noting any hard copy documents to follow, where applicable;

2. updating "notepad" or CAMLite contact history with details of action taken;

3. upon receiving the template for an appointee referral and any hardcopy documents, DWP Visiting will arrange to visit the claimant and prospective appointee and;

4. at the visit, form BF56 is completed as appropriate and review action taken if required.

No Fixed Abode Referrals/visit address unknown

17. Referrals received without a visit address will be rejected. The referrer must have agreed a visit address with the claimant before making the referral.

18. The visit address does not have to be the claimant's residential address, however it should not be a Jobcentre or similar Government building as it would be expected that the claimant would be interviewed by the Jobcentre and therefore a visit would not be appropriate.

19. Where the claimant has declared that they are 'No Fixed Abode (NFA) or Person Without Address (PWA)', a referral can only be made if a visit address, correspondence address and telephone number has been obtained and there is reasonable expectation of the Booking Agent being able to contact the claimant by telephone ie: NFA/PWA referrals where contact with the claimant hasn't been possible would not be appropriate.

20. A correspondence address is required in all cases in order to send a confirmation letter. This can be the same as the visit address but the referrer must make this clear.

Making the electronic referral

All referrals for a Core Visit to DWP Visiting will be dealt with by the local Visiting Team

2. Locate the DWP Visiting Referral tool(link is external) and:

Step Action

1.Input the post code of the claimant's address and select 'Submit'

2.Contact details for the Booking Centre will display.

3.Open the template hyperlink under the heading 'Making a referral'

4.Select the email hyperlink.

5.A new email page will open.

6.Complete the email subject line in the following order :

- Postcode
- Claimant's surname

7. Attach the completed template to the email.

3. The referral officer must note JSAPS Dialogue110, CAMLite Contact History if UC colleague and or LMS:

- the referral completion,
- the date of the referral
- a brief description why the visit is required
- contact details of the referring officer/section
- details of the Visiting Team sent to

Documentation

4. Send all documentation relevant to the referral electronically using the email obtained from the DWP Visiting Referral tool(link is external)

5. Exceptionally if it is not possible to send the supporting documentation electronically it must be sent, by courier, to the appropriate Visiting Team on the same day as the electronic referral ensuring that the Visiting Team are made aware.

6. The documentation must be clearly marked with the:

- claimant's details, and
- date of the referral.

WFI Interview arranged by DWP Visiting

Prior to the visit DWP Visiting telephone the claimant to book the visit, if during this conversation the claimant now agrees to attend the WFI or UC Mandatory Appointment, DWP Visiting will telephone the adviser/DASO/work coach giving the claimant's details.

2. The adviser/DASO/work coach must book the appointment and telephone the claimant back to confirm the arrangements.

3. The completed report is returned by DWP Visiting and must be retained until the WFI interview or UC appointment date.

Customer Agrees to attend WFI or UC Mandatory Appointment during DWP Visiting Booking conversation

4. If the claimant fails to attend the arranged WFI or UC Mandatory Appointment raise a new referral explaining the circumstances leading to the 2nd referral, giving the date and time of the failed WFI/appointment.

Cancelling the referral or visit

If following a referral for a Core Visit, and prior to the visit taking place:

- the claimant contacts the advisor/work coach, for example, to book a new WFI/UC mandatory appointment, or

- the referral officer receives information that the visit is no longer required, for example, notification that the claimant has left the country, etc, consider cancelling the Core Visit.

2. Send an e-mail to DWP Visiting to notify the visit is not required; the email address can be located via the DWP Visiting referral tool.

3. The subject line of the email must be in the following order:

- Postcode
- Claimant surname
- ‘Visit not required’
- Appropriate restricted marking

Contact from the Claimant

. If following a second ineffective visit the claimant telephones, check the details of why the referral was made and the referring officer/section in:

- JSAPS Dialogue110
- CAMLite Contact History if UC colleague or
- LMS

2. Progress the claimant’s query by referring the conversation to the referring officer/section.

Tracking a referral

Providing the referrer has given a valid email address they will receive regular updates about the referral. If the visit is outstanding more than 21 days the referrer contacts the Visiting Team using the contact details in the DWP Referral Tool.

Outcome of visit

When the Core Visit action is completed, the visit outcome is normally be returned electronically to the referring officer, with the exception where the referral was made by a Contact Centre the visit outcome will be returned electronically to the relevant Benefit Centre as identified in the template.

2. If documentation was sent, for example claim forms etc, the Outcome Report will be:

- printed and
- attached to the documents and
- returned by courier

3. Where the Visiting Officer obtains details of any changes affecting benefits, they will record this on the Outcome Report. The Visiting Officer will direct the change in circumstance to the relevant processing site.

4. If the Visiting Officer obtains change of details which do not relate to the benefit claim, for example a change of telephone number, they will provide full details on the Outcome Report.

5. On receipt of the Outcome Report, record any non benefit related changes on the appropriate IT system, JSAPS/ LMS/OPSTRAT/CAMLite.

6. Note the outcome of the Core Visit with the details from the report in:

- JSAPS Dialogue 110
- CAMLite Contact History if UC colleagues, or
- LMS

7. Print a copy of the Outcome Report and retain it with the claimant's case papers in line with normal retention rules.

Contact with DWP VISITING

1. If DWP Visiting staff telephone Jobcentre Plus or Universal Credit colleagues, the caller's identity must be verified.