

Spotlight on: National Insurance Credit Error Handling Service

Introduction

The aim of this spotlight is to help case managers and their team leaders to understand how to use the National Insurance Credits Error Handling Service (EHS). This includes how to access the service and select error cases to investigate and take corrective action in Electronic National Insurance Recording System (eNIRS) or refer for third party intervention.

Users undertaking NI credits correction work require knowledge and access to eNIRS, Universal Credit service and Customer Information System (CIS).

National Insurance credits

National Insurance Credits (NIC) can be awarded when a person is not paying National Insurance (NI) because they are ill or unemployed and claiming benefits.

These credits can help to fill gaps in a person's NI record, making sure they qualify for certain benefits including State Pension.

Claimants getting Universal Credit are automatically awarded Class 3 credits.

Liability

DWP sends HMRC information on the start and end date of a claim and if any, dates for periods of limited capability for work (LCW) and limited capability for work related activity (LCWRA).

These dates and periods are referred to as liability dates and periods.

The information sent to HMRC refers to Universal Credit assessment periods (APs) and is sent in a particular format and sequence as follows:

- UC start date only
- LCW/ LCWRA start date only
- LCW/ LCWRA end date (with start date for the claim period)

- UC end date (with start date for the claim period)
Note: the 3-month relevant period does not apply to periods of LCW/LCWRA.
Any period of LCW/LCWRA must sit within or be equal to a Universal Credit claim period otherwise it will error and cannot be processed by HMRC.
Claimants may have a number of these liability types, UC or LCW/LCWRA recorded within a tax year.
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National Insurance Credit service

The NIC service collects the UC and/or LCW/LCWRA dates as a batch period, generally for a tax year.

HMRC compares this information with the information they hold for the claimants National Insurance contributions and either send back to DWP:

- a success message confirming the transaction is complete; or
- an error message advising the transaction has been rejected with a reason why.

Liability dates that have been successfully processed are visible in eNIRS.

Error cases that need correction are made available to users via the NIC EHS.

The error cases must be investigated to understand the problem and to correct the conflicting information. They often relate to liability dates being processed in the wrong order or liability periods of the same liability type UC or LCW/ LCWRA overlapping each other.

Where liability dates in a sequence are rejected by HMRC, then subsequent liabilities in the sequence are blocked until the error case is fixed.

Once the error case is corrected and successfully processed, the next liability date in the sequence is sent to HMRC and is either processed successfully or errors.

The process is repeated until all liability dates in the sequence are successfully processed.

Dates on the error cases collected from the EHS are deemed correct.

National Insurance Credit Error Handling Service

Users working on the error cases are provided with a web link to access the EHS. You must be logged into Universal Credit on a different webpage for the web link to work.

When in EHS and on the landing page you are presented with 3 subpage tabs entitled:

- Select next case
- Search for a case
- Referred cases.

The select next case page is selected as a default but you may switch between pages by selecting the required tab.

Select next case

The select next case page gives access to the error cases that need investigating.

The dropdown list provides the option to select an error case at random from “**All error cases**” or choose a case from a list of available error types to action.

Select an error type and click “**work on next case**” to be directed to the error case details page.

When all cases of an error type have been actioned, that error type is removed from the drop-down list.

When all error cases have been actioned regardless of type, the dropdown list is removed and the message “**There are no new errors to fix**” is displayed.

Error case details page

Details of the case are displayed down the left hand side of the page as follows:

- Claimant name
- Claimant ID
- NINO
- Date of birth
- Liability start date:
- Liability end date: provided only if the error case is an end liability
- Liability type: UC or LCW/ LCWRA.

There are also two subpages the user can select, the overview page and the history page.

Between them, these subpages provide details of the error, guidance and support on how to fix the error, and a process to record the outcome.

Overview page

The overview page also provides the following information:

- Hint text: provided when the claimant has multiple claimant IDs
- Reason for error: description of the error type
- How to fix this error: scenarios with guidance on how to fix that error type

When the overview page displays hint text stating “The claimant has multiple claimant IDs” the user is prompted to use the History page.

The following are examples of liability date errors and the action to take:

1. The error case is a start date, and HMRC already hold an open start date from an earlier claim period, visible in eNIRS. HMRC will not accept the error case start date until the earlier claim period is closed with an end date.

The fix is to identify in UCFS or CIS when the earlier period finished and manually enter the end date in eNIRS. The end of the earlier claim period must not overlap with the start of the error case claim period. If it does, the end date of the earlier claim period should be amended to the day before the error case start date.

This allows the error case start date to be resent to HMRC for successful processing.

2. The error case is an end date and the last date processed by HMRC was an end date, visible in eNIRS. HMRC will not accept the error case end date until a corresponding start date has been entered for the error case claim period.

The fix is to manually input the start date of the error case end liability in eNIRS. The start date can be found in the error case details page. Liability periods cannot overlap, so the earlier dates already held in eNIRS may need to be changed or deleted to accommodate the error case start date and end date.

This allows the error case end date to be resent to HMRC for successful processing.

History Page

The claimant may have multiple claim periods within a claimant ID and multiple claimant IDs within a tax year.

Each claimant ID and the sequences within that ID need to be fixed independently of the other claimant IDs. This means that the EHS may hold more than one error case for the same claimant.

Multiple error cases for the same claimant are not made available for selection in date order. To help users with this scenario the history page displays how the error cases sit within the claimant's sequence of liabilities.

The history page provides the:

- claimant IDs,
- Liability type (UC or LCW/ LCWRA)
- Liability start date
- Liability end date (provided only if the liability is an end date)
- Status of the liability date
- Error description (only populated if that liability date has been rejected by HMRC).

The user should aim to fix the error cases in the history page in date order, earliest first. A link is available against each error case so the user can select the error case they want to action first.

The status of an error case is displayed in the History page as follows:

- Completed: successfully processed
- Error: rejected by HMRC and awaiting action by DWP user
- Referred: requires intervention by a third party
- Blocked: cannot be sent to HMRC for processing until a previous liability date in the sequence is fixed or the need to hold certain liabilities back is removed.

When the error case is actioned and resent to HMRC, the status changes from Error or Referred to either Complete or Error again, if not fixed correctly.

The next liability in the sequence is then automatically sent to HMRC and processed.

Recording your action

When the investigation is complete the outcome is recorded. The user selects one of the following in response to the question: **Are you able to fix this error now?**

- Yes – the information has been amended in eNIRS and resent to HMRC
- No, I'm referring this case – the error case cannot be fixed and needs intervention by a third party
- Action is not required – the claimant is not entitled to NI Credits or the liability dates have been entered manually into eNIRS and don't need to be resent to HMRC

When "No, I'm referring the case", is selected the user is asked: "Where are you referring the case?"

One of the following needs to be selected:

- DWP – initial triage by the operational centre, national, single point of contact (SPOC).
- HMRC – referred back to HMRC, as issues exist with the HMRC account
- Service Support – triage has determined a system issue that requires investigation/ resolution

An optional notes box is available to add details of why the error case could not be completed and why it was referred.

Select **Done** and the:

- actioned error case is processed.
- referred case is added to the referral list page; and
- notes are saved

Notes entered on a referred case are displayed at the top of the Overview page.

Referred cases

Cases that are referred cases need intervention by a third party before the error can be fixed. The following details of a referred case are contained in a list:

- National Insurance number
- Date referred
- Action link: View case history.

The list is ordered by '**Date referred**'. By default, this is most recent date at the top, oldest date at the bottom. A Sort function allows the order of the list to be reversed.

When a NINO has multiple referred cases, they are listed together in the same row with the most recent date at the top of the row and oldest date at the bottom.

To check the progress of a referred case, the user selects '**View case history**' link for that case. They can then review the history page and select the overview page to either fix the error case, update the notes section or re-refer the case if the error is still not fixed.

When a referred case is processed by HMRC, the status is either changed to error or complete.

When all referred cases have been processed and removed from the list page, the message '**There are no referred cases to fix**' is displayed.

Search for a case

To search for a case, the user needs to enter the claimant's NINO and select search. You will be directed to the history page of the error case or the referred case page.

Triage and incident management process

If there are any cases the user is unable to fix they need to check with their Service Centre single point of contact (SPOC) for advice on how to proceed.

If there is an obvious system error i.e. a 500 error message, then an incident should be raised via the usual service innovation lead (SIL) channels.

If it is unclear how to proceed, the user needs to select the DWP referral option, providing an explanation for the referral in the notes box. These cases are triaged by the national SPOC who will either:

- fix the error case, if user error
- refer the case to a case manager where the claim needs amending before the error can be fixed
- raise an incident via the SIL if the error handling service is not working as expected or the error case has been rejected incorrectly.

The national SPOC will monitor progress of the third party referrals and will fix the error case when the issue has been resolved.