

Introduction

This Spotlight product has been designed to help support staff in closing claims correctly. It replaces the 'Closing a claim - what you need to do' product.

Also the Claim closure guidance has been updated to include information on claimants who fail the Habitual Residency Test and those who fail to provide evidence.

The Spotlight will remain in place until the UCFS design and supporting products are developed further.

Also see Fail to attend

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Action when closing a claim

Before closing a claim, you must check:

the appointment booking service for any appointments attended or planned that may not have been booked on UCFS

profile and journal for any information about vulnerability or complex needs. You may need to send a journal entry to prompt them to contact

claim disclosure for the claimant's declaration information and any subsequent changes of circumstances that may impact on the claim

journal for any indication that the claimant has complied or attempted to contact

history to check for any commitment appointments attended, outstanding decisions, anything that may impact on the claim including notes from other agents

View Account – 'My Commitments' to see if the claimant has accepted the commitment if the reason for closure is fail to accept commitments

any outstanding decision with the decision makers

Claimants on the health journey at any point from day 1 to the date of the determination of the WCA outcome must not have their claim closed when entitlement is nil due to income, earnings or both. On these cases, the following entry will be created in claimant history 'Award is Nil due to earnings but a WCA decision has not been input'.

If you decide not to close the claim immediately you can set a review date. You may need to do this if

the claimant has Complex Needs

a decision maker decision is outstanding

There is no set guidance on how long you can defer a claim closure for. Agents should apply discretion when deferring closure and seek advice from the team leader to case conference if they are unsure.

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Additional actions (close claim) to-do

When you close the claim after the first assessment period, the Service will generate an 'Additional actions (close claim)' to-do. The claim will remain open until you have completed the to-do.

Important: The 'Additional actions (close claim)' to-do does not automatically generate if a claimant has not accepted their Commitments. Agents must still upload the 'Claim termination (claim closed)' notification (UCD211) (UCD211W) to notify the claimant that their claim has been closed.

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New claim not eligible/not entitled

Universal Credit is paid to the benefit unit, which includes eligible adults and relevant child dependants. Most decisions on eligibility and entitlement are made by decision makers.

Agents should check to see that there are no decisions outstanding before closing a claim.

If a claimant is asked to provide additional information to support their claim they have 1 month from the date the request was made.

The 'Refer to Decision Maker (Others)' ALP should be followed for any referrals not covered by one of these 'Refer to Decision Maker' agent-generated To-dos:

- Refer to Decision Maker (Capital/Other Income/Voluntary Work)
- Refer to Decision Maker (Housing/Family unit)
- Refer to Decision Maker (HRT)
- Refer to Decision Maker (Temporary absence not Prison)
- Refer to Decision Maker (Temporary absence Prison)
- Refer to Decision Maker (Backdating claim)
- Refer to Decision Maker (Late Reporting of a Backdated Claim)

Work coaches and case managers should ensure they request all the information that a decision maker will need. If the decision maker identifies that more information is needed they should request the additional information and allow the claimant sufficient time to provide it before reaching a decision.

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Claim closure reason

Important - agents must undertake the checks as detailed in 'Action when closing a claim' before closing a claim

Failed to Provide Evidence	Claim cannot be closed until 1 calendar month after the request for evidence was made. Agents will still receive the 'Consider close claim' to-do but should defer the consideration until 1 month after the date that the evidence was requested.
Failed to attend HRT interview	Agents should follow the Fail to Attend ALP
Failed to attend or accept their commitment	Agents should follow the Fail to Attend ALP
Claim withdrawn	Requests ideally should be made over the phone or via the journal. Face to Face requests can be made but there will be no audit trail. A note must be made in the history of the date and time the request was received.
Failed to review their details	Claimants are required to re-declare their circumstances when they have been in the Intensive Work Search regime or Light Touch regime for 12 assessment periods. Claims may be closed if a claimant fails to re-declare the details within a given time period. (See Annual Verification)
Claimant permanently moved abroad	Most claim must be closed but there are exceptions when a claim can be kept open even if the claimant is abroad. Use the 'Refer to DM (temporary absence not prison) to- do to refer a case to a decision maker.
Claimant aged 16/17	Claimants aged under 18 are not normally entitled to Universal Credit in their own right, however, there are exceptions.

	<p>On all claims from under 18 year olds, the work coach determines whether the claimant satisfies at least one of the eligibility conditions.</p>
Claimant deceased	<p>Single claimants - the claim must be closed if the death has been notified and verified.</p> <p>Claimant was part of a couple - the ALP should be followed to remove the deceased claimant at the correct time.</p> <p>All contact should be handled sensitively. Any additional support for recently bereaved claimants must be offered.</p>
Claimant moved in to Full Time Education	<p>Most claims must be closed but there are exceptions when a claimant will still be entitled to Universal Credit</p> <p>Decisions on whether a claimant is in full time education are made by a decision maker</p> <p>The claim should be closed from the 1st day of the AP in which the claimant becomes ineligible</p>
Claimant in Prison	<p>Claims for single claimants in prison must be closed unless they are a prisoner for less than 6 months and have housing costs.</p> <p>Decisions on whether a claimant is in Prison should be referred to a decision maker via the 'Refer to Decision Maker (Temporary absence Prison) To-do</p>
In legal custody	<p>If a person is imprisoned or detained in legal custody they are disqualified from receiving benefit.</p> <p>Transferred prisoners, children or qualifying young persons transferred from prison to a mental hospital under the provision of the Mental Health Act or the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 are also disqualified from receiving benefit.</p>
Claimant doesn't live in a UC postcode	<p>Claims must be closed for claimants making a new claim using a Full Service area postcode who are not living in that postcode area and are not in temporary accommodation.</p>

	<p>This does not apply to change of address once a claim has been made.</p>
<p>Claimant over state pension age</p>	<p>Claimants must be under state pension age to claim Universal Credit.</p> <p>The upper age limit doesn't apply if the person over state pension age is part of a claim and their partner has not reached that age.</p>
<p>Claimant has been matched to an incorrect National Insurance Number</p>	<p>This should only happen in exceptional circumstances but allows the claim to be closed.</p>
<p>Capital over £16,000</p>	<p>Claimants with capital over £16,000 are not eligible for Universal Credit. Some capital can be disregarded when calculating Universal Credit.</p> <p>The claimant has one calendar month to provide evidence of capital</p> <p>Agents should use the 'Refer to Decision Maker (Capital/Other Income/Voluntary Work)' to-do to make a referral to a decision maker</p>
<p>Nil award due to earnings</p>	<p>In most cases action must be taken to close the claim immediately as the claimant is not entitled to Universal Credit. These cases can be identified as an auto-trigger "consider closing claim to-do" when award is nilled due to earnings.</p> <p>Claimants may need to make a re-claim if their circumstances change.</p> <p>If the claimant disputes the earnings from the RTE feed they should be supported through the disputed earnings process. IMPORTANT - any outstanding to-dos that may result in higher awards (such as outstanding housing costs) must be completed first. The claim should only be closed if the award remains nil after completing this action and we are not awaiting any further verification.</p>

	<p>IMPORTANT - for anyone on the health journey, who has yet to have their WCA or waiting the decision from that WCA, must not have their claim closed.</p>
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