

# Derbyshire Welfare Rights Service

## Job Seeker's Allowance Claimant Commitment

If you claim Jobseeker's Allowance, you will need to agree a 'Claimant Commitment' which outlines what steps you will take to seek work in order to get benefit and what support Jobcentre Plus will give you.

This leaflet refers to 'old-style' JSA only. Universal Credit (UC) has a Claimant Commitment of its own and if you claim Contribution-Based JSA in an area where UC applies, it is called 'new-style JSA' and your Claimant Commitment is based upon UC rules.

Signing a Claimant Commitment is one of the conditions of receiving benefit.

You can discuss and agree its contents with Jobcentre Plus, so it is important to think about what you wish to see in your commitment.

### What does a jobseeker have to do?

If you are a jobseeker, you must take 'such steps as [you] can reasonably be expected to have to take in order to have the best prospects of securing employment'.

You have to be capable of work, available for work, actively looking for work, and you should also be able to show what steps you have taken to find work. It is very important to keep a record of what you have done to find work or prepare for work, including seeking training. Have this with you whenever you attend the Jobcentre.

You have to agree to all the terms of the Jobseeker's Agreement or Claimant Commitment. If you do not, your benefit may be 'sanctioned' (reduced or stopped for a period of time). See our fact sheets about Job Seeker's Allowance and Sanctions for more information.

### What is in a Claimant Commitment?

The commitment is supposed to be the basis of a personalised plan (you will be given a booklet called My Work Plan) setting out what you need to do in return for benefits.

The commitment may include you agreeing to take action such as the following:

- Take any work that you are able to do
- Take work that pays at least the minimum wage
- Take work that is within 90 Minutes' travel (each way) from your home
- Be available for work 40 hours a week [it may be possible for this to be less, with the agreement of Jobcentre plus, if for instance you have a disability or you are a part-time carer]

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- Work any day, any time [it may be possible to vary this, for instance if you have caring responsibilities, with the agreement of Jobcentre Plus]
- Apply for jobs that your Jobcentre Plus adviser (sometimes known as a work coach) tells you to apply for
- Check local papers, look at websites, cold-call potential employers, use the Universal Job match website
- Attend job interviews and take part in them fully
- Make a work search and preparation plan and spend time looking for work (of at least 40 hours each week unless Jobcentre plus agree a lesser figure with you because of your circumstances)
- Provide evidence that you have been looking for work
- Attend appointments with your Jobcentre Plus adviser/work coach
- Accept that potential employers may give feedback to Jobcentre Plus on your job applications and any job interviews you have
- Undertake to tell Jobcentre Plus of changes to your circumstances that may affect your claim - such as starting work or a job ending
- Acceptance of sanctions if you break the commitment.

## Think about your experience and skills

It will help you to think in advance about what your work experience is to date, what skills you have, what work you think would suit you best and why you think that is the case.

The claimant commitment process should also outline what support you should be given in order to get work. Think about what help you would like to have.

## Your Commitment must be reasonable

The commitment is intended to define what reasonable steps you should take to seek work. So your actions must be reasonable – and so must those of Jobcentre Plus.

Think about any limitations on your ability to look for work – such as illness, disability, caring commitments, child care commitments, lack of internet skills, lack of internet access, any sincere religious or conscientious objections you may have to certain types of work.

Think about what effect any of these may have on the type of work you can do, the hours you can do, or how far you can travel to any work. You can ask for this to be taken in to account when your commitment is drawn up.

Think about what help Jobcentre Plus could give you – they are supposed to be assisting you with learning and development. Do you need training in new skills, do you need help writing a CV, do you need help finding courses or qualifications?

If you think you are being asked to take actions that are unreasonable, or you are not being supported properly, seek advice.

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## Reviewing the commitment

You and your adviser/coach should review the commitment regularly.

You may also ask for the commitment to be looked at again if you think that any part of it is out of date or unreasonable.

If you have a dispute over the contents of the commitment, you can ask for a Decision Maker at Jobcentre Plus to review it. Seek advice before you do this.

Remember that if your circumstances change, you need to keep Jobcentre Plus informed.

## Find A Job (previously Universal Jobmatch)

You will be asked to use this site – it works by matching the details of your CV to possible jobs in your usual field of work, or to help find alternative work. You will be asked to create a CV and 'public profile' on the site.

For more details, see <https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch>

Depending upon your circumstances and your access to the internet you may be required via a 'Jobseeker's Direction' to use the site, and you could be subject to sanctions if you do not.

You cannot be sanctioned for failing to use Find A Job without a Jobseeker's Direction, and that Direction must be reasonable.

You may also opt to allow Jobcentre Plus access to view your job-seeking activity on Universal Job match but this is not compulsory. You do not have to waive any of your Data Protection rights. You will however need to show proof that you have registered with the site and uploaded a CV.

## Sanctions

If you fail to comply with your Claimant Commitment or a Jobseeker's Direction, your benefit may be sanctioned – i.e. cut, but although you may be paid less, or nothing at all for a period, your entitlement to benefit does not stop.

Sanctions may be imposed for differing periods of time depending, amongst other things, upon whether you have had previous sanctions in a set period.

Your Jobseeker's Allowance may be reduced by up to 100% while you are sanctioned.

If your benefit is sanctioned and you disagree with the decision, you have the right to dispute the decision. See our factsheet on Challenging Benefit Decisions.

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Additional information can be found in our leaflet 'JSA Sanctions and Hardship' and on our website, visit [www.derbyshire.gov.uk/welfarebenefits](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/welfarebenefits)

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To keep up-to-date with benefit changes in Derbyshire go to  
[www.derbyshire.gov.uk/benefitnews](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/benefitnews)

**Benefits Helpline – 01629 531535 or email**  
**[welfarebenefits@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:welfarebenefits@derbyshire.gov.uk)**

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday**  
**11.00am – 4.00pm**