

Claimant Commitment (JSA  
Regime)  
Topic 05: The Claimant  
Commitment and My Work Plan

October 2013

## Time

2 hours 30 minutes

## Objectives

At the end of this event learners will be able to:

- describe how each field of the Claimant Commitment can be populated; and
- describe how the My Work Plan should be completed.

## Learning Points

This event will cover the following learning points:

- The Claimant Commitment
- My Work Plan

## Support Material

- Power Point slides 10,11, 22-26.
- Copies of My Work Plan booklet (enough for each learner – to be handed back at the end of the topic).
- Case Study 05.01- Carol Griffin
- Handout 05.01- My Jobseeker Profile
- Handout 05.02 - Completed Claimant Commitment for Carol Griffin
- Handout 05.03 – Good Commitments
- Handout 05.04 – Enabling Java Script

## Validation

Successful completion of this event will be measured by:

- Question and answer exercises

## Method of Delivery

This event is facilitator led. It uses question and answer exercises, and PowerPoint Slides.



For the purpose of this learning:

In the initial discussions with the claimant which feed into the Claimant Commitment, 'coach' refers to whoever is conducting the Initial Interview.

## The Claimant Commitment

The Claimant Commitment is discussed, accepted and completed at the Initial Work Search Interview. The Initial Work Search Interview sets the right tone and relationship with the Claimant.



Ask the learners to note on their Action Plan the location of the Claimant Commitment Guidance for future reference:

DWP Home >> Operational Guidance >> full list of all DWP guidance A – Z >> Working and Getting into Work >> 'J' >> JSA Claimant Commitment.





Show:

- Slide 10 - What is behaviour?
- Slide 11 – How does this fit with the Claimant Commitment?



The Claimant Commitment is a High Level record of the plans and actions the claimant has agreed to undertake. The Low Level detail (what, how and when) are completed by the claimant in the 'My Work Plan' booklet.

**Introduction:**

- Scene setting with the claimant – why are you here? It's important to really gather as much information as possible about the claimant and their circumstances in order to understand and build the personalised activities.

## Diagnosis:

- Personalised discussion around their existing job history and skills, the kind of job they can do, transferable skills and their capabilities
- Any issues that may impact on availability and the kind of job they can do
- Setting worksearch and work availability requirements.

## Setting other activities done:

- CV, professional e-mail address, activating a Universal Jobmatch account or referral to provision to support completion of a CV or National Careers Service for example.

## Setting Intervention regime

- Establishing ongoing contact including method and channel



The most important outcome of this interview is that the claimant fully understands what they are required to do and the consequences of failing to comply.

## Setting Objectives

During the Work Search Interview the Work Coach must understand the claimant's circumstances and capability and set the objectives accordingly.



Show Slide 22 - Setting Objectives

Once you have discussed and agreed the work related requirements you then complete the Claimant Commitment.



It is good practice to make notes whilst in discussion with the claimant. These notes can then be referred to when you are completing the Claimant Commitment. This will give you the opportunity to ask further questions and re-enforce compliance.

This method of conducting the Initial Work Search Interview is tried and tested and is working well.

The information relating to Sanctions must be read to the claimant and the Work Coach must ensure the claimant fully understands the consequences of not complying with their Claimant Commitment.



Discuss with the learners – the majority of this is business as usual, the only change is the claimant taking



responsibility to identify and action activities to be done by themselves.

## The Claimant Commitment

Just to recap on what a Claimant Commitment is.



Show Slide 23 - What is a Claimant Commitment

We will now have a look at the Claimant Commitment.



When displaying the Claimant Commitment access all the drop-downs and fields in order to show the learners the full range of options.



Show Slide 24 - The Claimant Commitment.



For the purposes of displaying the Claimant Commitment, please refer to the 'Blank JSA Claimant Commitment' enclosed in the zip file with these learning materials.

The Claimant Commitment is completed electronically. Some fields have drop-downs which, when selected, determine which additional fields need to be populated.

The blank Claimant Commitment is accessible via an icon on the Work Coach's desktop.

One copy of their signed Claimant Commitment is given to the claimant, the other is kept in the Labour Market Unit (LMU).



LMS is completed as usual.

The section which asks if you want to complete a JSAg, must be set to 'no'.

You must set the Claimant Commitment Marker, confirming whether a Claimant Commitment is:

- CC Agreed;
- CC Disputed;
- CC Closed; or
- CC Set in error.

For any referral to contracted provision referrals, such as referrals to the Work Programme, you must take the following action on LMS so that the relevant information can be transferred to providers:

- Complete the Action Plan 'Aims' free text box with the following details from the Claimant Commitment:

- Types of Work from the Claimant Commitment Jobseeker Profile
- Any availability or work restrictions agreed on the Claimant Commitment.
  - In addition you must annotate the 'Aims' free text box with "Claimant Commitment Case" as this will signal the difference to providers.

When completing the Claimant Commitment, do not follow it from beginning to end - it is not a process driven operation. It is about using your listening and questioning skills to build up a picture of the claimant's employment strengths and recent work history.



Jobseeker's Directions should not be included in the Claimant Commitment. They are created on LMS and notified to the claimant in the same way as usual.

## My Claimant Commitment

The opening page of the Claimant Commitment sets out the conditions for receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance and is used to record whether the claimant has any restrictions on their availability, whether they have an agreed Permitted Period and their availability for work.

## My Types of Work

There are three options to choose from in the drop-down menu in the Restrictions field. These are:

- No Restrictions Agreed
- Permitted Period Agreed: and
- Other Restrictions Agreed.

Selecting **No Restrictions Agreed** displays the generic paragraphs that the claimant has no restrictions on the type of work they will undertake and that they will seek and apply for all types of work that give them the best prospects of securing employment.

### **Permitted Period Agreed**

From the start of a claim a Work Coach can decide if it is appropriate to agree a Permitted Period. This allows the claimant to restrict the type of work they are looking for to:

- employment in their usual occupation; or
- the level of pay they are willing to accept; or
- both employment in their usual occupation and at the same level of pay they were used to receiving.

Selecting **Permitted Period Agreed** displays two fields that are to be populated with the start and end dates of the Permitted

Below this are fields for recording the claimant's usual occupation and salary. Fields can be added or deleted as required.

### **Other Restrictions Agreed**

This drop-down should be selected to record information about any other acceptable restrictions the claimant may have.



What might be the 'acceptable restrictions' referred to?



Expected answers include:

- religious or other beliefs
- a physical or mental condition
- caring for a child or other caring responsibilities
- being a Lone Parent with care of a child aged 12 or under,
- engagement in treatment for drug and/or alcohol dependency,

- the level of pay a claimant is willing to accept; or
- other reasonable restrictions.

## Where I will Work

The **Where I will Work** field defaults to 90 minutes.

Claimants must be willing to travel 90 minutes to work in each direction, by a route and means appropriate to their circumstances, unless a restriction is agreed due to their health condition

If the Coach agrees that the claimant can restrict the days and/or hours they are available for work **Restricted Availability** should be selected from the drop-down menu.

## My Availability for Work

The three fields within this section are used to record:

- when the claimant is available to attend an interview
- how available they are to start work; and
- whether there are any restrictions.

Selecting the **I'm available to attend a job interview** drop-down displays:

- Immediately

- Within 48 hours
- Within 1 week

Selecting the **I'm available to start work** drop-down displays:

- immediately
- within 24 hours
- immediately after the end of my notice period
- after giving 1 weeks notice
- within 28 days

Selecting the **Restrictions** drop-down displays:

- No Restrictions on Availability
- Restricted Availability

Selecting **Restricted Availability** will enable a table to be displayed whereby the Coach can record details of the claimant's availability.

## My Actions for Getting into Work

Each week claimants must do **all things that can be reasonably expected of them** to give themselves the best prospect of finding work

Appropriate worksearch activities must be tailored to the claimant's circumstances. Once agreed they are detailed on the Claimant Commitment.

When agreeing what is reasonable, the Work Coach takes account of the number of hours per week the claimant is available to work – the claimant should be able to spend several hours each day engaging in worksearch activities.

The **My actions for getting work** section displays a table of pre-populated commonly used generic actions that most claimants will be expected to do. Although these activities have been pre-populated they can be re-ordered, amended and/or deleted to reflect individual claimant need.

This table also has the facility to add any personalised actions.





The Regular Work Search Activities discussion is not meant to be a 'numbers' exercise. It is not about counting how many times the claimant has carried out an activity. It should be about what is reasonable for the claimant to do in order to secure employment.

**Please note:** Any one-off actions that the Work Coach deems necessary to improve the claimant's prospects of finding work may be reinforced by a Jobseekers Direction.



Specific work preparation activities are not mandatory unless supported by a Jobseeker Direction.

At this point during the completion of the Claimant Commitment the claimant is reminded that they must keep evidence to show that they have completed specific actions and take this to the Jobcentre when they attend.

## Sanctions

The consequence of not complying with the Claimant Commitment is outlined. This section should be read out to the claimant and the Work Coach should, asking relevant questions, ensure the claimant understands.

## My Rights

### DMA and Conditionality

Where a realistic Claimant Commitment cannot be agreed between the claimant and the Work Coach every effort should be made to resolve any issues locally before making a **referral to the Labour Market Decision Maker.**



Before deciding on whether or not to take DMA action you need to establish whether the claimant has done everything that can reasonably be expected of them to find work. It is not about totalling up activities or hours spent.

If the claimant has completed all the activities set, they have met their requirements regardless of how long this took them. If they haven't completed all the activities set, a judgement must be made as to whether they did all they reasonably could and whether the Claimant Commitment needs to be amended. If the claimant has not done all they reasonably could they must be referred for a doubt decision.

### Changes in my Circumstances

Claimants are required by law to inform Jobcentre Plus of any change in their circumstances which could affect their

entitlement to Jobseeker's Allowance. Failure to report a change in circumstances could result in prosecution.

Claimants should be encouraged to inform us of their change of circumstance as soon as it occurs rather than waiting for the next interview/review.

## My Claimant Statement

When the Claimant Commitment has been agreed by both the claimant and the Work Coach the Claimant Commitment must be signed and dated by both parties.

The Claimant Commitment is treated as made on – a date must be entered in all cases to ensure clear version control.

## My Jobseeker Profile

At the end of the work focused discussion the Work Coach should complete the My Jobseeker Profile. The My Jobseeker Profile is a summary of the key information discussed in the Work Search Interview about the claimant's capability and circumstances relating to work.

The My Jobseeker Profile includes the following headings;

- The Types of work I am most likely to get
  - The Work Coach and claimant should agree the types of work most suited to the claimants skills, capabilities and experience

- My qualifications are
  - This should include details of educational, vocational and professional qualifications
- My employment strengths and skills are
  - This should include any skills the claimant has accrued, without having a formal qualification and should include transferable skills.
- My experience is
  - Includes details of the different type of work experience gained including any voluntary activities
- My circumstances are
  - This section includes information about the claimant and their circumstances that are relevant to work

These fields are there to record positive statements about the claimant. The fields expand depending on the amount of information required to be input.



How can negative statements be turned into positive statements? Here is an example;

A claimant with a health problem may state that they have limited capacity to stand and need to sit frequently.

The Work Coach would challenge the claimant to tell them what they are able to do; can they sit without problem, can they walk without problems, what other skills they have, how do they spend their day? The statement could therefore be - "I am able to undertake multi-positional work (work which does not involve maintaining one position for a prolonged period)."

Can the learners think of any other examples?

- I don't have a car, but I live on a bus route which connects me to five surrounding towns.

The My Jobseeker Profile section could include any information, not covered by the other elements of this section that might impact on the type of work the claimant is able to do. For example:

- I don't have a health condition/disability that affects the type(s) of work I am looking for;
- I have no dependent children;
- I have a car; and
- I undertake voluntary work to ensure I keep in touch with the labour market.

Fields are also included recording the type of work the claimant is best suited to and the reasons for this.



Issue HO 05.01

Allow learners a few minutes to read it



Is this a good example of a My Jobseeker Profile?



Take responses from the group and then give the following information:

This is an excellent 'My Jobseeker Profile' capturing in-depth discussion of claimant abilities and circumstances. It addresses issues up front and removes challenges to work. It is very work focused.

Positive statements included in this are:

- I rely on public transport

This positive statement could have come from the claimant stating that they either don't have a driving license or don't own a car.

- Previous voluntary work placement through Stage 4 with Asda

Although not as obvious this statement may have come from the claimant stating they have done no paid work.



### Activity using a Case Study

Divide the learners into groups of three or four.

The objective of this exercise is to:

- develop a Claimant Commitment based on the case study; and
- identify good examples of work search and work preparation activities.

#### Issue CS 05.01 Case Study Carol Griffin

Based on the case study develop a Claimant Commitment for Carol. Record the type of information you would expect to see in it

Allow 15 minutes for groups to complete the Claimant Commitment

When the groups are back together hand out the completed Claimant Commitment and compare with the groups findings.

#### Issue HO 05.02 Completed Claimant Commitment

Allow 20 minutes for the second part of the exercise.



You should now have a basic understanding of how to complete a Claimant Commitment with good examples of work related activity.

### My Work Plan

To help claimants plan and focus on their work search the My Work Plan booklet has been developed.

The My Work Plan booklet contains:

- a step-by-step guide through the claimant's Worksearch Journey
- information around preparing for the worksearch review
- the claimant's worksearch plan
- the claimant's worksearch record; and
- information about conditionality and sanctions.



Show Slide 25 – My Work Plan.



Please source locally the most up to date version of My Work Plan. These can be distributed to the learners and collected in at the end of the session.

Whilst you are completing the Claimant Commitment ask the claimant to start to complete their Work Plan booklet giving details of what they are going to do, how they are going to do it and timescales to meet.

Some claimants may need help with this. Talk with the claimant, answering any questions, and coach them to enable them to take responsibility for identifying and taking action on activities to be done.



Discuss with the learners different types of claimant and how they would deal with them.

Getting the claimant to take responsibility for identifying and actioning plans should form the basis of this discussion.

For example, a claimant tells you he can't complete his Work Plan booklet as he doesn't know how to update his CV.

You would explain the importance of having an up to date CV, tell the claimant of the places to go to update their CV, provide the relevant telephone numbers and addresses. Ask the claimant what his next step will be i.e. contact one of the places and make an appointment. You would then ask the claimant to document all these actions including timescales and any others he can think of in his Work Plan Booklet.



Discuss the My Work Plan booklet with the learners.



The Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime) states;  
I will look in newspapers and on websites during the week, and also make speculative approaches to employers.

This is the high level statement. How will this be entered onto the claimant's 'My Work Plan' booklet?



To make the statement more specific the claimant should:

- specify which newspapers they are to look in,
- which trade papers or websites they use,
- provide details of how often and when they are accessed,
- specify how often they look online, including the website URLs if known,
- ensure speculative approaches to employers are appropriate and well targeted; and
- include the total number of things they will do each week to look for work. “This means I will do X things each week to look for work.”

The entry on the claimant’s ‘My Work Plan’ booklet is ‘low level’ and should show the action to be taken, how this will be done and by what date.

The claimant should be coached to understand that this booklet is completed to give a forward look of the actions and activities to be undertaken in the next fortnight.



#### Activity using a Case Study

Divide the learners into groups of three or four.

Refer the learners back to CS 05.01 Carol Griffin and the Claimant Commitment created for her.

The objective of this exercise is to:

- develop an effective work plan based on the case study and Claimant Commitment; and
- identify good examples of worksearch and work preparation activities.

Allow 15 minutes for groups to complete the plan. When the groups are back together hand out the completed Work Plan and compare with the groups' findings.

Make sure that you refer back to the ABCDE framework.

Plans should be:

- Ambitious
- Behavioural
- Challenging but include contingencies
- Detailed
- Have evidence embedded

Allow 20 minutes for the second part of the exercise.



Issue Handout 05.03



Explain to the learners that this handout provides good examples of the type of plans the claimants should be making in the 'My Work Plan' booklet. They do not relate directly to the Carol Griffin case study that we have just worked through.

## Monitoring Compliance

Monitoring compliance is mainly carried out by the Assistant Work Coach during the Work Search Review.



What is the purpose of the Work Search Review?



Take responses before showing the next slide.



Show Slide 26 - Objectives for monitoring and maintaining compliance.

The purpose of the Work Search Review is to:

- review the quality of the claimant's worksearch / work preparation, compared with activities set out in their Claimant Commitment and recorded in the My Work Plan booklet.
- discuss with/refer to the Work Coach where you identify that the Claimant Commitment needs to be reviewed/updated
- review job search (including Universal Jobmatch) and work preparation evidence
- identify vulnerable people and ensure they get the support they need
- identify compliance and non-compliance
- initiate sanction action where appropriate
- provide advice to develop / strengthen the claimant's worksearch
- identify the need for further support for those at risk of failing to meet their requirement; and

- maintain a claimant's motivation around worksearch.

## In Conclusion

The Claimant Commitment and My Work Plan booklet are;

- about supporting independence
- a structured coaching plan with the responsibility on the claimant to take ownership and comply; and
- provides advice to help them help themselves rather than doing it for them.

Before we move onto the next topic consider the following;

- What does the move to being a coach mean for you as an individual?
- If we are expecting our claimants to behave differently, what will we need to do so that they have a different experience when they interact with us?
- What do I need to start changing in my behaviour so that this change happens?

You will have the opportunity to look more in-depth at these behaviours and practice these skills in the next part of this learning.





Allow a few moments for the learners to reflect on these questions before facilitating a short discussion about what they will do differently as a coach and what they will expect the claimant to do differently.

## Enabling Javascript

You may need to enable Javascript on your desktops to enable you to navigate the Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime).



Issue HO 05.04

Allow learners time to read through

## Summary

In this topic we have covered:

- a walkthrough of the Claimant Commitment (JSA Regime); and
- the My Work Plan

End of Topic 05