



Universal Credit Care Leavers

How to get
the right
Claimant
Commitment
for you



Claimant Commitment?

Your Claimant Commitment should help you to understand what the Department for Communities (DfC) expect of you in order to receive your Universal Credit money. If you have a sanction imposed on you, your Claimant Commitment should also help you understand what it is that DfC think has gone wrong.

It is important that everyone who claims Universal Credit agrees a Claimant Commitment that properly reflects their personal circumstances. Your Work Coach has wide discretion to tailor your Claimant Commitment to your needs. This leaflet aims to help you explain your situation to your Work Coach so that your Claimant Commitment can be adapted to your needs and circumstances.

Other leaflets are available with information for people who have childcare responsibilities, mental health problems or who have experienced domestic violence or homelessness, and for refugees. You can take this leaflet with you to show your Work Coach.



Your claimant commitment interview

Once your Universal Credit claim has been received by DfC, they will contact you to arrange an interview. Your Claimant Commitment will be drawn up with your Work Coach at this interview.

At this stage your Work Coach may not have much information about you, so make sure s/he knows about your circumstances, what you can and can't manage to do, and any particular needs you have so that s/he can support you.

You can bring a social worker or support worker with you to your appointment if you wish.

If you are handing in fit notes, remember that the first interview will usually be before you have a work capability assessment to determine whether you have limited capability for work, and you may be required to comply with conditions such as looking for jobs or attending training courses at this stage. There are legal requirements for conditions to be reduced if you have a physical or mental impairment, and in other circumstances explained below.

If you have complex needs, in addition to any easements the law allows in your circumstances, your Work Coach has discretion to suspend your conditionality requirements for a period of time if it is unreasonable to expect you to complete these. If this is appropriate in your case, the easement begins on the date you tell DfC about your needs and will continue for as long as you provide evidence of your needs.

“You can bring a social worker or support worker with you to your appointment if you wish”



Reasonable adjustments for health or disability

DfC has a duty to make reasonable adjustments if you need them because you have a disability. Let DfC know if you need help, and the reasons why you need it. Tell them in advance if you are bringing someone to the interview and the reasons why. If they won't help, seek advice from a welfare rights adviser or a solicitor.

Easements to work search requirements

If you have a physical or mental impairment that DfC feels requires a reasonable reduction, your work search requirements may be limited to less than 35 hours a week, and the kind of work you will look for can also be limited. Your work search requirements can also be reduced in other circumstances. For example, if you have caring responsibilities, including childcare, if you have experienced recent domestic violence, or domestic emergencies including homelessness. Work search requirements can be suspended for up to two periods of up to 14 days if you are unfit for work. You may have to provide evidence of this.

If you have complex needs

DfC defines “complex needs” as experiencing a difficult life event or personal circumstances that mean it would be unreasonable



to expect you to meet your work-related requirements. This includes a mental health condition, such as low self-confidence and self-esteem, anxiety or depression, or if you have said you are at risk of suicide or self-harm.

DfC may want to see evidence of your needs from someone acting in an official capacity, such as a health worker, housing association, support worker or someone from a support service. Your needs should be discussed at an interview.

It is important to tell your Work Coach about any complex needs you have. DfC should treat your situation individually and think about what you can reasonably be expected to do to meet your conditionality requirements, and how to tailor those requirements to your circumstances.

If you have complex needs, in addition to any “easements” the law makes in your circumstances, your Work Coach has the discretion to suspend your conditionality requirements if it is unreasonable to expect you to complete these for a certain period of time. If this is appropriate in your case, the easement begins on the date you tell DfC about your needs, and will continue for as long as you provide evidence of your needs.

“DfC may want to see evidence of your needs from someone acting in an official capacity, such as a health worker, housing association, support worker or someone from a support service”



“Last year we
helped over 500
people get back
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finances”



What if you want to change what is on your claimant commitment?

If you want your Claimant Commitment to be reviewed, you can ask your Work Coach at any time. You may want to do this if your circumstances change, or if it is not suitable for you (5).

Each time your Claimant Commitment changes, you will need to agree and accept a new one. Seek advice from a welfare rights adviser or a solicitor if DfC will not review your Claimant Commitment, or if you feel they have failed to take into account your circumstances. You can take this leaflet with you to show your Work Coach.

Help for Clanmil tenants

Our Benefits and Money Advice Team is here to provide free and confidential advice on all welfare benefits, debts and day-to-day money management for Clanmil tenants. If you have problems with your benefits, are struggling to afford your rent or manage your bills, we can help. Last year we helped over 500 people get back on track with their finances.

To talk to us, call 02890877047 or email moneyadvice@clanmil.org.uk

Where can I get further information?

Clanmil can provide information leaflets on:

- Mental Health
- Childcare
- Domestic Abuse
- Bed-Room Tax

You can find these on our website www.clanmil.org



This information leaflet has been produced by Clanmil Housing as part of our Money and Benefits Advice Service to help claimants understand how to negotiate their Claimant Commitment. It should not be taken as legal advice.