

Section 01 – An Introduction to the Flexible New Deal

1.1.	This section covers:	
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Introduction

- 1.2. This product supports the delivery of Phase One Flexible New Deal (FND). It provides guidance on processes and requirements, supporting the programme contract details and the legal arrangements for delivery.
- 1.3. It is divided into sections with each maintaining a common format of a contents list, introduction and overview.
- 1.4. This product also includes supplementary annexes providing additional information, such as links to websites and access to forms with accompanying guidance on how to use them.
- 1.5. The guidance that follows this introductory section will give you a succinct guide to how you deal with customers entering, participating and completing FND.

Customer eligibility

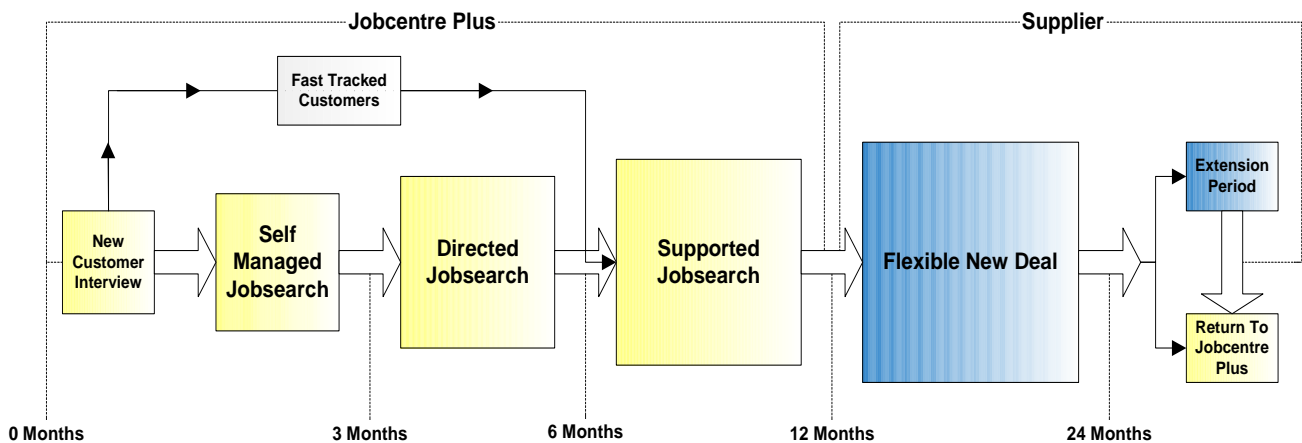
- 1.6. Jobcentre Plus (JCP) has responsibility for determining eligibility for FND.
- 1.7. Customers who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) (income based and contribution based) are **required** to actively participate in the enhanced Jobseekers Regime and Flexible New Deal (JRFND) as a condition to receive their full award of JSA. Lone parents and disabled customers must be in receipt of JSA if they wish to participate in JRFND.
- 1.8. Customers claiming JSA must:
 - be available for employment
 - have a reasonable chance of finding work in relation to:
 - the kind of work they are willing to do;
 - where they are willing to work; and,
 - the hours they are willing to work.
 - be capable of work;
 - have a current Jobseeker's Agreement (JSAg); and,
 - be actively seeking employment.
- 1.9. Customers who are claiming Pension Credit are also eligible to take part in JRFND however on a voluntary basis ([Further information regarding Pension](#))

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Credit customers can be found in: [Section 20 – Voluntary Pension Credit Customers](#)).

The enhanced Jobseekers Regime and Flexible New Deal overview

1.10. The enhanced Jobseekers Regime and Flexible New Deal (JRFND) comprises a four-stage process for customers. JCP will deliver the first three stages; Self managed jobsearch, Directed jobsearch and Supported jobsearch (the enhanced Jobseekers' Regime, commencing in April 2009) with suppliers delivering the fourth stage, the Flexible New Deal, from October 2009).



1.11. In April 2009 the JRFND programme started in 28 JCP districts which are segregated into 14 contract packages which are shown below:

- Each of the following four contract packages are delivered by a single supplier:
 - North & Mid Wales and South East Wales;
 - South Wales Valleys and South West Wales;
 - Devon & Cornwall; and
 - Greater Manchester Central and Greater Manchester East & West.
- Each of the remaining ten contract packages are delivered by two suppliers:
 - Ayrshire, Dumfries, Galloway & Inverclyde, Lanarkshire & East Dunbartonshire and Edinburgh, Lothian & Borders;
 - North East Yorkshire & the Humber and Tees Valley;
 - Derbyshire and South Yorkshire;
 - Coventry & Warwickshire, The Marches and Staffordshire;
 - Leicestershire & Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire;
 - Cambridgeshire & Suffolk, Norfolk and Lincolnshire & Rutland;
 - Birmingham & Solihull;
 - Black Country;
 - Central London and Lambeth, Southwark & Wandsworth; and
 - Kent and Surrey & Sussex.

1.12. In these areas FND will replace the following programmes:

- New Deal for young people;
- New Deal 25 plus;
- New Deal Self-employed;

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- New Deal 50 plus;
- New Deal for Musicians;
- Private Sector Led (PSL) New Deal; and,
- Employment Zones (EZs).

1.13. All customers in these areas who make new or repeat claims to JSA from the 6th April 2009 will enter the Jobseekers Regime at the Self managed jobsearch stage or the Supported jobsearch stage depending on the customer's circumstances.

Self managed jobsearch

- 1.14. The Self managed jobsearch stage will form the first three months of the customer's claim to JSA.
- 1.15. The first six weeks of a customer's claim will follow the current JSA regime. Customers wishing to claim JSA will be required to attend a New Jobseeker Interview (NJI) with a JCP adviser where they will agree and sign a Jobseeker's Agreement (JSAg). Some customers will be fast-tracked to the Supported jobsearch stage at this point.
- 1.16. Customers with a history of claiming benefit (spending 22 of the last 24 months on JSA) will be fast-tracked to the Supported jobsearch stage from the start of their claim. In addition, 18 year olds who have been continuously out of employment, education or training for six months prior to making a claim or subsequently (i.e. a combination of Not in employment, education or training (NEET) and JSA) will also be fast-tracked to the Supported jobsearch stage.
- 1.17. People in vulnerable groups can also volunteer for early entry to the Supported jobsearch stage, subject to capacity ([A list of early entry categories can be found in: Section 2 – Customer Referrals, Starts and Allotted Time](#)).
- 1.18. At their NJI with JCP, all customers will undertake an initial skills screening to identify any potential need and will be required to attend a mandatory Back to Work Session at around week eight of their claim which will set out customer rights and responsibilities for finding work, what is expected of them and where to go for help.

Directed jobsearch

- 1.19. The Directed jobsearch stage spans month four to month six of the customer's JSA claim.
- 1.20. After three months, if the JSA claim continues the customer will, as now, have a formal review of their JSAg. At this review JCP advisers will identify around 20 per cent of customers, whose benefit history or skills requirements suggest that they would benefit from additional help to find employment. Identified customers will receive two additional interviews with a Personal Adviser during this stage.
- 1.21. Customers requiring additional interviews will have a mandatory ten-minute basic skills screening at one of these interviews.

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Supported jobsearch

- 1.22. The Supported jobsearch stage spans month seven to month twelve of the customer's JSA claim (or month one to month six for those fast-tracked).
- 1.23. After six months claiming JSA, customers will enter the Supported jobsearch stage. Customers will be caseloaded to a JCP Personal Adviser and will have a series of mandatory interviews, their first being a formal review where the adviser will review the JSAG with the customer and will agree an action plan that outlines the activity they will need to take to move closer to work and subsequent interviews will follow up progress in relation to these activities.
- 1.24. The customer will undertake short, sharp training packages, designed to unblock barriers to work, improve employability, and directly help with jobsearch.
- 1.25. Within the Supported jobsearch stage the JCP Personal Adviser will decide which of the identified activity/activities detailed on the customer's action plan are mandatory and the customer will have to commit to up to three activities. The number will depend on how onerous or challenging the activity is. There will be regular interviews with the JCP Personal Adviser throughout the Supported jobsearch stage to ensure that the customer is complying with this requirement and identify what other actions need be taken.
- 1.26. Customers attending their first Supported jobsearch interview, who have not already had their basic skills assessed during their present claim to JSA will have a mandatory ten-minute basic skills screening.
- 1.27. At the end of the Supported jobsearch stage customers will attend a pre-provision interview with JCP where they will be informed that they will be contacted by an external supplier. JCP will then make the referral to FND support.

The Flexible New Deal

- 1.28. The Flexible New Deal, spans month 13 to month 24/ 30 of the customer's JSA claim (or month seven to 18/24 for those fast-tracked).
- 1.29. JCP hands the JSA customer over to you who will devise personalised back to work provision with the focus on sustained job outcomes. FND participation will last a minimum of 52 weeks and is mandatory for all JSA customers completing the Supported jobsearch stage.
- 1.30. All customers who are referred to the FND will have had a minimum of 26 weeks of work-focused support from JCP (through the Supported jobsearch stage). It is for you to assess and decide the best training and support tailored to the customer's individual needs. During this time we expect that:
 - you will invite customers to a face-to-face initial meeting, ensuring the customer is aware of possible sanction activity if they fail to attend. When the customer attends, you will undertake an individual assessment to assess their needs, agree an action plan and notify JCP of their start;

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- if a customer fails to attend/ comply/ participate, or if the customer's actions bring about doubts of their entitlement to JSA, you will consider if a referral to JCP for sanction activity is appropriate;
- you undertake meaningful fortnightly contact with each customer;
- you will ensure that every customer undertakes a minimum of four weeks continuous full-time work-related activity within their 52 weeks of participation if the customer has not previously had at least four weeks continuous full-time paid work since starting FND;
- when customers undertake certain activities during their FND period, you identify where a customer is to be transferred from JSA onto a training allowance and notify JCP; and,
- if the customer remains unemployed after 52 weeks of support, you will have decided to either extend support (for up to a further 26 weeks), with the agreement of the customer and JCP, or, return the customer to JCP for further activity and support relevant to their position in the labour market.

1.31. **Please Note:** Although contractually DWP works with 'suppliers' for FND services, we are always keen to ensure that the language we use with our customers and employees is clear and consistent. As such, in any communications products (forms, etc) they may in certain circumstances use a general term of 'Provider' (for example: the Provider Referrals and Payments system and the FND Notification to/ from Provider forms).