

## Section 20 – Voluntary Pension Credit Customers

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### Introduction

20.2. The Flexible New Deal (FND) is a mandatory programme for customers claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). There are however customers who are in receipt of Pension Credit who have access to FND on a voluntary basis. The following section details how these voluntary Pension Credit customers should be managed.

### Customer eligibility

20.3. Pension credit customers' participation is on a strictly voluntary basis, and those who choose to join the programme can leave at any time without penalty.

20.4. To access FND as a pension credit volunteer, a customer must be aged 60 or over and in receipt of a Pension Credit award notice.

20.5. In all circumstances the customer must:

- not be working or working less than 16 hours per week;
- live in a defined FND contract package area;
- not be in receipt of JSA, Income Support (IS) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA) (JSA recipients will meet the eligibility criteria for mandatory participation).

20.6. Further information for:

- people aged 60 to 64 can be found on the Pension Service website at: <http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/pensioncredit/age.asp>;
- people aged 65 or over be found on the Pension Service website at: <http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/pensioncredit/age65.asp>.

20.7. Customers with general enquires should be advised to call: 0845 6060265 and a further list of useful numbers can be found on the Pension Service website at: <http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/contactus/contact-phone.asp>.

### The voluntary referral

20.8. All Pension Credit volunteers 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).

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- 20.9. As with JSA customers the referral of Pension Credit customers will take place at a pre-provision interview with JCP through the Provider Referrals and Payments (PRaP) system and you are required to undertake the same action as you would for JSA customer referrals ([Further information regarding customer referrals and starts can be found in: Section 02 – Customer Referrals, Starts and Allotted Time](#)).
- 20.10. Pension Credit customers will be identifiable through the information provided through the PRaP referral where they will be detailed as a 'non mandatory customer' referrals.
- 20.11. Again as with JSA customers following the initial referral, you are required to arrange and undertake a face-to-face meeting with each customer, assess their needs, and begin to formulate a work focused action plan. You are then required to notify JCP of the customer start date within 15 days of the referral.

### **Managing a Pension Credit customers journey through FND**

- 20.12. You are expected to provide the same level of service to all customers that are referred to you, and Pension Credit customers should have access to the same opportunities and provision as mandatory JSA customers however you cannot raise sanction doubts against Pension Credit customers who do not undertake activities.
- 20.13. At the pre-provision interview, JCP will advise Pension Credit customers that once they volunteer they must commit to the programme. Pension Credit customers will have a clear understanding of what is expected from them and by choosing to participate in FND are showing their willingness to work with you and find employment.
- 20.14. While participating in FND Pension Credit customers will be expected to comply with the Action Plan you develop, however you cannot raise sanction doubts for activities the customer fails to undertake. Therefore while a 4 week period of 'work related activity' may be part of the action plan, ultimately Pension Credit customers are not required to undertake it. That said, if customers are not willing to undertake what would benefit their achievement of employment as set out on the action plan, they should leave the programme.
- 20.15. **Please Note:** Should a customer decide to 'opt out' of the FND it should be made clear to them that should they then decide to 'opt back in' further participation may not be possible.
- 20.16. Pension Credit customers do not require moving to a Training Allowance (TA) if they undertake full-time activity (over 16 hours) and JCP **do not** require notification.

### **Pension Credit customer changes in circumstance**

- 20.17. Pension Credit customers should be advised that any change of circumstance they may have should be reported by phoning the Pension Service on 0800 99 1234.

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20.18. Changes of circumstances that customers should notify the Pension Service of are as follows:

- changes in the customers personal details, e.g. if:
  - their bank details change;
  - they change your name;
  - they become disabled;
  - they get married or divorced;
  - they become part of a civil partnership or their civil partnership is dissolved;
  - their partner or spouse dies; or,
  - they start or stop doing voluntary work.
- changes in where the customer lives, e.g. if they:
  - move home;
  - go abroad;
  - go into hospital or someone they claim for goes into hospital;
  - are in custody serving a sentence imposed by a court; or,
  - go into residential care or a nursing home.
- changes in who lives with the customer, e.g. if:
  - their partner or spouse moves in with them or moves away; or,
  - someone who is not dependent on them financially moves in or out of their household.
- changes in the customers financial situation, e.g. if:
  - they are awarded a benefit;
  - any other benefits they receive are changed;
  - any other income they receive changes;
  - their savings or investments change;
  - their occupational pension changes; or,
  - they start or stop doing paid work.

20.19. Alternatively to contact the Pension Service in writing or by email contact details can be found on the Pension Service Website at:

<http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/contactus/home.asp>.

20.20. **Please Note:** If the customer receiving Pension Credit has been awarded an Assessed Income Period then they do not have to report changes to savings, investments or an occupational pension.