

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1. The Provider Guidance gives you information about your role as an organisation delivering Jobcentre Plus provision within New Deal for Young People, New Deal 25 plus, New Deal 50 plus, New Deal for Lone Parents, New Deal for Partners, Programme Centres, the Co-financed European Social Fund and Jobseeker Mandatory Activity (JMA) Pilot. There is considerable detail contained in the schedules of your contract with Jobcentre Plus and you must ensure you read, understand and are complying with that information since it is not the intention to repeat the detail here. This guidance provides additional information to the schedules of your contract in terms of your relationship with Jobcentre Plus, what needs to be achieved in relation to the provision you are delivering, and how to go about certain tasks and deal with issues. **You will also need to adhere to the Accuracy of Information standards given in Annex 1. In addition, those organisations looking to deliver a programme provision in Wales will also need to adhere to the Department's Welsh Language Scheme**

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2004/wls/>

This version of the Jobcentre Plus Provider Guidance is currently published in English only. However, if providers in Wales wish to obtain the guidance in Welsh, we will arrange for a translation to be made available for them. In the first instance providers should request the translation by contacting their local Third Party Provision Manager.

## **Aims of Jobcentre Plus Provision**

2. The overall aims of Jobcentre Plus provision are to help people improve their employability and ultimately to find and keep jobs. Your performance contributes directly to that of Jobcentre Plus overall and we therefore have a shared interest in the success of your provision. Jobcentre Plus operates a policy of continuous improvement in which we work to raise all aspects of quality and performance in the services we deliver and you are expected to work with us in doing so. All Jobcentre Plus provision is designed to tackle specific barriers which unemployed people face in finding and retaining work. In keeping with that, you are expected to provide people with a professional, high quality and work-like experience that delivers to them a sense of pace and purpose in their efforts to find work.

## **Eligibility Criteria: Access to Jobcentre Plus Provision**

3. Eligibility criteria are an important aspect of Jobcentre Plus work in managing the provision available. The criteria serve to target provision to groups of customers where research and experience have shown them to be most cost effective.

4. Generally Jobcentre Plus has responsibility for determining eligibility for provision. For most Jobcentre Plus programmes eligibility is determined by the length of time a customer has been unemployed but each programme typically has a number of eligibility categories allowing early entry into provision, to those customers who are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. For example people with disabilities, with immigration status, lone parents and partners of people claiming benefits. But this list is not exhaustive.

## **Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Jobcentre Plus/New Deal Allowance Payments**

5. Most customers entering Jobcentre Plus programmes have a claim to JSA, and for many they will be eligible or required to enter provision because of the length of time they have continued to claim it. JSA places certain responsibilities on customers. They must continue to meet these conditions whilst claiming JSA. Some Jobcentre Plus programmes attract, at specific stages, a Jobcentre Plus/New Deal Allowance Payment which is usually the equivalent of the customer's former JSA payment plus a Premium/New Deal Grant or Top-up payment depending on the programme.

## **Requirements of JSA and Jobcentre Plus/New Deal Allowance**

6. While customers continue to receive JSA they must be available for and actively seeking work. In order to continue to claim JSA during the Gateway and Follow-through periods, participants are required to sign labour market declarations at their Jobcentre Plus office. They sign their declaration, usually on a fortnightly basis, to confirm they are available for and actively seeking employment during a specified period. This will continue throughout the Gateway and Follow-through periods (where participants continue to receive JSA).

7. During the New Deal 25 plus Intensive Activity period (IAP), or whilst on a New Deal for Young People (NDYP) Option, when they are receiving a Jobcentre Plus/New Deal Allowance Payment, participants are not required to attend the Jobcentre Plus office to sign labour market declarations. However they will continue to receive support from their New Deal Personal Adviser (NDPA).

8. You must also allow participants to have time to attend/contact the Jobcentre Plus office as required to enable the continued NDPA support to take place. You will need to agree the attendance/contact arrangements with the Jobcentre Plus office you deal with so minimum disruption is made to a participant's activities on your provision. The level and frequency of this support will be decided by the NDPA before the participant commences the provision. These review interviews can be undertaken either at the Jobcentre Plus office, or the provider's premises or alternatively be conducted via the telephone if this is deemed appropriate.

### **Jobseeker's Agreement**

9. Each customer has a Jobseeker's Agreement (JSAg) as part of the 'available and actively seeking work' process. The JSAg is signed by both the customer and the NDPA, and is a benchmark against which the person's activity can be measured. You will need to agree arrangements to allow participants to attend interviews or sign labour market declarations, which minimise the disruption to their attendance on your provision. The JSAg is a requirement for claiming JSA. It is updated by the NDPA from time to time to reflect activity planned and recorded on the New Deal Action Plan.

### **Jobseeker's Direction**

10. In some situations, the Jobcentre Plus advisers might use a 'Jobseeker's Direction' when referring customers to provision eg Gateway/Follow-through provision. However, Jobseeker's Directions will not be used for referrals to IAP/Options provision, as **all** referrals in the IAP/Options are mandatory. As a provider you will be notified whenever a participant has been directed to attend your provision.

## **Other Support Available to Customers**

### **Travel to Interview Scheme**

11. Where customers secure interviews outside normal daily travelling distance they may be entitled to help with their fares from the Travel to Interview Scheme (TIS).

12. The interview must be with an employer for a job for which there is current recruitment. The job must be for 16 hours per week or more and expected to last at least three months.

13. If you think a customer may benefit from TIS you must refer them to Jobcentre Plus prior to the interview. Jobcentre Plus will be able to establish whether the customer will be entitled to receive the payment of the fares through TIS.

### **Work Trials**

14. Work Trials are short trial periods with an employer for an actual job vacancy. They can last for any period up to, but not exceeding, 15 working days.

15. Work Trials aim to help customers into work. They do this by giving employers (who may have doubts about a customer's skills, motivation or ability to cope with the job), an opportunity to see them in action, before deciding whether to employ them permanently. Evaluation of Work Trials has found that they are an effective way of helping priority customers into work. The availability of Work Trials to New Deal participants will be decided by the Jobcentre Plus District Manager

16. For NDYP participants, any time spent on a Work Trials cannot be added to the time they spend on the NDYP Option(s). However, providers will receive the usual 'on programme payments', whilst a participant is on a Work Trial. You will not be obliged to keep records of the participant's attendance during this time. Where Jobcentre Plus sets up a Work Trial with an employer it is Jobcentre Plus's responsibility to seek appropriate assurances from the employer on their Health and Safety arrangements through their completion of the HSQ1. A participant cannot start on the Work Trial until the HSQ1 is completed to the satisfaction of Jobcentre Plus. However, you should not ignore any Health and Safety issues that may be brought to your attention, for example, concerns raised by visiting Jobcentre Plus staff, or from the participant. If you do have any concerns you must raise these with your Jobcentre Plus contact.

### **Job Grant**

17. Job Grant is a non-taxable payment that can be made to customers when they move directly from benefit to start work for at least 16 hours a week or increase their hours to at least 16 a week and expect it to last 5 weeks or more. The amount of Job Grant paid will be £100 for single customers and couples

without children or £250 for lone parents or customers with children for whom they are entitled to receive benefit.

18. Customers may be paid a Job Grant if they:

- are starting work of 16 hours a week or more;
- expect the work to last at least 5 weeks;
- have been in receipt of a qualifying benefit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, New Deal Allowance Payments or Employment Zone payments or a combination of these benefits for at least 26 weeks immediately prior to moving into full time work;
- have not already received a Job Grant relating to the same 26 week qualifying period.

19. A Job Grant may be payable if the customer's partner is going into work of at least 24 hours per week and as a result the whole family's benefit ends.

20. If the customer requires more information about Job Grant or other financial help which may be available to them on starting work advise them to see their Jobcentre Plus adviser or to obtain a copy of the Jobcentre Plus Services booklet JPS1JP or WK1 leaflet

### **New Deal 50 Plus**

21. New Deal 50 plus is a voluntary programme for people aged 50 or over. It provides one to one job search advice and guidance from a personal adviser, including access to Jobcentre Plus mainstream programmes; access to the over 50s return to work element of the Working Tax Credit, paid by Inland Revenue; a Training Grant of up to £1,500 during the first 2 years in employment, for work related training. Please refer the customer to the Jobcentre Plus contact for further information.

## **ANNEX 1 – JOBCENTRE PLUS ACCURACY OF INFORMATION**

From April 2003, Jobcentre Plus developed a more cohesive approach to the delivery of information and advice services, which are consistently applied throughout the business. This is achieved through the implementation of the Jobcentre Plus Accuracy of Information Standards:

- **Information** – is general, factual data which is not customer specific
- **General advice** - is the promotion of Government policy, for example, work is the best form of welfare; people should plan for their retirement
- **Specific advice** – is information tailored to meet the customer's individual circumstances and requirements which may identify a number of options, but does not indicate the official's view of the best course of action
- **Recommendation** – is a statement to a customer suggesting his or her best course of action. It therefore goes beyond specific advice, which

may identify a number of options, by indicating the official's view of the best option.

In addition to these, a definition of signposting was developed in recognition that Jobcentre Plus staff need to be able to confidently refer customers to other appropriate organisations.

- **Signposting** – to alternative sources of information and advice may be appropriate in all contacts.

As a provider, you are providing a service on behalf of Jobcentre Plus and we would therefore expect you to also adhere to these standards when dealing with Jobcentre Plus customers. For example;

- if a customer is referred to your provision, we would expect you to provide them with accurate information and advice about the help that you would be able to offer them without recommending to them that they take up your provision. As long as you have provided the customer with all the key facts about your services, they will then be able to make an informed decision about whether to take up this provision or not.

**Note:** If it is **mandatory** for the customer to attend your provision, Jobcentre Plus staff will have already explained the consequences of not attending to the customer. You may want to reinforce these consequences, but you should still provide factual information and advice and allow the customer to make (their) informed choices.

- if a customer who is currently attending your provision seeks your advice about their allowance/benefit you should sign post them back to Jobcentre Plus for assistance.