

About Jobcentre Plus

Our service
standards

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Introduction

Jobcentre Plus is part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). We are here to provide work for those that can, and support for those that cannot.

We're always changing to meet the needs of our customers. Although many of our services are delivered over the phone, we are also improving ways for you to access our services on the internet. More and more we will encourage people to find information, make claims and look for jobs online.

Jobcentres will mostly be used for booked appointments. This is so we can spend more of our time helping people who need extra support.

Some of the help you get will be delivered for Jobcentre Plus by other organisations (such as training providers). They will have their own complaints procedures, but the principles in this leaflet still apply.

If you have trouble using any of our services, or you have an urgent question, we can make an appointment for you to speak to someone as soon as possible.

You can get our contact details and much more information online at **www.direct.gov.uk**

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To make a claim



www.direct.gov.uk/benefitsadviser



Phone **0800 055 6688**
Textphone **0800 023 4888**

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm

To find a job



www.direct.gov.uk/jobsearch



Phone **0845 606 0234**
Textphone **0845 605 5255**

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm

Our responsibilities to you

We want to give you the best service we can. When you contact us, we want you to be happy with the advice we give you and the way we treat you.

Right treatment

We aim to treat all our customers in the same way. We will:

- be friendly, fair and helpful
- treat you with respect
- behave professionally
- ensure our offices are as safe as possible for all our customers and staff, and
- respect your privacy.

When we contact you

You can choose how we contact you – by phone or in writing. But to keep your personal details secure we don't include them in replies we send by e-mail.

When we write to you

When we write to you, we aim for all letters to:

- be typed, clear and easy to read
- tell you if there is anything you need to do, and
- give you contact details, like a person's name and direct phone number.

We can write to you in English, Welsh or the language you prefer. We can contact you in the best way for you, if you tell us what this is.

Visiting our offices

When you visit our offices, our staff will:

- wear a name badge and greet you in a friendly, professional way
- always try to see you on time if you have an appointment
- book an appointment as soon as possible if you need one, and
- arrange a private interview room if you need privacy.

If you visit our offices without an appointment, we will try to help you straight away – mainly through our telephone services. If we can't, we will book an appointment for you.

Right result

We aim to give you accurate information and the right advice to help you:

- find a suitable job
- get each of the benefits you're entitled to
- understand the conditions of receiving your benefit, such as attending interviews or looking for work
- understand our decisions
- decide what to do, and
- access other support you may need, such as help to develop new skills or help with childcare or travel costs.

On time

We aim to make sure that we deliver our services within the times you expect. This includes:

- processing your benefit claim as quickly as possible
- changing any of your details when you tell us, and letting you know if the change affects your benefit
- being on time for appointments, and
- making sure we can take phone calls at agreed times.

When you phone us

We aim to answer phone calls within **30 seconds**. Our staff will give you their name and the name of the office or section you have called.

We will ring you back if you are concerned about the cost of the call, or if we can't answer your question right away. If we can't help you, we will try to direct you to the right place to get help.

When you write to us

When you send us a letter, we aim to give you a full reply:

- within **10 working days** of getting your letter, or
- within **15 working days** if we are replying to a Member of Parliament (MP) who writes to our Chief Operating Officer on your behalf.

Our response will be in a format that suits you. Where possible, we will contact you by phone to arrange this.

If we can't give you a reply within this time, we will say why and tell you:

- who is dealing with your letter
- when you can expect a full reply, and
- what we have done so far.

Easy access

We want to make sure you can access our services easily.

We will:

- give you the service you need, taking account of any health condition, disability or language problems you have
- provide different ways to get our services, such as face-to-face, by phone or the internet, and
- try to direct you to the right place if we can't help.

If you have a disability

We're committed to meeting our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Our offices have:

- induction loops and textphones for people who have difficulty hearing or speaking, and
- easy access for people who have a health condition or find it hard to walk.

We can also get a British Sign Language interpreter, or communicate in the way that's best for you. If you ask for an interpreter, we will aim to arrange one within **one working day**. We will arrange your appointment for as soon as possible after this.

If you have a disability or health condition that affects how you use our service, please tell us so that we can give you the right support. This might be helping you to fill in forms, or visiting you at home.

If you don't speak English

If you have an appointment at one of our offices or want to phone us, you can:

- use your own interpreter, or
- ask us for an interpreter.

We try to arrange an interpreter within **one working day**.

If your interview or phone call is urgent, we can usually arrange a telephone interpreting service straight away.

We can also help you fill in any forms.

What we expect from you

We've explained our commitments to you, but there are also things we expect in return.

Reasonable behaviour

You can help to make the Jobcentre Plus service pleasant by:

- treating our staff with respect, and
- being considerate and polite.

Giving us information and being on time

You can also help by:

- giving full and correct details
- giving more details if we ask you to
- being on time for appointments, and
- making sure you can take phone calls at agreed times.

Telling us when something changes

When you're getting benefits and your circumstances change, you must tell us straight away. For example, tell us if you:

- move home (or if other people move into or leave your home)
- change the account we pay benefits into
- start work or change the number of hours you work
- become ill or go into hospital, or
- if your other benefits change.

If you are not sure whether to tell us about a change, do it anyway. If you don't, you could lose out on money you should get. Or you could be paid too much, and have to pay it back.

Telling us what you think

At Jobcentre Plus we always aim to provide a high level of customer service.

We welcome all your comments, complaints, or ideas for things we could improve. Your feedback helps us to look at what we do and how we could do it better.

When things go right

If you think we've done something well, please tell us. Knowing that we got it right for you may help us to get it right for others.

We're always looking for new ways to improve our services. If you have an idea that could help us do this, please say. We will reply to your comments within 10 working days of getting them.

When things go wrong

If you think that we've got something wrong, or that we're not dealing with you in the right way, please let us know straight away. The sooner you tell us, the sooner we can look into the matter.

You may find it easier to speak to someone in the office you have been dealing with. A phone call will usually put matters right, and we can call you back if you are concerned about the cost of the call.

However, there may be times when you want to make a formal complaint. To find out more about how to do this, see page 13.

If your complaint is about an incident in one of our offices and you would like the CCTV footage as evidence, you need to ask us for it **within seven days** of the incident happening. Not all of our offices are able to keep footage for more than seven days.

In some cases you have a formal right of appeal against decisions we've made. We will always tell you when this is the case, how to appeal, and any time limits which apply.

Making a complaint

Making a complaint can seem hard, and you might be worried that it could make things worse. But we try to make it as easy as we can for you to tell us about your complaint.

We will try to deal with your complaint as quickly as possible, and put right anything we have got wrong. We may not be able to give you everything you want, but if we know how you feel we can work with you to make things better.

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If you complain, we will make sure that staff with the right experience, knowledge and authority look into the matter. We will:

- deal with you in a pleasant and professional way
- take your complaint seriously
- keep your complaint private, and
- not treat you differently from anyone else just because you have made a complaint.

Providers should give the same standard of service as Jobcentre Plus. If you have any complaints, talk to your provider about them. Your provider will have their own complaints procedures that they'll explain at your first meeting.

If you have gone through the provider's process and are not satisfied with the way they have dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Independent Case Examiner to investigate (see page 15).

Independent help

If you want independent help when you're dealing with us, or when you want to complain, you could ask:

- a local advice centre like a Citizens Advice Bureau, or
- your Member of Parliament (MP).

Your adviser should be able to tell you about local sources of independent advice and help.

How to make a formal complaint

Stage 1

Get in touch with the person you have been dealing with. Tell them, or their manager, about your complaint.

We aim to fully resolve your complaint within 15 working days of receiving it. We hope you will be happy with that reply.

Stage 2

If you don't settle your complaint at stage 1, get in touch with the District Manager of the Jobcentre, contact centre or benefit centre you have been dealing with. Anyone in the Jobcentre, contact centre or benefit centre can tell you who the District Manager is.

This manager will make sure your complaint is looked at again, and they will let you know what will be done. We aim to fully resolve complaints at this stage within 15 working days of receiving them.

Stage 3

We will settle most complaints at stages 1 or 2. However, if you're still not happy with the answer you get at stage 2, you can write to our Chief Operating Officer:

**Chief Operating Officer
Department for Work and Pensions
6th Floor
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NA**

The Chief Operating Officer can't personally answer all letters, but will make sure that your complaint is reviewed fully and fairly. They will ask the most suitable person to look into it.

If you write to the Chief Operating Officer and not the office you usually deal with, we aim to reply within 15 working days.

If we can't give you a reply within this time, we will say why and tell you:

- who is dealing with your complaint
- when you can expect a full reply, and
- what we have done so far.

If we have made a mistake we will:

- say sorry
- put it right as fast as possible
- tell you what went wrong and why, and
- learn from it.

Independent Case Examiner

After the Chief Operating Officer sends you their decision, you may still think that we've not dealt with your complaint properly. If so, you can write to the Independent Case Examiner. This person is independent from Jobcentre Plus, and the service is free.

The Independent Case Examiner can only help after you get the Chief Operating Officer's final reply. You must contact them within six months of getting the reply.

Please don't contact them before, or instead of, following stages 1 to 3.

To find out more, please contact:

Independent Case Examiner
Jupiter Drive
Chester
CH70 8DR



Phone **0845 606 0777**



www.ind-case-exam.org.uk

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

If you still feel that we've not sorted out your complaint, your MP may be able to refer it to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman is totally independent from Jobcentre Plus and the government. Their service is free.

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To find out more about this, please contact:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP



Phone **0345 015 4033**



www.ombudsman.org.uk

Special payments

We run a special-payment scheme as part of the Department for Work and Pensions. This is a ‘discretionary’ scheme, which means that we look at each case on its merits. It aims to help put people back to the financial position they would have been in if we had not made a mistake.

You can find more information in the guide ‘Financial redress for injustice resulting from maladministration’. You can see a copy of this guide in your Jobcentre, or on the internet at **www.dwp.gov.uk**

Call charges

Charges were correct as of the date on the back of this leaflet.

Calls to 0800 numbers are free from BT land lines but you may have to pay if you use another phone company, a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

Calls to 0845 numbers from BT land lines should cost no more than 5p per minute with a 13p call set up charge. You may have to pay more if you use another phone company or a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

Calls to 03 numbers from BT land lines should cost no more than 5p a minute with a 13p call set up charge. However calls to 03 numbers are usually included in the cost of any call plan you may have, so ask your service provider if you will be charged for these calls.

Calls from mobile phones can cost up to 40p per minute, so check the cost of calls with your service provider.

You can ask us to call you back if you're concerned about the cost of the call.

Textphones

Our textphone numbers are for people who cannot speak or hear clearly. If you don't have a textphone, you could check if your local library or Citizens Advice Bureau has one. Textphones don't receive text messages from mobile phones.

We're always looking for ways to improve our leaflets. If you have any comments or suggestions about this leaflet, email us at: **leaflet.feedback@dwp.gsi.gov.uk**

This email address is only used for leaflet feedback.

We cannot answer questions about your pension or benefit.

Feedback form

If you do not want a reply, you don't need to give us any of your personal details.

Your details

Name

Date of birth

Address

Postcode

National Insurance number

Phone number

Email address

How do you want us to reply to you?

☐ Letter ☐ Phone ☐ Email ☐ Do not reply

Please give us your address, phone number or email address so we can reply to you in the way you want.

What is your feedback?

☐ Complaint ☐ Enquiry ☐ Suggestion ☐ Compliment

Please write your comments in the space over the page. Please also use this space to tell us about any special requirements we should bear in mind when we are dealing with you. →

(You may use an extra sheet of paper if you want.)

[illegible]

Would you like to take part in any future discussion groups or surveys about our service?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Please send or take this form to your local Jobcentre.

Thank you for contacting us.

Date received

Important information about this leaflet

This leaflet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct as of April 2012. It is possible that some of the information is oversimplified, or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

You can find more information about benefits and pensions online.



For benefits information visit
www.direct.gov.uk/benefits



For pensions information visit
www.direct.gov.uk/pensions

This information is available in other formats on request. If you can't use the internet, you can phone for a more detailed leaflet.



Phone **0845 731 3233**
Textphone **0845 604 0210**

We aim to provide a high quality of service to all our customers. You can find out more in our customer charter at
www.direct.gov.uk/dwpcharter

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