



## **Work focused interviews**

### **Who has to take part in a work focused interview?**

You can be called in to attend a work-focused interview if you are claiming or receiving any of the following:

- employment and support allowance (ESA)
- incapacity benefit (IB)
- income support (IS) on grounds of disability
- severe disablement allowance (SDA)

Lone parents who are able to claim income support also have to take part in a work focused interview. You will also have work focused interviews if you are claiming jobseeker's allowance.

### **What happens at a work focused interview?**

When you are called to the interview a 'personal adviser' will discuss your work prospects. A work focused interview is intended to:

1. assess your prospects of obtaining work
2. assist or encourage you obtain work
3. identify activities that you may undertake that will make remaining in or obtaining work more likely
4. identify training, educational or rehabilitation opportunities you can take which may make it more likely that you will obtain work
5. identify current or future work opportunities, including self employment, relevant to your needs and abilities

To pass the interview requirement, you must not only turn up for the interview at the right time, but also take part in it. You are expected to answer questions about your educational qualifications, any vocational training you have undertaken, your employment history, your work-related skills, any paid or unpaid work you are doing and any caring or childcare responsibilities you have.

You may also be asked about any medical condition which in your opinion puts you at a disadvantage in getting a job. This may involve discussing a capability report provided by the DWP doctor who examined you. Participation in these work-focused interviews should not adversely affect your benefit claim.

You will also be required to help the personal adviser complete an 'action plan', which will list the steps you are willing to take in order to enhance your job prospects.



However, you are not required to do any more than take part in the interview. Whether you actually attend training, follow up on a job vacancy or do anything else agreed in the action plan or suggested by the personal adviser is entirely up to you.

You may be required to take part in further interviews at a later date.

### **What if I don't attend?**

If you don't attend the interview without good cause, your claim will lapse or your benefit will be reduced. So you should still attend the interview, even if you feel it is inappropriate for you at the moment (or contact the benefit office straightaway within 5 days of the date of your interview to tell them why you cannot or could not attend).

### **What is good cause for not attending an interview?**

There is no definition of good cause. It could be for a variety of reasons. For example it would be good cause if there was a misunderstanding due to learning, language or literacy difficulties. You might also have good cause if you had to keep a medical or dental appointment or if you were ill due to your condition and this made it impossible to attend the interview.

### **Who does not have to attend a work focused interview?**

The personal adviser can waive or defer attendance for an interview if they consider that it would 'not be of assistance' to you or 'appropriate in the circumstances'. Once attendance has been waived you are treated as if you had taken part in the interview. If attendance has been deferred you will have to attend an interview at a later date.

You are also not required to attend a work-focused interview if:

- you are aged 60 or over.
- you are about to start work
- you are claiming IS/IB and are exempt from the personal capability assessment (PCA)

### **Where can I get more help and information?**

DIAL Great Yarmouth

12a George Street

Great Yarmouth

Norfolk NR30 1HR

01493 856900 Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm