

Expected hours of work related activity Guidance

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Introduction

The expected hours of work-related activities that the claimant is required to do each week is used to calculate their Conditionality Earnings Threshold, the barrier between the Light Touch and Working Enough regimes.

The Universal Credit Service defaults to the maximum expected hours of work-related activities per week for the relevant Labour Market regime and also takes into account the age of the youngest child of claimants who are lead carers. For example, the maximum expected hours for claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime with no children under the age of 13 is 35 hours per week, whereas claimants with children between 3 and 12 is a maximum of 30 hours per week.

However, these maximum expected hours can be adjusted to take into account any health condition or caring responsibilities or other circumstance the claimant may have.

Labour Market regime	Default maximum hours per week
Intensive Work Search regime: main carer for youngest dependent child aged 13 or over	35
Light Touch regime Intensive Work Search regime - main carer for the youngest dependent child aged 3 to 12 Work Preparation regime (limited capability for work following a Work Capability Assessment)	35 30 16
Work Focused Interview regime No Work Related Requirements Working Enough	16 0 0

Tailoring expected hours

A claimant may not be able to meet the maximum expected hours of work-related activity, for example if they:

- have a health condition
- have caring responsibilities
- are the lead carer for a child or children and experiencing difficulties with childcare, travel or other circumstances which means that they cannot meet the maximum (see Work-related requirements for claimants with children)
- are working and have earnings below the Administrative Earnings Threshold

This list is not exhaustive.

The expected hours can be tailored to allow a claimant to do fewer hours of work-related activity per week where appropriate.

Example

Claimant A works 3 hours per week with earnings below the Administrative Earnings Threshold.

It takes claimant A 1 hour to travel to work and 1 hour to travel home from work (total travel time 2 hours).

The total amount of working hours and travel time (5 hours) must be deducted from the expected hours of work-related activity.

Although the expected hours can be tailored to the claimant's circumstances, they cannot be increased above the maximum number of expected hours. If the claimant says they want to do more hours of work-related activity, the additional hours are not recorded on the Claimant Commitment. These are done entirely voluntarily by the claimant.

Availability

A claimant in the Intensive Work Search regime is required to look for and be immediately available for any work:

- regardless of the type and salary as long as the salary is at or above National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage
- on a full-time basis, generally:
 - a minimum of 30 to 35 hours (see the above table) to take them above their Conditionality Earnings Threshold)
 - up to 40 hours a week for 16 or 17 year olds
 - up to 48 hours a week for over 18s
- within 90 minutes of their home by their normal method of transport

In certain circumstances, limitations can be placed on a claimants work availability. See Availability for work.

Lead carers who are responsible for looking after children may also have their travel time capped depending on their hours of availability. See Work-related requirements for claimants with children.

Example:

A claimant allocated to the Intensive Work Search regime pre-Work Capability Assessment could have reduced expected hours and a limitation on their work availability to suit their health condition.