

# Unite Community

This leaflet was produced with the support of London Unemployed Strategies.

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# Your Work Search

**Myth:** I have to produce evidence via Universal Jobmatch of every hour's work search for a full 35 hours per week.

**Fact:** You do not have to use Universal Jobmatch for your work search.

You do have to register with it to get Jobseekers Allowance, but you can use any other means (e.g. other websites, printouts of newspapers viewed, jobs applied for etc) to show your 'coach' what you have been doing to find work. If you are still claiming under JSA, then you should not have to account for every hour you spend doing work search. You need to show you have taken 'reasonable steps' to find work.

What is 'reasonable' should be agreed between you and the coach and written into your Claimant Commitment – so do not be pressured into agreeing something you think is unreasonable. You can also ask for a review of your Claimant Commitment at any time if you think it needs changing, according to your circumstances.

Also, when you are just starting on JSA or Universal Credit, the law says: **'Where a claimant has previously carried out work of a particular nature, or at a particular level of remuneration, a work search requirement and a work availability requirement must be limited to work of a similar nature, or level of remuneration.. but**

- (a) only if the Secretary of State is satisfied that the claimant will have reasonable prospects of obtaining paid work in spite of such limitation; and
- (b) the limitation is to apply for no more than THREE MONTHS beginning on the date of claim.' (JSA Regs 2013)

***So you can ask for limitations, based on your previous work and income, for up to three months, to be built in to your Claimant Commitment.***

After that, in theory, you can be pushed into doing any work for any amount of money or hours (as long as it's minimum wage). And if you register under the new Universal Credit, they can be more insistent about the 35 hour work search requirement (what they call 'expected hours'.)

Some Jobcentres are trying to get claimants to fill out hour-by-hour worksearch sheets as evidence for them. But you should not have to do this, even under UC, as long as you are taking what they now call 'all reasonable action':

**When deciding if the work search 'all reasonable action' requirement has been met, your job coach should have regard to the**

- Time spent by the claimant searching for work and

- Quality of the claimant's work search including the range of actions that they have taken (for example, contacting employers, registering with employment agencies, investigating self-employment opportunities etc).

In order to meet the requirement to take all reasonable action in any week claimant must:

- 1.1 Take action to get paid work for their expected hours of work per week minus any relevant deductions or
- 1.2 Satisfy the Secretary of State that they have taken all reasonable action despite the time spent doing this being less than the claimant's expected hours of work and
2. The claimant's action must be action which gives them the best prospects of obtaining work.

(JSA Regs 2013)

This looks tough – and it is. BUT ultimately it is still about how each job coach or Jobcentre interprets the law and guidelines. The more confident you are about what you have been doing to look for the type of work or training that you think is most suitable for you, the more you can convince them that this gives you, in their terms, 'the best prospects of obtaining work' taking up voluntary work of your own could help with this and remember –

THE CLAIMANT COMMITMENT IS A TWO-WAY STREET – IT SHOULD SAY WHAT DWP

ARE DOING TO HELP YOU FIND SUITABLE WORK OR TRAINING. SO MAKE SURE DWP ARE PROVIDING YOU WITH ALL THE HELP YOU NEED.

**We want real jobs and a real living wage – not Workfare and sanctions**

PCS is the union that represents job centre workers. It is not staff working in jobcentres that set Government policy. They want to be able to provide help to those who need it rather than focus on conditionality or mandatory unpaid work. The staff are often put under extreme pressure to refer claimants to programmes or to sanctioning in order to hit secret targets. Unite and PCS are working to expose the Government lies on targets and working with other organisations to help claimants and to abolish workfare and sanctions.

## Join Unite Community

**Come and be part of the largest union in the UK, Unite. If you're unemployed, a carer, a volunteer, student or retired, Unite Community membership is for you.**

Unite Community membership costs just 50p per week. Up and down the country Community members come together in groups and meet up to take action together on issues they feel passionately about. Join us and get involved. To find out more or to join on-line [www.unitetheunion.org/community](http://www.unitetheunion.org/community) or email us on [community@unitetheunion.org](mailto:community@unitetheunion.org)