

# Withdrawn

**This publication has been withdrawn.**

It is no longer current.

# Department for Work and Pensions

## Provider Direct Guidance for Mandatory Work Activity Providers

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Please note: The Provider Direct service cannot be used for queries about claimants in receipt of Universal Credit, as the agents do not have access to the relevant IT systems.

### Introduction

1. Provider Direct is a telephone helpline service for providers. It is only for use when a claimant has failed to participate in a mandated activity, including Mandatory Work Activity, and you have been unable to contact them.
2. The service will allow you to check that you hold the correct details prior to deciding whether to make a Decision Making and Appeals (DMA) referral to DWP.
3. The aim is to reduce the large number of inappropriate referrals, which will have clear benefits for both providers and DWP. A significant proportion of unnecessary DMA referrals are made because providers are not aware of changes of circumstances, most notably when a claimant has changed their address or found work.

4. Two main reasons for claimants not attending their Mandatory Work Activity placement are:
  - Changed address and therefore not received their notification letter.
  - No longer in receipt of benefit.
5. Provider Direct may also be able to inform you of other changes they are able to easily identify from the system which may have led to a claimant failing to participate.
6. You are free to call as many times as you wish between the hours of 8am - 6pm, Monday to Friday. However, you can only check the circumstances of up to ten claimants in any single call. If you need to enquire about more than ten claimants, you will need to call back. It is important that these restrictions are adhered to in order to allow agents to manage the volume of calls that they receive.

\*Please note: If you call between 8am - 9am and 5pm - 6pm, it may take longer for your call to be answered due to the limited number of agents available to take calls at these times.

The quietest times to call (and consequently the quickest times a call will be answered) are after 11.00 and before 16.00

Additionally, please remember that the line closes at 6pm, therefore if you have a large number of queries to make please try to avoid calling the service towards the end of the day as there may not be enough time to answer all of them.

### **Benefits of Using the Service**

7. The benefits of using this service include:
  - Saving a provider's resources and time by only having to complete a DMA referral in appropriate circumstances.
  - Faster processing of DMA referrals.
  - The adverse decision rate should increase if inappropriate referrals are removed.
  - Reductions in the number of instances of potential participant negative behaviour towards providers due to inappropriate DMA referrals.

**Note: The Provider Direct service is not designed or resourced to deal with other queries. If DWP finds that there are instances where this service is not being used for its intended purpose, DWP reserves the right to withdraw the service.**

8. If this was to occur, you would need to provide assurance of compliance before access to the service could be re-instated.

## Access Code Process

9. Each provider is allocated their own unique Provider Direct Access Code. This code is sent out monthly by our Business Management Team to the nominated Single Point of Contact (SPoC) within the prime provider organisation.

The role of the SPoC is to:

- Take receipt of and manage the secure distribution of the Access Code.
- Ensure that all staff comply with the security plans relating to Provider Direct.
- Check to ensure that authorised users are using the correct Access Code following a change to it.
- Authorise changes of Provider Direct users should anyone leave the supply chain or change job roles.
- Take responsibility for resolving any complaints that may arise from Provider Direct agents.
- Notify DWP immediately should there be a change of circumstances that could affect the security of the Provider Direct Access code e.g. if a member of staff leaves who had access to the Access Code. Where this occurs a Potential Incident proforma ([Annex B](#)) must be completed and sent to [WPD.SECURITY@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK](mailto:WPD.SECURITY@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK)
- Any known or suspected breaches in security should be reported as per Chapter 8 of the [Generic Provider Guidance](#)

**NB see [paragraph 43](#) for more details**

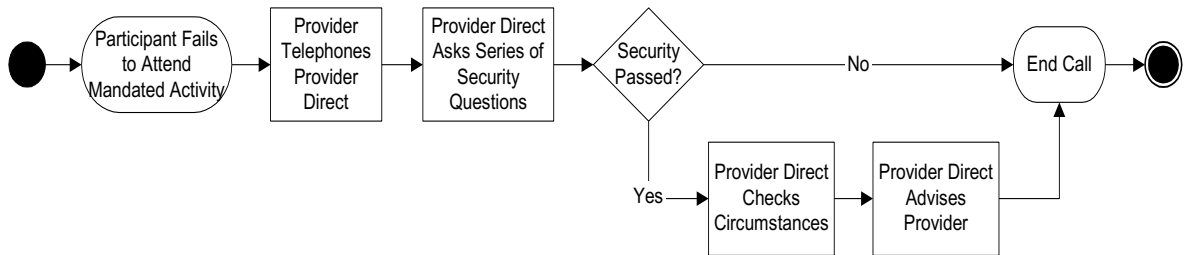
## Access Code Security Process

10. Before you can access the Provider Direct service, if you haven't done so already, you must provide DWP with the following:

- A detailed explanation of how you propose to keep the Access Code secure
- Confirmation of whether or not your security plan will need updating – if so a Deed of Variation will be required.

11. If there are any changes to your Access Code security process you must inform DWP immediately.

## Call Process Flowchart



## Using the Service

12. To use the Provider Direct service you will need to phone the dedicated Provider Direct telephone Number **0345 6044015**. Please note that to help maintain security, all calls will be recorded.
13. You will need to have immediate access to the referral information that was originally sent by Jobcentre Plus to allow agents to manage call volumes as effectively as possible.
14. A Provider Direct Desk Aide is attached to help you provide and record any relevant information. See [Annex A](#).
15. The Provider Direct agent will first confirm your eligibility to access the service by:
  - Asking for the name of your company and your own name;
  - The name of your prime provider;
  - Check your details against an approved provider list to confirm that you are eligible to use this service; and
  - Determine the reason for your call.

## Provider Access Code Security Check

16. The agent will then conduct the Access Code security check. They will:
  - Ask you to identify three random digits from an eight digit Access Code; for example, they may ask for the 2nd and 5th and 8th digit of the Access Code; and
  - Check the Access Code against the monthly Access Code list which will be shared with providers as required.
17. **If you correctly identify all three Access Code characters**, the call will continue. Where you wish to discuss up to ten claimants during the call, it will not be necessary to ask further security questions on the *provider* Access Code.

**If you fail to identify all three characters the agent will:**

- inform you that you have failed the security questions;
- advise you to call back when you have the correct Access Code; and
- end the call.

## **Claimant Security Check**

18. You will be asked for claimant security details based on the information held on the original PRaP referral from Jobcentre Plus to satisfy the security check.
19. Please note that if you have updated this information on your internal systems, this will not match the information that Provider Direct agents hold. They will only have information from the original referral.
20. You can check the circumstances of up to ten claimants in any single call.
21. Provider Direct agents will not have the capacity to deal with more than ten claimants in any one call. This will help to minimise the time you are waiting for your call to be answered.

**Note: It is important to ensure that DMA referrals are not stock piled. If you are unable to contact a Provider Direct agent within two consecutive days of you finding out that the participant failed to participate, you must raise the compliance doubt.**

22. The agent will ask you one security question for each claimant, which you must answer correctly for the call to continue.

### **For each claimant, the agent will ask you:**

The National Insurance number (NINO) and the full name of the claimant.

23. They will then ask you one question from the following list:

- The referring officer's initials or name
- Employment history (eg last employer)
- Selected qualifications
- The signing day and cycle
- Date of referral to Mandatory Work Activity\*

24. \*Due to the way that the Provider Referral and Payment (PRaP) system updates overnight, the referral date that you receive is the day after the date that they were actually referred via the Jobcentre Plus Labour Market System (LMS). To accommodate this discrepancy, the agent will accept the answer to the referral

date as being the date held on LMS plus one day. For example, if the referral date held on LMS is 06/09/12, but you have 07/09/12 on PRaP, this should still be accepted as a security pass.

25. The claimant may not have any qualifications or work history (and sometimes information in LMS may be unclear).
26. In this case, the Provider Direct agent will select one of the remaining three questions.
27. If you fail the claimant security check, the agent will make a judgement on whether to:
  - move on to the next claimant; or
  - advise you to call back when you have the correct details.

### **Details to be checked**

28. Once you have passed the security questions, the agent will ask you the date the participant failed to participate in Mandatory Work Activity.
29. They will then ask you which of the following claimant details you wish to check:
  - Address
  - Contact details (eg phone number)
  - Entitlement to benefit on the date they failed to participate (whether or not in receipt of benefit).
30. The agent will also tell you about any other obvious changes in the claimant's circumstances that are evident. They will not however be able to check for every change of circumstances, or understand the legislation around Mandatory Work Activity policy or processes.
31. If the claimant was in receipt of benefit on the day they failed to participate and contact details are correct, the agent will advise you to raise a compliance doubt.
32. If the claimant was in receipt of benefit on the day they failed to participate and contact details held by the provider have changed (eg change of address), the agent will give you the correct details and advise you **not** to raise a compliance doubt.
33. If the claimant was in receipt of benefit on the day they failed to participate but the claim is now dormant, the agent will advise you to raise a compliance doubt. If the claimant has taken up employment, and information is available, you will be given:
  - The employer's name

- Start date
  - Job title
34. If the claimant was not in receipt of benefit on the day of failure to participate, the agent will advise you **not** to raise a compliance doubt. If the claimant has taken up employment, and information is available, you will be given:
- The employer's name
  - Start date
  - Job title
35. If not in employment, you will be told why the claimant has signed off benefit, if this is known.
36. Provider Direct will not provide written evidence of any changes in circumstances that are identified, therefore you may wish to record the details of your call to Provider Direct for audit purposes.
37. You should record:
- The date you called Provider Direct
  - Whether you were advised to raise a referral – if not then why not?
  - Who you spoke to (the name of the agent)
38. The agent will ask you if you have all the details you need, and if you are clear what action you need to take. The call will then be ended.

### **Access Codes**

39. It is important to ensure that Provider Direct agents only answer calls from authorised and contracted providers. To maintain security of claimants' personal data, a rigorous system of security checks has been put in place to support this process.
40. A unique Provider Direct Access Code will be issued monthly; a private email will be sent to all SPoCs, containing a Microsoft Word document that is password protected.
41. On receipt of an acknowledgment from the SPoC, a separate email will then be sent to them containing the unlock code that is required to open the Word document.
42. It will then be the individual SPoC's responsibility to pass on the access code to the relevant people within their organisation in a secure manner.



43. The access code will be changed each month and the SPoCs will be emailed the new access code on the last Wednesday of the month, which will then be used from the following Monday.

### **Access Code Changes and Security**

44. It is important that security of claimants' data remains our paramount priority; however we must balance this with the needs of the business in order to sustain an effective efficient service. We have therefore decided to adopt a risk-based approach to keep any disruption to a minimum.

#### **Instances when DWP would need to be informed of a change of circumstances that could require a change to the Access Code:**

- If a member of staff leaves without giving notice, or they were subject to pending disciplinary procedures.
- If a person has been dismissed
- If there is any reason to suspect fraudulent activity
- If a subcontractor organisation goes in to liquidation/ceases trading or terminates their subcontractor relationship with you or;
- Any other scenario where there is the potential for a security breach

(This list is not exhaustive)

#### **Instances when DWP would not need to be informed of a change of circumstances that could require a change to the Access Code:**

- if a member of staff leaves to take up a new job and there is no reason to believe that they would do something inappropriate with the access code or;
- if a member of staff completes a temporary contract and there is no reason to believe that they would do something inappropriate with the access code

**Note: If you have any doubts at all about whether or not DWP should be informed, you should err on the side of caution and complete an Annex B form. (Please see below).**

#### **Action to take where a member of staff has left and a change in Access Code may be required.**

Where you believe that a change to the Access Code may be required you must complete **Annex B** and send it immediately to: [WPD.security@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:WPD.security@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

**(NB this address is only to be used to send these proformas to. Any other Provider Direct issues/ query should be sent via your Performance Manager).** Additionally, if you believe a

security breach has occurred you must raise a security incident with DWP in the usual way.

45. Upon receipt of **Annex B**, DWP will assess all of the given circumstances and then decide if a change to the Access Code is required.

46. Upon receipt DWP will look at the reasons for the member of staff leaving to establish whether or not a change to the Access Code is required. Each case will need to be judged on its own merit.

47. If a change to the Access Code is required, the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) will be notified and a new code will be sent using the agreed change of Access Code procedures.

## **Complaint Handling**

### **Raising a Complaint about an Individual Agent or about the Provider Direct Service**

48. The complaints process within Provider Direct is as follows:

- If the Agent cannot settle the complaint, a Team Leader will then speak to you.
- If a Team Leader cannot settle the complaint, a complaints template is completed.
- This is then sent to the Complaints Resolution Team to deal with.
- They will look into the complaint and feedback to you directly.

49. If you are unhappy with the service in general, for example the length of time you have been kept waiting or concerns about the security process, you may also raise these with your Performance Manager in the usual way.

## **Business Continuity**

50. In the unlikely event of a technical problem occurring, leading to Provider Direct being unable to take calls, the SPOC will be contacted by a member of the Work Programme Business Management Team who will advise of the nature of the problem and how long the service is likely to be affected for.

## **Annex A: Provider Direct - Desk Aide**

### **Before making the call**

- Do I have the up to date Provider Access Code?
- Do I know the name of my prime provider?

***Remember - you will need to confirm three out of three characters correctly***

- How many claimants am I going to enquire about?

***Remember - you can enquire about up to ten claimants in one call***

- From the original ***PRaP referral information***, do I have details of each claimant's:
  - Referring officer's initials or name
  - Employment history (eg last employer)
  - Selected qualifications
  - Signing day and cycle
  - Date of referral to Mandatory Work Activity\*
- What date did each claimant fail to participate? (It is necessary to know this before a phone call can proceed.)
- What information do I need to know about each claimant?
  - Was each claimant still in receipt of benefit when they failed to participate?
  - Do I have the correct address / phone number for each claimant?
  - Have any of the claimants started work? Is the employer / start date known?
  - Is there any other information that may be relevant?

**Recording the information**

	Date signed off	New address	New phone number	Employment Details	Other
<b>Claimant 1</b>					
<b>Claimant 2</b>					
<b>Claimant 3</b>					
<b>Claimant 4</b>					
<b>Claimant 5</b>					
<b>Claimant 6</b>					
<b>Claimant 7</b>					
<b>Claimant 8</b>					
<b>Claimant 9</b>					
<b>Claimant 10</b>					

## Annex B Notification of Change of Circumstances in Provider or Sub-contractor Organisation

**NB:** Please do not include *personal* details about any member of staff

Prime provider Organisation	Subcontractor Organisation	Date of change of circumstances	Reason for change e.g., member of staff dismissed, subcontractor ceased trading etc. (please give as much information as possible)

Please send the completed proforma to the [WPD.security@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:WPD.security@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) **immediately.**