








Fact Sheet WB/013: Jobseeker's Allowance

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Overview

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) is an unemployment benefit paid by the UK Government to people who are unemployed and actively seeking work. It is administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions) in England, Wales, and Scotland, and in Northern Ireland by the Department for Communities (www.communities-ni.gov.uk). Claimants must be between 18 years of age and the State Pension age (www.gov.uk/state-pension-age).

Eligibility

There are 3 different types of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA):

- 'New style' JSA
- Contribution-based JSA
- Income-based JSA

Which types you can get depends on your circumstances.

You can only apply for contribution-based and income-based JSA if you either:

- Get the severe disability premium, or are entitled to it
- Got or were entitled to the severe disability premium within the last month and are still eligible for it

If you cannot work because of coronavirus (COVID-19)

You can claim JSA if you cannot work but you're still getting paid by your employer ('on furlough') or through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Both of the following must also apply:

- you usually work less than 16 hours a week
- you meet the other eligibility requirements for JSA

New Style JSA

To be eligible for 'new style' JSA you'll need to have worked as an employee and paid Class 1 National Insurance contributions, usually in the last 2 to 3 years. National Insurance credits (www.gov.uk/national-insurance-credits) can also count.

You will not be eligible if you were self-employed and only paid Class 2 National Insurance contributions, unless you were working as a share fisherman or a volunteer development worker.

You'll also need to:

- Be 18 or over (there are some exceptions if you're 16 or 17 - contact Jobcentre Plus www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus for advice)
- Be under the State Pension age (www.gov.uk/state-pension-age)
- Not be in full-time education
- Be available for work
- Not be working at the moment, or be working less than 16 hours per week on average
- Not have an illness or disability which stops you from working
- Live in England, Scotland or Wales
- Have the right to work in the UK

You'll also need to take reasonable steps to look for work. You must still follow the guidance on working safely during coronavirus (www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19).

Your partner's income and savings will not affect your claim.

You can get 'new style' JSA for up to 182 days (about 6 months). After this you can talk to your work coach about your options.

Check if you're eligible for Universal Credit. If you are, you could get Universal Credit at the same time or instead of 'new style' JSA.

Contribution-Based JSA

You can only apply for contribution-based JSA if you either:

- Get the severe disability premium, or are entitled to it
- Got or were entitled to the severe disability premium within the last month and are still eligible for it

To be eligible you will also need to have worked as an employee and paid Class 1 National Insurance contributions, usually in the last 2 to 3 years. National Insurance credits (www.gov.uk/national-insurance-credits) can also count.

You will not be eligible if you were self-employed and only paid Class 2 National Insurance contributions, unless you were working as a share fisherman or a volunteer development worker.

You'll also need to:

- Be 18 or over (there are some exceptions if you're 16 or 17 - contact Jobcentre Plus [www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus] for advice)
- Be under the State Pension age (www.gov.uk/state-pension-age)
- Not be in full-time education
- Be available to work
- Not be working at the moment, or be working less than 16 hours per week on average
- Not have an illness or disability which stops you from working
- Live in England, Scotland or Wales
- Have the right to work in the UK

You'll also need to take reasonable steps to look for work. You must still follow the guidance on working safely during coronavirus (www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19).

Your partner's income and savings will not affect your claim.

You can get a contribution-based JSA for up to 182 days (about 6 months). After this you can talk

to your work coach about your options.

Income-Based JSA

Your employment in the last 2 to 3 years does not affect your eligibility.

You can only apply if you either:

- Get the severe disability premium, or are entitled to it
- Got or were entitled to the severe disability premium within the last month and are still eligible for it

You'll also need to:

- Be 18 or over (there are some exceptions if you're 16 or 17 - contact Jobcentre Plus [www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus] for advice)
- Be under the State Pension age (www.gov.uk/state-pension-age)
- Not be in full-time education
- Be in England, Scotland or Wales
- Be available for work
- Not be working or be working on average less than 16 hours per week
- Not have an illness or disability which stops you from working
- Be single, or have a partner who works for less than 24 hours a week on average
- Have £16,000 or less in savings (including your partner's savings)

You'll also need to take reasonable steps to look for work. You must still follow the guidance on working safely during coronavirus

(www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19).

Apply for New Style JSA

To apply, you'll need your:

- National Insurance number (www.gov.uk/lost-national-insurance-number)
- Bank or building society account details (or those of a family member or trusted friend)
- Employment details for the past 6 months, including employer contact details and dates you worked with them
- Private pension statement letter (www.gov.uk/pension-types)

To reclaim you need to apply again, even if your details have not changed.

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Backdating your claim

When you apply, you can ask for your claim to be backdated by up to 3 months if you were not able to claim sooner.

If you want to backdate your claim, you'll need:

- The date you want your claim to start from
- The reason your claim was delayed

Your claim may not be backdated if you do not have a good reason for the delay in making your claim. Reasons for backdating your claim could include:

- You had a family bereavement - a partner, parent, child, brother or sister died
- You were given the wrong advice that you could not get JSA

Apply online

You cannot apply online if you're under 18.

Claim online at: www.apply-for-new-style-jsa.dwp.gov.uk.

Apply for Contribution-Based JSA or Income-Based JSA

You will need to call Jobcentre Plus to apply.

Jobcentre Plus

Telephone: 0800 055 6688

Textphone: 0800 023 4888

Relay UK (www.relayuk.bt.com) (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 055 6688

Video relay service (<https://main.signvideo.me/app/8/10933>) for British Sign Language (BSL) users - check you can use the service: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Osx7FFxFpNY

Welsh language: 0800 012 1888

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Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Find out about call charges (www.gov.uk/call-charges)

You must claim with your partner (make a 'joint claim') if you're applying for income-based JSA and neither of you is responsible for a child. If you're not sure, contact Jobcentre Plus.

After you make your claim

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will make an appointment to talk to you, either over the phone or face-to-face.

If you disagree with a decision

You can challenge a decision about your claim (www.gov.uk/mandatory-reconsideration). This is called asking for mandatory reconsideration.

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