Department for Work & Pensions

Claimant Segmentation Trial Standards and Guidelines

This document contains the instructions, standards and guidelines that must be followed during the 3-month implementation of the Claimant Segmentation Trial. Please adhere to these as closely as possible. If you think your office may have a problem with complying with any of these instructions, please contact your single point of contact (SPOC) as soon as possible. Your SPOC will be able to raise this with the project team if necessary.

Trial overview

The Claimant Segmentation Trial is being rolled out to 27 Jobcentre Plus (JCP) offices across the country. It aims to test what the impact of weekly jobsearch reviews (WJRs), also known as weekly signing, is on claimant success in finding work, and most importantly identify which groups of claimants respond best to WJRs.

The trial will use an approach known as 'Randomised Controlled Trials' (RCTs) to rigorously test the impact of WJRs. This means that we will need to randomly assign claimants to either WJRs or standard fortnightly jobsearch reviews (FJRs), also known as fortnightly signing, and observe the outcomes.

The data collection and random assignment will be performed by the Claimant Segmentation Survey tool, which you will have received with this guidance. The simple, quick, and easy-to-use tool will enable us to collect key information about claimants that will help to analyse in detail how and why WJRs work.

The rest of this document covers how and when to use the Claimant Segmentation Survey tool and standards that must be followed subsequently to ensure this trial generates the best results possible. Please remember that these measures are temporary impositions that will ultimately help in making everyone more effective at helping claimants back into work.

Department for Work & Pensions

<u>**Claimant Segmentation Survey Tool**</u>

You should have already received the Claimant Segmentation Survey Tool. This is an excel-based tool that has been design to be as quick and un-obstructive to normal work as possible.

When to use

The tool should be administered at the end of the meeting where the claimant would usually be told how often they need to sign in your office. Work coaches or assistant work coaches should allow up to five minutes to run through the tool from beginning to end.

If a claimant has made a claim and been through the tool once, and then subsequently comes off benefits (for any reason) and then makes a second claim, including a rapid-reclaim, they must still go through the tool again. As long as their NI number is correctly entered, we will be able to track their repeat entries in the data.

How to use

The tool is very simple and easy to use.

Setting up the tool for use	Work coaches or assistant work coaches should save the tool to their desktop, and ensure that macros are enabled for it. If you do not know how to do this, contact your IT champion, SPOC, or FLISM. The first time the file is opened the user will be prompted to enter an email address. Please enter your own work email address. Once entered the first time and saved, you will not need to do this again.
Before using the tool	We have provided a copy of the questions which you may print, give to claimants before their interview, and ask them to complete in advance. This is not compulsory, but will ensure that running through the tool during the interview should be as quick and smooth as possible. If they do not or cannot fill it in, then simply enter answers directly into the tool during the interview.
Starting the tool	To use the tool, simply open the file from your desktop. It will open and the survey page should automatically appear. The welcome page asks you to continue if the claimant is eligible to take part in the study. Eligibility criteria are discussed below. If

a new JSA claimant is not eligible, the relevant LMS marker must be set. Instructions on setting LMS markers are provided at the end of this document.

NINO and consent

To begin a new survey, click 'Begin new survey'. You must then enter the claimant's National Insurance number. Please ensure that this is correctly entered as this will be the only means we have to track claimant's data. If the number entered is not a valid NINO you will be prompted to correct it.

You must then ask for the claimant's consent for us to collect information about them. This is necessary because we are collecting additional information beyond what is necessary for the claims process for the purposes of research. Please read out the passage to the claimant and ask if they are happy with this. Please click either the 'Agree' or 'Disagree' buttons.

If they disagree they will still be part of the trial using the data we already have available and the questions about your views on the claimant, <u>and the NINO must still be entered</u>.

If the claimant has any questions about this trial, see the FAQs below, which should address most of their concerns. If the claimant requires further information still, please seek advice from your SPOC or manager.

Claimant questions

If the claimant agrees to answer questions, you will be taken to the first of two claimant question pages. Make sure the claimant can see the questions on the screen, and then work through these with the claimant, reading out each question and asking the claimant to indicate answer(s) they would choose. Enter their answers as you go. The claimant should have received a paper version of the questions in advance, meaning they should have their answers ready prepared.

Please note that for some questions only one answer choice is possible (circular buttons) whereas for others you may select more than one answer (square buttons).

If the claimant does not understand any question, help them to understand the meaning, paraphrasing if necessary. The option 'prefer not to answer' is available for every question; the claimant must not be pressured to respond to a question if they do not want to (but no question can be left blank).

The claimant questions are spread over two pages – this is simply to save you from scrolling down the page. Use the 'Next' button to navigate to the next page.

Questions for you

Once you have completed all the claimant questions, or if the claimant did not agree to answer the questions, a window will open asking you (the work coach / assistant work coach) to ensure that you can answer the next section in confidence. At this point please adjust the screen so that the claimant cannot see what is displayed. If necessary explain that you now need to fill in additional information.

Once the screen is appropriately adjusted, click 'Ok' and you will be taken to a separate question page. These are questions for you to answer about the claimant; please answer them as accurately and honestly as possible.

The final question asks you to indicate which category best describes the claimant. Please refer to the Pen Picture categorisations for more detail on each of these descriptions. These are included at the end of this document.

Once you have completed all the questions, click the 'Next' button. At this point the data is saved and submitted to our central server via your email. Therefore you should not close and re-start the tool for the same claimant; the data has already been submitted and re-running the tool with the same claimant will create a data error.

You may be warned by your email system that a program is trying to send an email on your behalf. If so, click 'Allow'. The email is sent from your email address, but is immediately deleted. The data is also encrypted before sending, so no-one else will be able to access the responses.

Assignment to WJR / FJR

Once the data email has successfully been sent, a window will appear informing you of the claimant's assignment to either

	weekly or fortnightly job-search review meetings. Remember that this will be assigned randomly; **for this trial none of the answers given in the survey will affect the assignment**. At this point you should make a note of the claimant's assignment on LMS by updating the relevant marker, and continue as normal with scheduling their next visit. You may close the tool; there is no need to save.
Information for claimants	You should not discuss with the claimant the reasoning behind the assignment. This is because, once assigned, the worksearch regime is part of the claimant's requirements and should not be taken either more or less seriously by the claimant because they believe it is part of a trial rather than business as usual. However it is necessary to be honest if a claimant asks for further information. If necessary inform the claimant that this is part of the new system which assigns 50% of claimants to weekly signings. Further questions could be directed to a manager or the Single Point of Contact in your office.

<u>Running the trial: Standardisation</u>

Once the Claimant Segmentation Survey tool has been administered, it is important that the delivery of either WJRs or FJRs is as standardised as possible. This will allow us to compare the difference between those receiving each intervention as accurately as possible.

The period of data collection using the Claimant Segmentation Survey tool is approximately 3 months, and each claimant is in the trial for 13 weeks thereafter; however, we will continue to track the claimants for 52 weeks. Thus it is important that those claimants who come through the Claimant Segmentation Survey continue to receive the same standardised treatment even after the data collection phase of the trial closes.

The following is a list of guidelines that should be adhered to as closely as possible for the duration of the trial. If you feel that meeting any of these standards will be problematic at your JCP, please discuss this with your SPOC who will be able to raise issues with the project team.

1. No claimant – whether assigned to WJRs or FJRs – should have any additional interaction with advisers or staff at the JCP apart from their scheduled signing meetings or separate business as usual.
2. No member of staff – whether advisers, work coaches or management – may change a claimant's assignment (to either WJRs / FJRs) after the Claimant Segmentation Survey tool has been completed before the 13 weeks assignment period for that claimant is completed. The only exception is when a claimant becomes ineligible for the trial – see below. In this case the LMS marker must be changed.
3. After the 13 weeks is completed, the participant is no longer part of the trial. **It is important that from then on both groups follow standard procedure in your office – they should not be treated differently depending on whether they have been doing WJRs or FJRs.**
4. A claimant's assignment to either WJRs / FJRs must continue until the 13 weeks is up or the claimant's claim is closed – they must not be switched to FJRs / WJRs signings for any reason.
5. We will agree with your office the format to be used for off-cycle meetings for WJR. These should be the same for all claimants in the WJR group. Normally, for those assigned to WJRs,
    a. off-cycle meetings should be kept to under 10 minutes
    b. during off-cycle meetings there should be no special content covered beyond what would normally be covered by a fortnightly job-search review meeting
    c. for the **off-cycle** meeting, for those in the weekly group, the intervention **must be standardised for everyone in your office** who is part of the trial
    d. all meetings should be conducted in the same manner – i.e. face to face at the JCP
    e. the notice period given for all meetings should be standard – i.e. one week in advance
    f. for **on-cycle** signings, use current procedures. Any discretion, for example in the length of signing, may be continued but **it must be applied equally to those on weekly and fortnightly signing.** That doesn't mean everyone must be treated the same, but everyone on weekly must be treated the same as if they were on fortnightly signing. So if you have a policy of phoning up those who you think are least motiviated, you must phone them whether or not they are signing weekly (it is not necessary to phone the same number of people in each group).

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Consistency in how you engage with claimants, who are part of this trial, is critical to the chance of developing our learning and helping to improve the way we deliver our business.

Claimant Eligibility Criteria

There are circumstances under which claimants do not follow fortnightly or weekly Jobsearch reviews, but are either exempt from signing entirely, sign by post, or require daily signing.

These cases should be exempted from the trial, and the LMS marker set accordingly.

All other cases should be part of the trial. It is vital for the success of the trial that people are not exempted from the trial on the basis of their suitability for weekly signing – this is exactly the thing that is to be analysed and if some groups are exempted the results may be misleading.

Setting an LMS marker

All claimants in scope of this trial will need an LMS marker set appropriately. To do this;

Open claimants record on LMS

Select “Hotspots” on menu

Drop down list appears and "Pilots" is in the list

Select Pilots

The View Pilots list appears

Locate the "JSA Segmentation" option to include them in the trial

After the trial period

Once the claimant has completed 13 weeks, the claimant's signing regime may be reviewed. When it is reviewed it is vital that the regime is applied irrespective of whether they have been signing weekly or fortnightly. This is necessary as we are tracking claimants for a full year.

It is not necessary to review the signing immediately; if it suits your office better then the claimants can continue on their assigned regime until it is convenient to review. However they must not be 'switched' to the opposite group. When changing signing regimes, you should only take into account the characteristics of the claimant and **not** the signing regime they were assigned to under the trial.

FAQs

Q: Why do we need a trial?

A: Running trials is important in order to properly and scientifically understand what works best, and for whom. Without a trial we are relying on the judgements and experiences of individuals which are likely to be correct in those instances, but cannot necessarily be applied throughout the country. This trial will provide us with accurate information that will allow us to make policy that is relevant and useful for all JCPs nationwide.

Q: What's wrong with relying on the judgement of work coaches and assistant work coaches?

A: There's nothing wrong with their judgement, which is why the tool seeks to capture their experience and judgement. This trial will help us understand whether we can develop a statistical tool that could be used to help staff in making their decisions. Staff have the experience which will always be key in making the right decisions for claimants. While staff will make the right decision most of the time, the goal is to make the right decision always.

Furthermore, the introduction of UC is likely to change the way we operate. Caseloads will be increasing, meaning we need to find new ways to support staff in their work, and much more interaction with claimants will be done online, meaning staff won't necessarily come face-to-face with claimants until later in the process. We want to investigate whether a tool could be useful in these circumstances.

Q: What if I think the claimant is lying?

A: There is very little that we can do to force claimants to tell the truth in their answers. Firstly, you should always make it very clear that their answers will in no way affect their situation; the data will be used at an aggregate level and will be completely anonymised. If they have previously given you a different answer to the same question asked in the survey, you can ask them to confirm which the correct response is. However, we do not expect you to probe or push claimants; just record what the claimant answers.

Q: What if we decide after the interview that the claimant shouldn't be in the trial?

A: Once a claimant has been through the Claimant Segmentation Survey, their data is automatically part of the trial. However, if there are exceptional reasons why the claimant needs to be exempted from their assigned signing regime (e.g. moved to a daily signing regime), this will be possible so long as this is noted in LMS through applying the appropriate LMS marker.

Q: How do I explain to claimants why they have been assigned to WJRs/FJRs?

A: You should not discuss with the claimant the reasoning behind the assignment. This is because, once assigned, the worksearch regime is part of the claimant's requirements and should not be taken either more or less seriously by the claimant because they believe it is part of a trial rather than business as usual. However it is necessary to be honest if a claimant asks for further information. If necessary inform the claimant that this is part of the new system which assigns 50% of claimants to weekly signings. Further questions can be directed to the Single Point of Contact in your office.

Q: Why does the assignment have to be random?

A: Random assignment allows us to be as certain as possible that there is no other factor affecting the outcomes we are interested in.

Imagine that I want to test a new fertiliser in my garden. I sprinkle all the pot plants on the west side of my garden with the new fertiliser, and all the pot plants on the east side with the old fertiliser. After one month I notice that the pot plants on the west side have grown much more than those on the east side. However, I cannot be certain that this growth is (only) due to the fertiliser; what if they also received more sunlight, or were more sheltered from wind, or even benefitted from the fertiliser my neighbour uses? To conclusively evaluate the impact of the fertiliser, I should randomly give half the pot plants the new fertiliser, and half the old one. If after one month I still notice that those that received the new fertiliser have grown more, then I can be much more certain that this is due only to the fertiliser and nothing else. Applied to a much larger scale, this approach allows us to calculate with statistical certainty whether an intervention causes an outcome.

Q: Are my answers to the questions about the claimant going to be linked back to me?

A: No. As with the claimant's answers, all responses will be used in aggregate. The individual answers you give will not be linked to you personally.

Q: Do I have to angle my screen away for the third page? What happens if the claimant asks to see the questions?

A: The reason we request that you turn the screen is so that you may answer these questions about the claimant confidentially. We want your answers to be as honest as possible, and if the claimant can see the screen you may feel obliged to be more favourable towards them. By angling the screen, you will be able to answer the few questions quickly and honestly.

If the claimant asks to see the questions, we advise that you inform them that you also need to input information into the data collection tool. Do not discuss the questions as this may change the way the claimant reacts to their weekly / fortnightly assignment. Please do not share details with the claimant unless there is a real danger that your relationship with them will be damaged, and you are comfortable doing so.

Q: Will this tool be replacing work coaches and assistant work coaches?

A: No. This tool is only being used for this trial in order to collect data and ensure that assignment of claimants to weekly / fortnightly signings is mathematically random.

Q: Our judgement will always be better than a tool, why are you trying to develop a tool?

A: Your judgement, which is based on experience and day-to-day interaction is indeed invaluable. However, we are trying to do two things: firstly, with the move to UC, more and more claimants will be engaging with the system online. In these cases we will no longer be able to rely on your judgement all the time, and may need a robust tool that can be effective in your place. Secondly, this trial will provide us with invaluable evidence on which type of claimants will be helped by WJRs, and which won't. The important point here is that we will have a national-level view, which will then be shared with work coaches and assistant work coaches to make sure that the decisions they have to make day-to-day are given all the input possible.

Q: What happens after the 13 weeks?

A: Once the claimant has been on either weekly of fortnightly signing for 13 weeks, they should then move on to whatever signing regime they would normally be placed on. Given that the target is to have 50% of claimants on weekly signings, it is likely that for the majority of claimants they will simply stay on weekly / fortnightly signings. However, after a period of 13 weeks we will no longer specify how the claimants should be treated. Please note, however, that we are still interested in how the claimants fare over 52 weeks, and so will continue monitoring them even after the 13 weeks have passed.

It is not necessary to review the signing immediately; if it suits your office better then the claimants can continue on their assigned regime until it is convenient to review. However they must not be 'switched' to the opposite group. When changing signing regimes, you should only take into account the characteristics of the claimant and **not** the signing regime they were assigned to under the trial.

Q: What if the claimant refuses to take part?

A: The claimant may refuse to answer the survey questions; however, they cannot opt to not take part in the trial. The trial is looking at the impact of receiving WJRs / FJRs, and as such they must adhere to the signing regime they are assigned so long as their claim is active. If a claimant is worried about being part of a trial, explain that their experience of claiming JSA will not differ, except in the frequency of the signings which is nationwide policy.

Q: What if the claimant comes off benefits and then subsequently re-applies?

A: All new claims must go through the survey. We will be able to track the claimant via their NINO, and so it does not matter if they go through the survey multiple times.

Q: What happens if someone moves to another benefit?

A: In our records this will show as the claimant flowing off JSA, but we will be able to track if they moved onto a different benefit. In this way, we will be able to determine if they moved off JSA because they had found employment, or for other reasons.

Pen Pictures – Detailed Descriptions

A. Willing but nervous job-seekers

- Are nervous about whether they can find work, might feel there aren't many jobs available, and that there isn't much help / support for them
- Are otherwise keen to work, and think work has real benefits
- Are usually actively looking for work
- Are generally willing to leave benefits to work
- Are likely to apply for jobs quickly
- Often have qualifications

B. Eager job-seekers

- Have often made a commitment to find work, and are not nervous about moving into work
- Are willing to risk doing jobs which are not ideal for them, and make compromises to get work
- Generally don't enjoy being out of work
- Respect those in work and believe it's important not to rely on benefits
- Are likely to apply for jobs very quickly

C. Ambivalent claimants with few barriers

- May have personal circumstances which means they see work as less of a priority (e.g. health/childcare issues)
- Not nervous, but little commitment to finding work/increasing hours
- Can cope with change;
- Are otherwise capable of working and job-seeking activity and don't have significant barriers;
- May believe that it's important to earn one's own money, and that there aren't enough jobs available.

D. Other job-seekers;

- Don't easily fit into any of the above groups;
- May have significant barriers to working or undertaking job-search activity.