

Restrictions for Claimants with caring responsibilities for a child

A claimant with caring responsibilities for a child can restrict their availability for employment to less than 40 hours per week, providing that:

- they are available for work for as many hours as their caring responsibilities allow; **and**
- they have reasonable prospects of securing employment; **and**
- they are available for at least 16 hours per week.

In a small number of areas, there may be few or no jobs available which would fit within the restricted patterns of employment sought.

To accommodate such a situation, where the Work Coach agrees that no suitable jobs are likely to be found, claimants with caring responsibilities for a child can restrict their hours to as many as their caring responsibilities allow, subject to a minimum of 16 hours per week, regardless of whether they can show reasonable prospects or not.

The claimant's circumstances will be reviewed regularly.

Claimants who have additional caring responsibilities for a child because they have an outstanding parenting order in England, Wales & Scotland or a parenting contract in England or Wales agreed or issued after exclusion, truancy or misbehaviour at school, can restrict their availability for work providing the restrictions are reasonable in light of the order/contract.

These circumstances will be considered good cause for not attending the office during this period. In these circumstances, where the claimant is required to care for a child, Work Coaches will consider treating the claimant as available for work to safeguard the parent from being disallowed JSA and attendance can be excused for this period.

Restrictions for Lone Parents

From 26 April 2010, in addition to being able to restrict their availability as a claimant with caring responsibilities for a child, a Lone Parent who has a child aged 12 or under, has the **right** to restrict their availability for work to school hours if they wish.

This right is restricted to normal school hours, for example 9am to 3.15pm subject to a minimum of 16 hours per week.

Where a Lone Parent restricts their availability to school hours, they do not have to show they have reasonable prospects of getting a job.

If a Lone Parent has more than one child aged 12 or under, they can restrict their availability in line with the school hours of all of their children.

Example

A Lone Parent has two children, Oliver aged 8 and Lauren aged 11.

Oliver attends school 8.45am to 3pm, while Lauren attends school 9am to 3.15pm.

The Lone Parent can restrict their availability in line with a combination of their children's school hours: 9am to 3pm.

Work Coaches should make all eligible Lone Parents aware of this right.

The provision whereby a Lone Parent can choose to restrict their availability to school hours only applies to term time. If a Lone Parent wants to restrict their availability during the school holidays they will have to meet the criteria of a claimant who has caring responsibilities for a child.