

Health and Work Conversation Booklet

WORK COACH VERSION

Work coach guidance:

These grey boxes contain information for you about how to guide a claimant through the Health and Work conversation.

1. This document contains the claimant version of the Health and Work Conversation booklet as well as work coach instructions for guiding the claimant through each part of the Health and Work Conversation.
2. The booklet has two types of instructions for work coaches:
 - a. Work coach guidance sections provide instructions you need to follow.
 - b. Script sections suggest what to say to the claimant. You don't have to follow these exactly - adapt them to your style.

Employment and Support Allowance

Health and work conversation

Please ask your work coach if you need this booklet in braille, large print or audio.

What is the health and work conversation?

The health and work conversation is a type of work-focused interview. This isn't your Work Capability Assessment.

The conversation isn't about you looking or applying for work now, it's about helping you get into work when you're able to in the future. It can help you get to know your work coach and plan simple steps to help build your confidence and motivation.

You and your work coach will use simple tools to talk about an action that you want to do, and plan how you can do it. You'll be able to talk openly to your work coach who can put together a plan of support for you.

Please fill in the *About me* section

Before you see your work coach, please have a go at answering the questions in the **About me** section on page 2. The answers you give will help you have a better conversation with your work coach and help them find the best support for you.

There are no right or wrong answers – just think about what matters to you. If you feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions, you can stop and come back to them later.

Please only fill in page 2, because your work coach will talk you through the rest of the booklet.

Do you need to take part in the health and work conversation?

Yes. The health and work conversation is part of your claim to ESA. Your ESA payments could be reduced if you don't take part in your conversation.

Is this your Work Capability Assessment?

No. The health and work conversation isn't a Work Capability Assessment. The details of this health and work conversation will not be shared with the healthcare professional that carries out your assessment.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Work coach guidance:

Starting the Health and Work Conversation

Work coach guidance

- Greet the claimant and thank them for coming in.
- Explain to the claimant that the purpose of the HWC is to help them think about what's important to them and how to move towards their goals.
- Reassure the claimant that:
 1. this conversation is not their Work Capability Assessment
 2. all actions will be voluntary
 3. they do not have to do anything that they are not comfortable with
- **If the claimant hasn't done so already:** Ask the claimant to complete the 'About Me' section of the booklet.
- NB. The claimant only has to fill out the sections of the 'About Me' form that they want to fill out – you do not have to ensure that every question has an answer. The About Me is just a quick way to find out a bit more about the claimant to inform the rest of the conversation.

Script

- *Hello. Thanks very much for coming in today. My name is....*
- *The Health and Work Conversation is a new thing that Jobcentres are doing. It's to help you think about your interests and goals and how to achieve them.*
- *This is not your Work Capability Assessment. This is not the appointment where we assess your capability for work.*
- *Also, any actions we come up with today will be voluntary - it's up to you to carry those things out if you think they're helpful.*
- *During the conversation today, we'll go through a few different things. First I'll ask you to tell me a bit about yourself. Then we'll talk about your goals and how to help you achieve them. Finally, we'll end the conversation by talking about the support available for you.*
- *At any point, you can just let me know if you don't feel comfortable discussing something.*
- *To start, I'd like you to write down a little about yourself. We'll be using this booklet, and I'd like you to take a seat and complete the page that says "ABOUT ME" on the top. When you're finished, come over and let me know.*

About me

Please fill in your details below:

First name

Last name

Please answer the following questions honestly, as this will help you and your work coach have a good, open conversation and focus on the things that matter to you.

What kinds of things do you like doing in your life and at work?

For example, cooking, speaking to people, being outside.

What are you good at?

For example, working with others, computer skills or being patient.

How does your health affect your life and your ability to work?

For example, you cannot sit for a long time, or you are nervous in some situations.

What work have you done in the past, if any?

What are some of the things that have made you proud in your life or at work?

For example, helping someone, being thanked or doing something for charity.

Is there anything else in your life that makes it difficult for you to work?

For example, housing or debt issues, you are a carer for someone or you are having relationship problems.

What help do you need to get back to work?

Tell us how and what you want to do and if you need support.

Please do not fill in any more of this booklet.

Your work coach will speak to you about your 'My 4 steps' on the next page.

Work coach guidance:

Discussing the About Me

Work coach guidance

- When the claimant has finished completing the About Me, tell them you will take a few moments to look through it.
- Start the discussion by acknowledging the claimant's health condition but then quickly move onto something positive they have mentioned, such as an activity they enjoy doing.
- If you notice any specific support needs (such as a need to refer the claimant to mental health services), make a note of these and come back to them in the My Actions section at the end of the HWC.
- The entire discussion regarding the About Me shouldn't take more than 5 minutes.
- It's just a start to the conversation and you can come back to any support needs later in the conversation.

Please use separate My Values sheet

Work coach guidance:

OPTIONAL: Give the claimant the separate “My Values” exercise sheet

Work coach guidance

- The My Values exercise is optional. However, it is an evidence-based way to encourage people to be more open to challenges, so it can be very useful during the HWC.
- We recommend you use the My Values especially if the claimant seems like they don't want to engage, but it is useful for all claimants, so try to use it as much as possible.
- This exercise is done on a separate sheet as the answers can be quite personal. Don't make a copy of that separate sheet or record the claimant's answers.
- The claimant does not have to share their answers to this exercise with you if they don't want to – they can do the exercise but keep their answers private.
- The most important thing is that the claimant is comfortable doing the exercise. Encourage them to do it by explaining that a wide range of people find it helpful.
- If the claimant has language barriers, you can ask them to write their answers to My Values in the language they are most comfortable with.
- If writing is a problem, you can do the exercise verbally with the claimant – either directly or using an interpreter.
- After the claimant has finished, ask them if they would like to share anything about the exercise, but don't push them.

Script

- *Next, I'd like you to spend a moment thinking about your personal values – things that matter to you or that make you happy.*
- *The reason I'd like you to do this exercise is because I want to make sure that in our conversation today we really focus on things that you care about.*
- *Other people have found that this exercise can be really helpful for thinking about wishes and goals.*
- *When you've finished, you won't have to show or tell me what you've written unless you want to. It's completely up to you*
- *I'll just be here if you have any questions.*

My 4 steps

What are the **My 4 steps**?

One of the side effects of having a disability, illness or health condition, can be loss of confidence and motivation. The **My 4 steps** exercise in this booklet can help you talk about taking steps to move forward in the future, looking at any challenges or problems that you may have.

You and your work coach will use your answers from the **About me** section to talk about your **My 4 steps**.

You and your work coach will fill in one of the **My 4 steps**, but there are more you can do yourself at home.

*See how **My 4 steps** can help you.*

Work coach guidance:

Introduce the claimant to the “My 4 Steps” section of the HWC

Work coach guidance:

- “My 4 Steps” is a four step process to help claimants identify a goal and make a plan to achieve it. The four steps are WANT, OUTCOME, OBSTACLE, and PLAN.
- Before the claimant completes this section, try to make the claimant feel calm and comfortable (even in the middle of a busy Jobcentre). You can ask the claimant to take a deep breath, or remind them that this time is about thinking about the things they care about.
- Don’t rush – My 4 Steps should feel like a conversation. Use the scripts to help claimants find their own answers to each step, then ask the claimant to write their answers down.

Script:

- *Following on from the previous exercise, you’ll now have a chance to think about some important wishes or goals you’d like to achieve.*
- *Now we’ll do something called My 4 Steps. This is an exercise to help you move towards your goals. It’s based on years of research - lots of people have used it to help them achieve their goals.*
- *At the end of the exercise we’ll make a plan to help you achieve your goal. There are no consequences if you don’t carry out the plan. But I hope that you will carry it out, because I think it can help you.*
- *We’ll start by identifying a goal you’d like to achieve. It can be about anything you want to achieve in your life – it can be about work or health, or something else like a relationship or a hobby.*
- *The thing to remember is that the wish should be challenging or realistic. It should be something that is within your control or power to achieve.*
- *There are no right or wrong answers when it comes to doing this exercise. Just relax and think about what matters to you.*

My 4 steps continued

Fill in this section of the booklet with your work coach. Look at what you want to do and how you can do it.

Step 1 – Want (This means ‘what would you like to happen’)

This should be something that is important to you, that you really care about or are excited to do. It should be something that is not too easy, but still something you think you can do.

Write your answer here:

Step 2 – Outcome (This means ‘what do you believe can happen’)

This is about how you would feel (for example, excited, proud or happy) or what you would be able to do if you get what you want in **Step 1**.

Take a moment to imagine how you would feel.

Write your answer here:

Step 3 – Obstacle (This means ‘what is stopping you’)

This is about what is stopping you from getting what you want in **Step 1**. It’s something within you that you have some control over, and you’re able to do something about it, even though it is difficult. It could be a habit, something you believe in, or a feeling you have.

Take a moment to imagine what is stopping you.

Write your answer here:

Step 4 – Plan (This means ‘what you are going to do’)

This should be something that helps you get over the obstacle in **Step 3**. Your plan should be something that you can do, and that you believe will be helpful to you.

Write your answer here:

Write down your answers from your **Obstacle** in **Step 3** and from your **Plan** in **Step 4**.

	Obstacle from Step 3		Plan from Step 4
If		then I will	

Work coach guidance:

How to guide the claimant through step 1 (WANT) of My 4 Steps

Guidance: Read out the instructions for the “Want” step in the claimant version of the booklet. If necessary, use the script below to give the claimant some additional guidance on how to think about their Want.

Script:

- *Your “Want” is something that you want to achieve. It’s a goal that you want to work towards and reach. It should be important to you, something you personally really care about or would be excited to achieve.*
- *It should be challenging, but also realistic – something that you can see yourself achieving in the coming weeks.*
- *It could be something relatively small (e.g. getting to bed on time, spending more time with family this weekend, completing a chore that you’ve put off for a while) or something bigger.*
- *Your wish can be about work or health but it can also be about anything else.*

Guidance: Check that the claimant’s goal (their “Want”) is realistic, meaningful, and not too easy or too difficult by using the points in the script below.

Script:

- *Is it something that is within your control to achieve? Is it realistic?*
- *Is the Want something that’s personally important to you? Is it something that really matters to you and that you would be happy to achieve?*
- *Is it challenging?*

Guidance: Sometimes claimants choose a goal that is very broad or long-term like “I want to get better” or “I want to get into work”. Break these down into smaller Wants that help the claimant move towards the broader goal. For example, you could use the script below.

Script:

- *It’s great that you want to achieve that, but it’s a big goal and would be difficult to achieve in one go. Let’s break it into a smaller goal that will get you on your way towards achieving that bigger goal.*
- *What is a smaller goal you want to achieve in the next 2 weeks that would help you move towards achieving that larger goal? We’ll make that smaller goal your “Want”.*

My 4 steps continued

Fill in this section of the booklet with your work coach. Look at what you want to do and how you can do it.

Step 1 – Want (This means ‘what would you like to happen’)

This should be something that is important to you, that you really care about or are excited to do. It should be something that is not too easy, but still something you think you can do.

Write your answer here:

Step 2 – Outcome (This means ‘what do you believe can happen’)

This is about how you would feel (for example, excited, proud or happy) or what you would be able to do if you get what you want in **Step 1**.

Take a moment to imagine how you would feel.

Write your answer here:

Step 3 – Obstacle (This means ‘what is stopping you’)

This is about what is stopping you from getting what you want in **Step 1**. It’s something within you that you have some control over, and you’re able to do something about it, even though it is difficult. It could be a habit, something you believe in, or a feeling you have.

Take a moment to imagine what is stopping you.

Write your answer here:

Step 4 – Plan (This means ‘what you are going to do’)

This should be something that helps you get over the obstacle in **Step 3**. Your plan should be something that you can do, and that you believe will be helpful to you.

Write your answer here:

Write down your answers from your **Obstacle** in **Step 3** and from your **Plan** in **Step 4**.

	Obstacle from Step 3		Plan from Step 4
If		then I will	

Work coach guidance:

How to guide the claimant through step 2 (OUTCOME) of My 4 Steps

Guidance: Read out the instructions for the “Outcome” step in the claimant version of the booklet. Use the script below to give the claimant some additional guidance on how to think about their Outcome.

Script:

- *Is your Outcome the best one you can imagine?*
- *Are there any other positive Outcomes you can imagine?*
- *Have you visualised the Outcome and imagined it as fully as possible?*

My 4 steps continued

Fill in this section of the booklet with your work coach. Look at what you want to do and how you can do it.

Step 1 – Want (This means ‘what would you like to happen’)

This should be something that is important to you, that you really care about or are excited to do. It should be something that is not too easy, but still something you think you can do.

Write your answer here:

Step 2 – Outcome (This means ‘what do you believe can happen’)

This is about how you would feel (for example, excited, proud or happy) or what you would be able to do if you get what you want in **Step 1**.

Take a moment to imagine how you would feel.

Write your answer here:

Step 3 – Obstacle (This means ‘what is stopping you’)

This is about what is stopping you from getting what you want in **Step 1**. It’s something within you that you have some control over, and you’re able to do something about it, even though it is difficult. It could be a habit, something you believe in, or a feeling you have.

Take a moment to imagine what is stopping you.

Write your answer here:

Step 4 – Plan (This means ‘what you are going to do’)

This should be something that helps you get over the obstacle in **Step 3**. Your plan should be something that you can do, and that you believe will be helpful to you.

Write your answer here:

Write down your answers from your **Obstacle** in **Step 3** and from your **Plan** in **Step 4**.

	Obstacle from Step 3		Plan from Step 4
If		then I will	

Work coach guidance:

How to guide the claimant through step 3 (OBSTACLE) of My 4 Steps

Guidance: Read out the instructions for the “Obstacle” step in the claimant version of the booklet. Make sure the claimant finds an internal obstacle that they can create a Plan for, not an external obstacle that they have no control over. Help them identify an internal obstacle by using the script below.

Script:

- *Is your Obstacle something you can influence or control?*
- *Is your Obstacle an internal obstacle – something inside you?*
- *Is that the true Obstacle?*

Guidance: If the claimant feels uncomfortable with finding an internal obstacle, remind them they don't have to share anything they're uncomfortable with, but the exercise is most helpful if they are open and honest.

Note 1: Sometimes claimants choose “*Wants*” that only have external obstacles they don't have any control over. For example, they might say they want to go to language classes, but there are no classes near them. In this situation, check whether there is another internal obstacle stopping the “*Want*”. For example, you could suggest to the claimant that they do a language class online. If they lack the computer skills to do an online course, that is an internal obstacle they can address by doing a computer training course.

If the “*Want*” really has no internal obstacle, ask the claimant to choose a new “*Want*” which does have an internal obstacle.

Note 2: Sometimes claimants have obstacles that are always present. For example, a claimant might say their goal is to visit a friend more often, and identify their chronic pain as an obstacle to this goal. Because the pain is always present, work with the claimant to identify about specific ways to overcome this issue. For example, you could say “*Your “Want” is to visit a friend. When is the next time you could visit and how will your pain make it difficult?*” The claimant could say they will visit their friend on Saturday, and then make a plan to deal with their pain well enough to be able to visit their friend by that day.

My 4 steps continued

Fill in this section of the booklet with your work coach. Look at what you want to do and how you can do it.

Step 1 – Want (This means ‘what would you like to happen’)

This should be something that is important to you, that you really care about or are excited to do. It should be something that is not too easy, but still something you think you can do.

Write your answer here:

Step 2 – Outcome (This means ‘what do you believe can happen’)

This is about how you would feel (for example, excited, proud or happy) or what you would be able to do if you get what you want in **Step 1**.

Take a moment to imagine how you would feel.

Write your answer here:

Step 3 – Obstacle (This means ‘what is stopping you’)

This is about what is stopping you from getting what you want in **Step 1**. It’s something within you that you have some control over, and you’re able to do something about it, even though it is difficult. It could be a habit, something you believe in, or a feeling you have.

Take a moment to imagine what is stopping you.

Write your answer here:

Step 4 – Plan (This means ‘what you are going to do’)

This should be something that helps you get over the obstacle in **Step 3**. Your plan should be something that you can do, and that you believe will be helpful to you.

Write your answer here:

Write down your answers from your **Obstacle** in **Step 3** and from your **Plan** in **Step 4**.

	Obstacle from Step 3		Plan from Step 4
If		then I will	

Work coach guidance:

How to guide the claimant through step 4 (PLAN) of My 4 Steps

Guidance: Read out the instructions for the “Plan” step in the claimant version of the booklet. Use the script below to give the claimant some additional guidance on how to think about their Plan.

Script:

- *Your plan should be an action that you will take would be helpful to do to overcome your obstacle.*
- *Your plan can be something you do (such as calling a friend) or it could be a reassuring thought you tell yourself.*

Guidance: If the claimant is struggling to identify an action they can take to address the Obstacle, use the script below to help them think about it.

Script:

- *What is an effective action or thought to overcome your Obstacle?*
- *Is there something reassuring or helpful you could tell yourself when your Obstacle comes up? Even just telling yourself a reassuring message can be a helpful for dealing with an Obstacle. What would your message be?*
- *Is there someone you could talk to who could help you in any way? Your action could be to talk to that person.*

My 4 steps continued

Fill in this section of the booklet with your work coach. Look at what you want to do and how you can do it.

Step 1 – Want (This means ‘what would you like to happen’)

This should be something that is important to you, that you really care about or are excited to do. It should be something that is not too easy, but still something you think you can do.

Write your answer here:

Step 2 – Outcome (This means ‘what do you believe can happen’)

This is about how you would feel (for example, excited, proud or happy) or what you would be able to do if you get what you want in **Step 1**.

Take a moment to imagine how you would feel.

Write your answer here:

Step 3 – Obstacle (This means ‘what is stopping you’)

This is about what is stopping you from getting what you want in **Step 1**. It’s something within you that you have some control over, and you’re able to do something about it, even though it is difficult. It could be a habit, something you believe in, or a feeling you have.

Take a moment to imagine what is stopping you.

Write your answer here:

Step 4 – Plan (This means ‘what you are going to do’)

This should be something that helps you get over the obstacle in **Step 3**. Your plan should be something that you can do, and that you believe will be helpful to you.

Write your answer here:

Write down your answers from your **Obstacle** in **Step 3** and from your **Plan** in **Step 4**.

	Obstacle from Step 3		Plan from Step 4
If		then I will	

Work coach guidance:

Help the claimant complete the “IF-THEN” statement at the end of My 4 steps.

The if-then statement at the bottom of the My 4 Steps page connects the Obstacle (Step 3) with a Plan that will help overcome the Obstacle (Step 4). Example of these statements are:

- IF I feel stressed about leaving the house THEN I WILL phone my friend Jill for support.
- IF I feel uncomfortable during my physiotherapy exercises THEN I WILL remind myself that I'll get better with time.

Ask the claimant to say the if-then statement out loud after they write it. Tell them they should repeat the statement to themselves to make sure it stays in their memory. Then when the Obstacle comes up, they will easily remember their Plan to overcome it.

Work coach guidance:

Complete the Action Plan

- After you have finished the My 4 Steps exercise, you complete the Action Plan on LMS.
- Unlike the My 4 Steps where we support claimants to overcome internal obstacles, the actions in the Action Plan are focused on overcoming external obstacles.
- This includes external obstacles like housing issues, debt issues, or childcare issues.
- The actions can include finding out more about the issue online, or through local support, referrals to DWP provision, and charities.
- The actions recorded in My Actions can be related to the wishes from My 4 Steps, but they don't have to be.
- To come up with useful actions:
 - Think back to the About Me – did the claimant mention anything where they could need help or a referral?
 - Think back to the My 4 Steps – did any external obstacles come up that you could discuss now?
 - Consider if there are any other actions that you think the claimant would benefit from.
- Unlike in the My 4 Steps where it's important that the claimant comes up with their own wants, obstacles and plans, it is fine to make suggestions at this part of the HWC!
- Check whether the claimant agrees these actions would be useful. The claimant is more likely to do the actions if they understand the actions and believe they would be helpful.
- Remind the claimant that the actions are voluntary.
- Coach the claimant to come up with a specific plan, including when and where they will complete the action.
- When you have added 2-3 actions, issue the ESA49 letter with the agreed voluntary actions.

Script:

- *So now you've used My 4 Steps to make a plan for achieving a goal and overcoming an internal obstacle that might come up on the way to achieving our goal.*
- *However, there might be other things that you need help with as they are less in your control, such as finance, healthcare, and other things that the Jobcentre Plus can provide support for.*
- *So now let's take a moment to think about other actions that would help you achieve goals that are related to health or work.*
- *These actions are voluntary – there will be no consequences if you do not complete them.*

Work coach guidance:

Closing the Health and Work Conversation

- Thank the claimant for their time and effort.
- Make a few notes for yourself on LMS regarding their My 4 Steps so that you can ask them about how it went if you contact them again.
- The claimant's HWC booklet has several templates for "My 4 Steps". You complete one of these with the claimant during the HWC. Encourage the claimant to use the additional copies in their daily life to help them move towards their goals.
- Tell the claimant you hope the four steps are useful for them and that you'll contact them to see how they're getting on.

Follow-up with the claimant to see how they are getting on with their My 4 Steps

- Check in with the claimant to see how their My 4 Steps is going.
- This may be by phone, email, text message or a follow up appointment based on what is feasible and most appropriate.
- Remember these check-ins are not about monitoring the claimant to ensure they achieve their goal – the check-ins are about making the claimant feel supported, and possibly guiding them to revise their four steps if they feel it isn't working.
- Revising the My 4 Steps if the claimant say it isn't working:
 - Check if the Want they picked in Step 1 is something they genuinely care about. Perhaps they forgot about the exercise because they didn't pick something they were truly motivated to achieve. If this is the case, ask the claimant if they would like to pick a different Want.
 - Check if the Want they picked in Step 1 was realistic and something they could achieve. If it wasn't, ask the claimant if they would like to pick a different Want.
 - Check if the Obstacle that the claimant picked was an internal obstacle and something that they had some control over. If it wasn't, explore if there is a different obstacle that is holding them back.
 - Check if the Plan the claimant made to overcome the Obstacle was effective. It might be that the claimant had a good Want, Outcome and Obstacle, but their Plan wasn't the right one and they need to try a different one.
 - Remind the claimant that My 4 Steps is a learning experience and that they'll get better at it over time as they keep using it.