



## What is Sanctioning?

**This is when your benefits are stopped for failing to do something you have been asked, by the Job Centre, such as attending an interview or completing an application form.**

### Who can be sanctioned?

You can be sanctioned if you're claiming:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance (and you're in the work-related activity group)
- Income Support

### How to avoid sanctions

The best way to avoid sanctions is to do all the things that are set out in your claimant commitment or agreement. Here's a checklist to help you:

- Make sure you understand all your responsibilities
- Ask your Work Coach or Jobcentre Adviser to explain anything that's unclear
- Let the Jobcentre know as soon as possible if there's anything in your agreement that you can't do, and explain your reasons
- Keep track of all the dates when you have to go to the Jobcentre and any other meetings you have to attend
- Keep a record of all your activities that relate to your benefit requirements. For example, make a note of the time you spend looking for work and any jobs you apply for
- Keep a copy of anything the Jobcentre gives or sends you



## How to challenge a sanction

You can ask the Jobcentre Plus to look again at their decision to sanction you if you think:

- They were wrong to sanction you
- They have deducted the wrong amount from your benefit
- They have given you the wrong level of sanction
- They have reduced your benefit for the wrong length of time

If Jobcentre Plus refuses to change their decision, you can appeal against it.

## Appealing against a benefit sanction

At this stage it's probably a good idea to get some help from an expert, such as the Citizens Advice Service

## Inform Housing Benefit

When your benefits are sanctioned, the Jobcentre will contact the council, who usually stop your Housing Benefit and Council Tax reduction until they have confirmation of your new income. Be sure to inform them of your sanction so your housing benefit and council tax support don't stop.

## Apply for a hardship payment

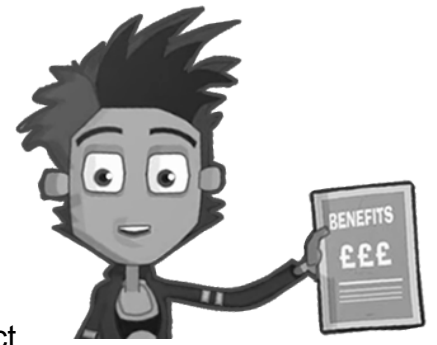
A hardship payment is a reduced amount of benefit that you can apply for from the Jobcentre if your benefit has been reduced because of a sanction. It normally pays 60% of your benefit payment.

To be eligible for a hardship payment, you must now be following the rules for getting your benefit.

Hardship payments of Universal Credit have to be paid back once the sanction comes to an end.

If you want to apply for a hardship payment, ask at the Jobcentre.

## Contact Local Welfare Provision



If you need help with essential costs like heating or food bills contact local welfare provision on 0345 8504504

## Find your local food bank

If you are struggling to buy food, there may be a local food bank you can use. You can find your nearest foodbank here.

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