**London Councils ESF Programme 2014-2020**

**Frequently Asked Questions –**

**Employment Status**

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| Q1 | A participant was on ESA for 6 months but was then moved onto JSA. The participant has been claiming JSA for 8 months. Are they eligible for the programme? |
| A1 | No, the participant would not be eligible. You cannot combine the two different statuses of economically inactive (there is no requirement to be available and actively seeking work) and unemployed (there is a requirement to be available and actively seeking work when in receipt of JSA). In this case, the participant would be considered short term unemployed as they have not been continuously unemployed for 12 months. Participant would be eligible when they have been unemployed for 12 months. |

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| Q2 | A participant has been continuously unemployed for over 12 months but has only been claiming JSA for 7 months. Is the participant eligible? |
| A2 | Yes, as the benefits someone is claiming does not dictate their employment status. You will need to evidence that a participant has been unemployed (ILO definition: out of work, want a job, have actively sought work in the previous four weeks and are available to start work within the next fortnight).  This also works if the participant was previously on JSA but is not at the point of enrolment and is still unemployed. |

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| Q3 | If we have a JCP verification form without a benefits letter, will this work? |
| A3 | Yes, ideally leaver forms are signed the day before a participant starts employment or training course, but understandably circumstances can affect this, so they can be signed after the start date. |

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| Q4 | Can the date of signature on a TPV be dated after the participant start date? |
| A4 | Yes. Please make sure that date of signature and the signature are in wet ink. |

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| Q5 | A participant has proof of JSA but is also receiving PIP. Is this participant EI or LTU? |
| A5 | As the participant is on JSA, they will be unemployed not economically inactive, regardless of them being on PIP. |

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| Q6 | If participants are receiving Income Support or Child Tax Credit do these benefits show they are economically inactive? |
| A6 | No, these benefits can both be received by people who are in full time work. If a participant is on these benefits and facing barriers to employment it might be best to contact the Job Centre for third party verification. |

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| Q7 | Does a participant have to have been on JSA for the period of their unemployment to be long-term unemployed? |
| A7 | No, a participant could be on no benefits and still be either long-term unemployed or economically inactive. They could also have been on benefits for some of that time but not all. However, they must provide evidence that covers the whole period of their unemployment such as a Third Party Verification. If they had only been on JSA for some of that time information about their benefits e.g. a proof of benefits letter would not be adequate evidence. For example, if the participant was over 25 and had been on JSA for only 8 months they would have to provide evidence to show they had been unemployed for 12 months or more. |

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| Q8 | Can you be EI and on ESA? |
| A8 | Yes if a participant is in receipt of ESA they are EI.   * If they have been put in the support group, it means the DWP has decided that they cannot work and that it does not expect them to do anything to improve their chances of finding work. * If they have been put into the work-related activity group it means the DWP has decided that their disability or health condition does limit their ability to work right now, but that there are things they can do to improve this. They’re not expected to look for work, but they can be asked to go to a work-focused interview and then do work-related activities. |

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| Q9 | A participant’s proof of benefits letter only covers up until 2 weeks before enrolment, would we need to provide further evidence to verify that gap? |
| A9 | Yes, you would need to provide another proof of benefits letter that covers the period from the date of the first proof of benefits letter up to the date of enrolment. This letter can post-date enrolment. Please provide both proof of benefits letters in the file so that the entire period of unemployment is covered. |

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| Q10 | If a participant is on ESA and has a proof of benefits letter stating they are on ESA, when does the letter have to be dated? |
| A10 | EI is not the same as long term unemployed; you do not need to show the length a person has been claiming ESA. A recent letter evidencing that the participant is claiming ESA would be sufficient, they do not need to be EI for a certain length of time. It is good practice for the letter to be dated in the previous 2 weeks prior to enrolment. |