

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-rexxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx

Our Ref: FOI 127

02 February 2012

Dear Ms May

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 12 January 2012.

You request a copy of any forms, notices or documents given to customers referred to Mandatory Work Activity and Mandatory Work Experience to read or sign, so they fully understand the terms of the schemes, and any related amended guidance given to Jobcentre staff. You also quote a press article published on the internet by Public Interest Lawyers Limited which you say refers to judicial proceedings against these work schemes resulting in amendments to our practice and policy.

With regard to Mandatory Work Activity, there have been no changes in the expectations on claimants referred for support. For your information, I have attached the latest guidance published for Jobcentre Plus advisory teams, along with the letter sent to referred claimants.

Although the Department for Work and Pensions does not operate a Mandatory Work Experience programme, participation on its Work Experience programme becomes mandatory (other than for 16/17 year olds) once claimants have made the decision to take this option up. Unlike Mandatory Work Activity, the decision to participate is entirely voluntary. Those participating serve a one-week probationary period during which they can leave voluntarily without fear of sanction.

Your request refers to the recent filing of a claim for judicial review against the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions with respect to the Jobseeker's Allowance (Employment Skills and Enterprise) Regulations 2011. I trust you will appreciate that the Department cannot comment on individual cases referred to in the media, nor upon any speculation made by the press, whilst legal proceedings remain under consideration.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, 5th Floor The Adelphi, 1-11, John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF www.ico.gov.uk