

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Our Ref: Fol 3170

DATE: 16th August 2017

Dear Ms Harriman

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 28 July 2017. You asked for:

The Full service guidance document "Assisted Digital"

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2016-0778/Assisted_digital_v1.0.pdf

explains how claimants experiencing a variety of barriers to claiming UC maybe given coaching or support.

However what is unclear is how someone (who has no alternative source of support and does not have an appointee) can be assisted if they physically cannot use a device because of a physical disability - or are precluded - due to a criminal conviction - from accessing the internet.

The guidance says "During delivery of assisted digital, Universal Credit members of staff must not enter information on a claimant's behalf. " and "Universal Credit members of staff must never enter information on a claimant's behalf. "

Now it might be that I have misinterpreted this and in fact this prohibition does not apply where full assistance is given over the phone.

However I would be grateful if you could answer the question and/or provide further guidance - including any relevant internal procedural guides - which explain exactly how a person physically unable to use the internet may be assisted.

DWP Response

On occasions when the claimant cannot access the Universal Credit system, or, due to a criminal record they are excluded from accessing the internet, they can make and administer their claim over the telephone. In addition and if appropriate, we can also arrange for a home visit.

It is only in these exceptional cases that we input data on the claimant's behalf. The information entered and its accuracy is the responsibility of the claimant.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Strategy 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@dwpgsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. 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