

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Central Freedom of Information Team

freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Our reference: VTR IR35

Date: 27 January 2015

Dear R Davis,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) review request, which we received on 19 January 2015.

I am of a senior grade to the person who dealt with your request previously, and can confirm that I have carried out an internal review. I am now in a position to respond to you.

You have asked us:

This is **remains** a somewhat embarrassing "non-response".

This is a combined matter of law and DWP policy, therefore you should be able to respond with correct procedure that all of your national staff of "Workcoaches" should adhere to.

For example, it would be illegal to force a Jobseeker to give you access to their Universal Jobmatch account. It would be illegal to force a Jobseeker to actually open a Universal Jobmatch account. Therefore, and on this basis, please provide the answers to the questions already posed and ignored:

1 - Can a JSA Workcoach force Claimants to agree to have the following statement included in their Claimant Commitments:

"I will provide detailed evidence of all of my jobseeking activities when I attend the Jobcentre"

which was then verbally explained by the JSA Workcoaches as being "to print out copies of any/all roles applied for by the JSA Claimants to present to the JSA Workcoaches as evidence of jobseeking activity" under threat of referral to a decision maker if those JSA Claimants do not comply and despite those JSA Claimants fully completing and presenting their WS1 booklets at every signing on appointment?

2 - If the answer to Question 1 is NO, can JSA Claimants then request to the JSA Workcoaches that this statement was removed from their Claimant Commitments?

3 - If the answer to Question 2 is YES, can JSA Workcoaches refuse to remove this part of a Claimant's Commitment?

4 - If the answer to Question 3 is NO, what can those JSA Claimants do about those JSA Workcoaches for their refusal to remove it?

For each of these questions, they are a YES or NO answer. Therefore, please do not provide lengthy answers saying "go off and read these parts of these statutes to avail yourself of the information. Please, for each question raised, simply answer YES or NO, and provide a reason why a particular answer is given with a reference to the relevant policy and/or statute. This is a generic request, and I am not requesting advice, opinion or explanation of any policy

I am content that both your original request and the subsequent review were dealt with in accordance with DWP guidelines for Fol requests. Our replies explained the Freedom of Information Act provides people with a right of access to recorded information held by public authorities such as DWP. The Act does not extend to requests for views, comments or answers to questions about a particular matter. Your request can be in the form of a question, but DWP does not have to answer if this would mean creating information that is not already held in a recorded form.

However, in the interests of customer service, if we don't hold recorded information that directly answers a question, we do our utmost to provide the recorded information we believe to be most closely related to the subject under question. The recorded information held was provided in our reply to your original request.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

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