

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: VTR 5666

DATE: 30 December 2013

Dear Mr Hepplestein

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received 2 December 2013. You asked;

"1. Section 44(2) of the Welfare Reform act 2012 states:

"In section 1 (the jobseeker's allowance), in subsection (2)(b) for "entered into a jobseeker's agreement which remains in force" there is substituted "accepted a claimant commitment"."

a) If this Act is in force now how are those claimants who are currently claiming JSA and still have a JSAg legally entitled to claim JSA as they have not yet "accepted a claimant commitment"?

b) Doesn't the fact that there are still claimants receiving JSA without having "accepted a claimant commitment" (and will be up to April 2014) mean that a JSA claimant with a JSAg does not mandatorily have to accept a JS CC to be eligible for JSA? If, as you state in my previous FOI (5422), it is mandatory to accept a JSA CC please provide more detail to explain specifically what makes it mandatory for a claimant with a current JSAg to accept a JS CC.

2. In the section "My Claimant Statement" in the JSA CC there is this statement: "I understand this Claimant Commitment is my Jobseeker's Agreement for the purpose of section 1(2)(b) of the Jobseekers act 1995"

What written or verbal explanation will be offered to the claimant at the point of signing the JSA CC to ensure that the claimant literally understands the full legal ramifications of the statement he is being asked to accept?"

It may be helpful to know that "The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public the right to request data held by public bodies". Public bodies are not required by the Act to provide an interpretation of data.

The JSA Claimant Commitment will become the new form of Jobseeker's Agreement and will set out more clearly what is expected of the claimant to look for work. It outlines what job seeking actions a claimant must carry out in order to give them the best chance of getting into work quickly. As now, it will be based on a discussion between the Adviser and claimant, however, the Claimant Commitment places a stronger focus on the responsibility that

claimants have to do all they can to look for work, in return for the support they receive from the state. Therefore, the Adviser will have an in-depth discussion with the claimant to build an understanding of their job seeking actions and requirements of the Claimant Commitment in order to remain entitled to benefit. Before asking claimants to sign the Claimant Commitment advisers will read all the points covered in My Claimant Statement over to the claimant and ensure they understand each point.

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@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