

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: Fol 2250

DATE: 21st June 2017

Dear Mr Zola,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 28 May 2017. You asked:

What is the precise legislation that enables mandatory community benefit work experience placements be arranged for DWP's youth obligation (YO) and work and health programme (WHP) schemes for UC, ESA and JSA claimants including any with limited capability to work?

Who will be responsible for finding placement hosts and referring claimants to start at these YO and WHP work placements?

What specific sanctions can apply for any UC, ESA and JSA claimant who refuses outright to such placements?

I have addressed each of your questions in turn.

What is the precise legislation that enables mandatory community benefit work experience placements be arranged for DWP's youth obligation (YO) and work and health programme (WHP) schemes for UC, ESA and JSA claimants including any with limited capability to work?

As planned, from April 2017 DWP introduced the new Youth Obligation for 18-21 year olds who make a new claim to Universal Credit full service and are in the All Work Related Requirements Conditionality group. They will receive intensive work focused support from day one of their claim. If they are still unemployed and claiming Universal Credit after 6 months they will be referred to work-related training or guaranteed work experience. This will give them the skills and experience they need to gain an Apprenticeship place or other job and progress their future career.

The Youth Obligation is delivered under the following legislation: Welfare Reform Act 2012 and Universal Credit Regulations 2013. The Youth Obligation is only for UC full service claimants aged 18-21 who make a new claim on or after 26 April. The programme is not for claimants with a limited capability to work.

Community Benefit Work Placements are not currently part of the Work and Health Programme.

Who will be responsible for finding placement hosts and referring claimants to start at these YO and WHP work placements?

Jobcentre Plus Employment advisers will be responsible for sourcing organisations who will offer work experience to claimants on the Youth Obligation. Jobcentre Plus work coaches will refer claimants to work experience opportunities.

What specific sanctions can apply for any UC, ESA and JSA claimant who refuses outright to such placements?

All claimants are expected to take responsibility for meeting the actions they have agreed with their Work Coach in their commitment. If a claimant does not do so, for example if they do not attend the guaranteed work experience, they are given every opportunity to explain their reasons for not doing so. Imposing a sanction is not something we do lightly.

Information on the sanctions that may apply to Youth Obligation claimants is provided on Gov.uk. at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596901/universal-credit-and-you-march-2017.pdf

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