



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

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[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref:  
FOI2023/36113,36255, 36344,  
36861, 36863, 36866

5 June 2023

Dear David James,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) requests received on 11, 12 and 13 May.  
You wrote:

**FoI Ref 36113 received 11 May**

“Referred to the Restart Scheme IN 2023

I have already completed a work scheme which is just shoddy and exploitative unpaid work experience placements and offers no help it did not benefit me in any way.

1. so why would I be refereed to it again? as a JSA claimant?

once you have gone through the shoddy and exploitative unpaid work experience placements which offers no help or benefit . work scheme the guidance states you should not be Referred again after you have already been on it.

2. can you show me or direct me to the information, on why I have been inappropriately referred to 365 day Restart Scheme.

for JSA claimants.”

**FoI Ref 36255 received 11 May**

“JSA CLAIMANT 2023

if you are mandatory forced on a 365 day restart scheme. with serco on the threat of sanctions

3. Is there any requirement to sign any documents provided by work program providers

4. is a claimant required to sign any of the following

action plan document  
health and safety document  
sign in sheet document

acceptable behavior document

5. 1.) if claimant does not consent to signing any of these documents would they be sanctioned.? these documents do not help me get a job or search for a job. so why am I forced to sign them?

6. 2.) if you have already been on a work scheme is it mandatory by force! do you have to go on another one? .

Guidance Chapter 1: Introduction and overview Updated 6 February 2023 You may agree these as voluntary activities, but you must not set these as mandatory requirements.?"

#### **Fol Ref 36344 received 12 May**

"Dear Department for Work and Pensions,  
please could you give me an answer to the following FOI request:  
If you have already completed schemes set by DWP in the past and it lasted almost 2 years and it was just a complete waste of time. It was more about sanctions getting people off benefits not actual help. And now you are forcing JSA claimants on it. Saying its mandatory. But if you read the guidance its not mandatory.

question

7. Do I have to go on it again and again? is it still mandatory once you completed in the one of these restart-schemes looking at the guidance its stated once completed you don't have to go on it again.

8. Is it mandatory if you already been on of these restart schemes.?"

Guidance Chapter 2

- 8.12. The only restriction to this is mandating your Participant to complete work experience, apply for work, attend a job interview or take up work. You may agree these as voluntary activities, but you must not set these as mandatory requirements.

- You may agree these as voluntary activities, but you must not set these as mandatory requirements.

- scheme now mandatory for JSA claimants? Even if you did on already?"

#### **Fol Ref 36861 received 13 May**

9. "1.) please provide me with a blank or sample Action Plan used by Restart scheme provider, Reed in Partnership, serco, in relation to the Restart scheme. for jsa claimants Please provide me with any recorded information held by the DWP stating what would happen to a claimant who declines to sign the Action Plan." Or any other documentations

10. 2.)please provide me with good reason not to attend a restart scheme. which counts as good reason for jsa clamant.

11. 3.) please provide me with information, if you have already done a restart scheme in the past and has never benefitted you but the entire scheme it self has been the barrier to get in employment. why have jsa claimants been black mailed. forcibly coerced, persuade (an unwilling person) to do something by using force or threats to there benefits forced on the threat of sanctions to partake in a scheme which has never benefitted anybody for the 2nd, 3rd time?

**12.** 4.)work coach at job center sates it mandatory for them to put people on these restart schemes, I disagree. according to the guidelines its solely down to the work coach to exercise discretion on referral to Restart. can you confirm that. its not mandatory for work coaches to force people on the threat of sanction to be put on a restart scheme which they have already done in the past.?

**13.** 5) please provide me with information if a jsa claimants believes 1000% that the restart scheme will not benefit him or her what will happen if jsa refuses to partake in a restart scheme?

**14.** 6) please provide me with information. what will happen if you do not want to sign any documentation at a restart scheme?

**15.** 7.)can you take legal action against the work coach, for misinformation, which leads to sanctions?"

**Fol Ref 36863 received 13 May**

"jsa restart scheme 365 days

jsa claimants

**16.** please provide me with information. good reason not to attend a restart scheme? example: jsa claimant is a volunteer worker in his community, jsa claimants, has court appointments , jsa claimant is involved in a criminal case and attending court.

**17.** what is accepted as good reason not to attend please now provide good reason not to attend jsa restart schemes"

**Fol Ref 36866 received 13 May**

"JSA CLAIMANTS

jsa restart scheme

please provide information:

**18.** will a jsa claimant be forced mandated black mailed, coerced on the threat of sanctions to there entitlement to benefits

if they do not sign a action pane with a restart provider?

if they do not partake in a Diagnostic Assessment tool

**19.** if they do not wont to sign any documentation at the restart provider meeting under the threats of sanction which you call mandating forced mandated black mailed, coerced irrelevant signing of providers documents. what will happen to a jsa claimant not wanting to sign documentation knowing he was forcibly told to partake under the threat of benefit sanctions in something which does not benefit them in anyway.

**20.** what will happen to a jsa claimant if not signing the restart providers documents."

## DWP Response

We confirm that we hold some of the information you have requested.

For ease of reference, we have combined all your FoI requests into one response and have numbered each question as shown above.

The FoI Act provides a legal right of access to recorded information held by a public authority like the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), subject to certain exemptions that may apply. The Act does not oblige a public authority to create new information to answer questions; nor does it require a public authority to give an opinion or explanation, generate answers to questions, or create or obtain information it does not hold.

Where your request asks questions or seeks to engage us in debate which you want us to respond to, rather than requesting recorded information, we will provide you with the recorded information that we hold that best answers the question. Once we have provided the recorded information, we have met our obligations under the Act; interpreting the information provided is up to you.

It might be helpful if I first explain that the department has a number of different employment programmes, including the Restart Scheme. Other employment programmes include the Work and Health Programme (WHP) and Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES). All these programmes are designed to help people into employment.

**Questions 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8.** The Restart Scheme is not a specific training course. It was designed to provide more intensive support than would be available through Jobcentre Plus. It also provides much greater capacity and flexibility than is available through other provision.

A claimant who has completed the Restart Scheme cannot be referred back to it again, but as stated above, the department has a number of different employment programmes, and therefore a claimant may be referred to a different programme when their previous one has ended, or at a later date if they have still not found employment. This is to ensure they do not become inactive in their job search.

**Questions 3, 4, 5, 9, 14, 18, 19 and 20.** The department has no recorded information which refers to a mandatory requirement for participants on the Restart Scheme to register, complete or sign paper or electronic documents drawn up by a provider.

There is also no specific legislation that requires a Restart Scheme participant to sign a provider form or give a reason for declining to complete an initial diagnostic assessment or sign an action plan.

A participant may refuse to complete or sign any forms or documents drawn up by a Restart Scheme provider. If this happens, we ask providers to note any reasons offered for the refusal to sign although the participant is not required to give a reason.

Although signing the action plan is not mandatory, a Restart Scheme participant is expected to comply with any mandated activities set out in the action plan. Failure to adhere to the mandated actions set out in the action plan may lead to a compliance doubt referral being raised with Jobcentre Plus and a decision will be made as to whether a sanction should be imposed.

The Restart Scheme focuses on positively engaging participants, so that mandation is only considered where other attempts to engage participants have failed.

**Question 9.** As requested, please find attached blank copies of the action plans used by Reed and Serco.

**Questions 10, 16 and 17.** The Restart Scheme is mandatory for all Claimants who are eligible and suitable. In a small minority of cases, a referral to alternative provision such as WHP or IPES may be considered, where the support offered better suits the specific personal circumstances of the claimant.

Where a claimant who is eligible and suitable to be referred to the Restart Scheme has a job offer or is due to start work, the Jobcentre Plus work coach may delay the referral until they can confirm whether or not the claimant has started work.

Once a claimant has started the Restart Scheme, there will be occasional special circumstances whereby participants cannot attend face-to-face appointments, but those will be exceptional and must be discussed and agreed in advance with the Jobcentre Plus work coach and the Restart Scheme provider. As a minimum, regular telephone contact would be a requirement to ensure ongoing engagement continues. One of the aims of the Restart Scheme is to help prepare participants for work and part of that includes actively engaging in regular face-to-face meetings and telephone appointments where necessary, as they would while in employment.

**Questions 11, 12 and 13.** If a Jobcentre Plus work coach feels that the Restart Scheme is the most appropriate next step in a claimant's journey and they match the suitability elements, then they will refer the individual where necessary. The Restart Scheme becomes a mandatory programme for all participants at the point of referral.

**Question 15.** If you feel that you may need to raise any issues or make a complaint about a Jobcentre Plus work coach, please see the following information which is already accessible to you in the public domain, you can follow this link to [DWPs complaints procedure](#).

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team  
Department for Work and Pensions

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## **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.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk) or by writing to: DWP Central Fol Team, Caxton House, 6-12 Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA.

Any request for an internal review must be received by us within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please note we are not obliged to provide a review if it is requested after more than 40 working days.

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.

Website: [ICO FOI and EIR complaints](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113.