

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: VTR 4729

DATE: 23 November 2015

Dear Ian Howgate,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 5 November 2015. You asked:

"I received a letter recently from the DWP advising that "We [DWP] are required to check all claimants' income and savings regularly ..."

I am therefore seeking the statutory basis for this review of income and savings, bearing in mind that claimants are placed on notice of their requirement to advise the DWP of changes in these two areas as they arise.

I am also looking for some sort of definition of how regularly the DWP are required to check these details for all their claimants and what the basis in law is for this period."

All claimants' who receive benefit must notify the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) every time there is a change in their circumstances that may affect their benefit payment. For example, if there is a change in their occupational pension, change of address, or if someone moves into their household. Reporting changes on time enables DWP to ensure that they continue to fully meet the conditions of their benefit, and that they are paid the correct amount.

You are correct in that it's the responsibility of the claimant to tell us about these changes. However, to help them do this, from 27 April 2015, DWP introduced the Annual Verification check.

This means that DWP will send an 'Annual Verification' letter asking claimants, who have been receiving income-based Jobseeker's Allowance for 12 months or more, to confirm or update their circumstances, and sign a declaration included in the letter.

The legal basis for the Annual Verification for Jobseeker's Allowance is provided by Regulations 24 of The Jobseeker's Allowance Regulation 1996, in conjunction with Regulations 17 and 18 of The Social Security and Child Support (Decision and Appeals) Regulations 1999:

- The Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations 1996 (S.I. 1996/207) can be found at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/207/pdfs/uksi_19960207_310515_en.pdf

- The Social Security and Child Support (Decision and Appeals) Regulations 1999 (S.I. 1999/991) can be found at:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/991/pdfs/ukxi_19990991_301114_en.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