

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: [freedom-of-information-rexxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx](mailto:freedom-of-information-rexxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx)

Our Ref: VTR4434

28<sup>th</sup> February 2013

Dear Frank Zola,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request. The questions you raised are detailed below (grouped into topics) along with our responses.

1.1 Jobcentre Plus staff are issuing opaque orders (copy below) for people in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance to register on the Government Gateway.

*Copy of orders*

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*Registering on Government Gateway*

*A new, modern, online job posting and automated matching service will be launched on 19 November*

*This will be an essential tool to help you find work and I will be talk to you about how to make best use of the system each time you visit the Jobcentre. In order to access the new service you will need to have a Government Gateway account. You can create this account now, to ensure you are able to access Universal Jobmatch when it becomes available.*

*I have listed below the action you need to take to set up your Government Gateway account. Please do this within the next two days. If you need any help do not hesitate to contact me.*

- 1. To register with Government Gateway go to [www.gateway.gov.uk](http://www.gateway.gov.uk)*
- 2. Enter the Government Gateway and click the Register button.*
- 3. You will be asked to input your name, your email address and a password containing 8-12 numbers and letters.*
- 4 You will be allocated a User ID. Please keep a note of this as you will need to use both the User ID and the password you created to access Universal Jobmatch. DWP will need a note of your User ID No. to allow access to your account, please bring it with you when you next sign on.*

*5 You will receive a confirmation email from the Government Gateway. You need to click on the link within this email to complete the registration process. Please note that the link will expire within 24 hours. After that time you need to go back into Government Gateway and request a new confirmation email through the 'Your Account' section.*

The 'orders' referred to in your request is not a nationally approved Universal Jobmatch (UJ) product. We have therefore requested all Jobcentre Plus offices refrain from using locally produced products and as a result of this, documents of this nature should no longer be in circulation.

1.2 Can you confirm that none of the Actions listed in these civil service delivered orders indicates they are mandatory and that if none of the actions listed on this document are not followed there will be no benefit sanction? Please provide internal information on Jobcentre Plus policy on whether your policies on fully informed consent apply to Universal Jobmatch and the Government Gateway?

1.5 Please provide a copy of all the guidance issued to Jobcentre Plus staff that states they they can make it mandatory for people in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance to allow Jobcentre Plus and DWP staff log-in access to their Universal Jobmatch account and work search records, without the account holder needing to be present. Is consent required to allow DWP and Jobcentre Plus staff to have log-in access to a Universal Jobmatch users account?

1.6 Please provide a copy of all the guidance issued to Jobcentre Plus staff that states they can make it mandatory for people in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance to disclose the "User ID No" referred to in item 4 of the order. Is consent required to disclose to DWP or Jobcentre Plus staff confirmation of a Universal Jobmatch/Government Gateway "User ID No"?

It is not currently mandatory for jobseekers to use the Universal Jobmatch (UJ) service; claimants therefore register with UJ via the Government Gateway on a voluntary basis. Likewise, the consent to access their UJ account is given voluntarily.

However we do intend to introduce mandatory use of Universal Jobmatch in 2013. It has always been our intention to mandate some JSA claimants to register with Universal Jobmatch and upload a CV so that they can make full use of the service. We intend to require those claimants to do this under a Jobseeker's Direction, when some changes have been made to the service to fully support this. Jobseeker's Directions require Jobseeker's Allowance claimants to take specific actions which will help them find work, and failure to do so without good reason may result in a benefit sanction.

Claimants will not be asked to provide DWP staff with their Government Gateway User ID; this is personal to the claimant and must not be shared. However, claimants can choose to allow DWP access their account on a purely voluntary basis by ticking a box within their UJ profile. Consequently there is no guidance on these subjects as suggested in points 1.5 and 1.6 of your request.

1.3 What are the legal basis that registration with the Government Gateway are a mandatory condition of Jobseekers Allowance?

Registration with the Government Gateway is not a mandatory condition of Jobseekers Allowance. However, once creating an account with Universal Jobmatch becomes mandatory for some jobseekers it will be necessary for those claimants to register with the Government Gateway.

#### 1.4 Please provide a copy of all the guidance issued to Jobcentre Plus staff on Universal Jobmatch and the Government Gateway?

Please see attached a copy of the Jobcentre Plus Universal Jobmatch toolkit. This guidance reflects what is currently provided to staff. **However, it is currently under review and will be revised in future.**

#### 1.9 What law and regulations make it mandatory for someone on Jobseekers Allowance to give DWP or Jobcentre Plus copies of personal private and confidential correspondence with employers, to retain, concerning job applications?

There is no law or regulation making it mandatory for someone on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) to give DWP or Jobcentre Plus copies of personal private and confidential correspondence with employers. However, JSA claimants must demonstrate what they are doing to look for work under section 24 of the Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations 1996; or demonstrate that they have complied with a requirement to apply for a vacancy notified to them by their adviser. Failure to do so without good reason could result in a benefit sanction being imposed.

#### 1.7 Can you confirm that Jobcentre Plus or Universal Jobmatch Staff have the facility to provide any Job Applicant, upon their request, with the contact details of any employer who has posted a vacancy on Universal Jobmatch, so the applicant can apply direct to the employer, rather than disclose personal correspondence and a job application (personal data) with the government via Universal Jobmatch?

It is for an employer to choose both the method of application and the level of detail to be displayed on the job posting. If an employer uses the online service to advertise their jobs, they can choose whether to have applications directly through the UJ service or via alternative methods. It is recommended that employers always include an alternative contact method even if applications are accepted online through the service.

DWP staff will not be able to provide jobseekers with alternative contact details for any employer who has chosen to only receive applications through the service.

Universal Jobmatch has been developed to meet existing accessibility standards (W3C AA) and be compatible with assisted technologies. However, alternative methods of contact will be provided, on request, for disabled jobseekers or jobseekers with a health condition or impairment who are unable to use the service.

#### 1.8 Can you confirm that Jobcentre Plus that it is not possible to sanction someone's Jobseekers Allowance if they do not wish to apply for a job only listed on Universal Jobmatch, but would be happy for Jobcentre Plus to assist them make a job application direct to the employer, rather than disclose personal correspondence and a job application (personal data) with the government via Universal Jobmatch?

A claimant must create a Universal Jobmatch account in order to apply for a job directly through the service. However, as it is not currently mandatory for claimants to create an account, advisers will not require claimants who have chosen not to register with the service to apply for any of these jobs.

That said, at present claimants will still be expected to undertake anonymous jobsearches on UJ and apply for any jobs that they are capable of doing, where the method of application is external to the service (e.g. by posting or emailing your CV/application form directly to the employer). Failure to do so without good reason may result in a benefit sanction being imposed.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

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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@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.ico.gov.uk)