

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: [freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Our Ref: VTR 1126

DATE 11 March 2013

Dear Eric Knight,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 08 March. You asked for:-

*I've seen in many letters the phrase " What the Law says you need to live on "*

*My questions are as follows:*

*Which law exactly is being referred to?*

*How was the figure of £71 per week arrived at?*

*How is that figure broken down?*

*For example, what does the government say unemployed people should budget for essentials, like food, water, electricity, gas, and telephone and internet? Dry cleaning? Stamps?*

*Transport? What about domestic cleaning?*

*I presume someone calculated what that money should cover per individual, so could I have a breakdown on that?*

*Whilst I appreciate things like rent and ctb are shared, they are not costed in the benefit, so why is there a lower amount of benefit if a couple are claiming? What duplicate factors have been deducted on the assumption they are shared, and could I have a breakdown of that too please?*

*If, as the law says, £71 is what is required (under the present economic climate) is this human right, or is it a temporary privilege?*

*In terms of what one needs to live on, most people would say on average that they would be content with the government's declared national average income of £25,000. How does the government propose to bridge the difference for people on NMW? For example I understand that Mr Duncan-Smith has recently described benefits paid to claimants on workfare as wages. Does that mean that people on workfare and related work activities are entitled now to claim working tax credits?*

*I have also heard through various sources of something called permitted work. Is that available to all unemployed people, and if not, why not?*

*What else may be lawfully and legally claimed in benefits, and what are the current restrictions on being able to earn money,(up to the national average)and why?*

You can expect a reply by 09 April unless I need to come back to you to clarify your request or the balance of the public interest test needs to be considered.

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)