

Our Ref: FOI2018/13342

Date: 27 December 2018

Dear Frank Zola,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 7 December 2018.
You asked:

*[1] When does the DWP intend to add notes to the online Universal Credit claim form, that gives guidance to claimants who do not have ID documents and want their claim for UC "started right away"?**

[2] When does the DWP intend to add notes to the online Universal Credit claim form, that gives guidance to claimants that they can be asked a set of biographical security questions, at a Jobcentre evidence interview so their claim for UC "started right away", when they do not have ID documents? In line with your 'Identity verification and standards of evidence' methods and processes: http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2016-0778/Identity_verification_and_standards_of_evidence_v4.0.pdf

Not providing this guidance to claimants during the process of a new UC claim, could mean a claim is abandoned or delayed and cause them financial hardship.

Currently claimants who can't or decline to use Verify, as presented with the following message, when making a UC claim online:

"[can't / do not want to use gov.uk verify]

*You'll need to
at a jobcentre"*

Get your identity documents ready

You need to attend an evidence interview. You'll need to book your interview once you've completed this to-do.

Can you bring 1 of these documents to your interview?

It must be the original document. Any photos must look like you.

UK passport

EEA passport

UK photo driving licence

national identity card

residence permit or card

immigration status document

registration or naturalisation certificate bank card for the account where you want your Universal Credit to be paid

If you use a bank card, it must show your name, the account number and sort code.

Additional identity documents

Can you bring 2 of these documents to your interview?

They must be the original documents.

birth certificate

Council Tax statement

NHS medical card

recent bank or building society statement (if you've provided a bank card, then this must be for a different account) debit or charge card (if you've not already said you'll provide this) passport

(if you've not already said you'll provide this) full or provisional UK driving licence (if you've not already said you'll provide this) local authority rent card marriage or civil partnership certificate tenancy agreement non-UK driving licence Young Scot card CitizenCard"

Book your interview

To complete your claim, you'll need to book and attend an interview.

Call to book

0800 328 5644 (Textphone: 0800 328 1344) Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

You'll be asked for your National Insurance number when you call."

<http://welfarecentral.org/index.php/forum-home/universal-credit/1737-making-a-uc-claim-online-extracts-from-application-form#8406>

**Amber Rudd MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, recently said:*

"There is no requirement for a UC claimant to have ID, but if you do purchase one we can actually reimburse you.

Where people don't have ID our terrific work coaches use many methods to identify someone and get their claim started right away."

<https://twitter.com/AmberRuddHR/status/1070380130311307265>

[3] Please provide your guidance to Work Coaches on reimbursing claimants to obtain ID and the guidance and methods used by Coaches to identify "someone", so a Universal Credit claim can be "started right away"?

[4] Please provide your internal guidance for Coaches on how they can identify "someone", so a Universal Credit claim can be "started right away"?

[5] Does the DWP ever intend to require all new UC claimants to use Verify or other services to prove ID online before a UC claim can be started?

[6] For your planned migration from legacy benefits to Universal Credit, can claimants use their Local Authority (Housing Benefit and Council Tax), HMRC and DWP letters and other evidence of receipt of these 'legacy' benefits as proof of ID? If they can, why are they not listed as evidence of ID above (on the UC online application form). When will they be listed as ID to bring to a Jobcentre UC evidence interview, so a Universal Credit claim can be "started right away"?

DWP Response

In relation to requests 1, 2, 5 and 6 it may be helpful if I explain the role of the Freedom of Information Act. The Act provides a right of access to recorded information held by a public authority like DWP (subject to certain exemptions). The Act does not provide that a public authority must create new information to answer questions; nor does it provide that a public authority give advice, opinion or explanation in relation to issues/policies under question.

In cases where a customer does ask a question, rather than request recorded information, we do our utmost to provide the recorded information that best answers the question. Once the public authority has provided the recorded information, it has met its obligations under the Act; interpretation of the information provided is left to the requestor.

The information we hold that best explains / answers your questions:

For parts 1, 2 & 5:

'Universal Credit: How to claim' <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim>

For part 6, we are co-designing the migration processes with stakeholders as set out in the: *'DWP Response to the Social Security Advisory Committee's Recommendations (Managed Migration) Draft Regulations 2018'* below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/753714/draft-universal-credit-managed-migration-regulations-2018-report.pdf

Information for parts 3 and 4 is attached.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Policy Group 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@dwp.gsi.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