

Freedom of Information request 3765/2014

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Information request

Please provide information that Work Programme participants, are only defined as "vulnerable" by the DWP when they are claiming ESA, as suggested in your 166 memo?

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/348195/work-programme-memo-166.pdf

Please provide information you hold that any person defined as "vulnerable" under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 have every effort made to visit them/meet face to face before any benefit sanctions compliance doubt is issued by one of your providers or to your own Labour Market Decision Makers. If a compliance doubt is issued after it has not been possible, despite every effort, to meet face to face with the vulnerable person, please share the DWP policy information and sanctions procedure and legal basis of applying the benefit sanction in this context?

Please also provide information you hold that shows that all or specific provider staff who work with "vulnerable" people must hold and enhanced criminal records disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service?

DWP response

The action providers must take with regard to sanctions and vulnerable groups can be found in Chapter 6 'Raising a Compliance Doubt' of Work Programme Provider Guidance through the following link.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343389/wp-pg-chapter-6.pdf

The key guidance for providers is that 'A referral must not be made for vulnerable claimants until after any safeguarding measures undertaken.'

With regard to 'enhanced criminal record disclosure' as a department we require the Baseline Personnel Security Standard to be met for all Provider staff. Organisations such as providers recruiting people to work with vulnerable adults or to specified professional, licensing and regulatory bodies have additional legal obligations which require them to obtain a different type of criminal record Disclosure Certificate. These 'Standard' or 'Enhanced' Disclosure Certificates provide details of all convictions and not just those

which are unspent. In England and Wales this service is provided by Disclosure and Barring Service (previously the Criminal Records Bureau) and in Scotland by Disclosure Scotland. The link below gives the full guidance available on the DWP internet site:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251271/guide-for-dwp-contractors-bpss.pdf