

Freedom of Information request 4216/2013

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Information request

Please email me your Jobcentre Front Line Adviser and Managers guidance and policy for the [1] Claimant Commitment, specifically for:

[2] People claiming Universal Credit

[3] People claiming Jobseekers Allowance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/claimant-commitment-to-spell-out-what-jobseekers-must-do-in-return-for-benefits>

particularly interested to understand/secure disclosures that highlight the [3] differences between a 'JSA Claimant Commitment' and a 'Universal Credit Claimant Commitment'.

Please confirm and or email me information held that for new JSA claims from October 2013 there is [4] no requirement to accept or sign a 'JSA Claimant Commitment'? If this is the case please disclose information that it will still be a requirement to sign a Jobseeker's Agreement, or [5] will the 'JSA Claimant Commitment' simply be presented/renamed as a 'Jobseeker's Agreement' and as such signing such will be required for new JSA claims from October 2013?

Please email me a specimen:

[6] 'JSA Claimant Commitment'

[7] 'Universal Credit Claimant Commitment'

DWP response

Question 1 & 6

In response to your request to receive a copy of the Claimant Commitment that will be used for Jobseeker's Allowance claimants from October 2013 and any supporting advisory guidance. These products are still being developed and unfortunately, I am therefore, unable to provide you with either product.

We believe the Department is not required to disclose this information because the processes are still being designed and this is policy in development. Section 35 of the Freedom of Information Act refers:

Section 35 (formulation of government policy etc)

This policy is still being developed. The Department considers that the balance of public interest therefore weighs in favour of non-disclosure. This is because the Act acknowledges that good government depends on good decision making and therefore needs space in which to formulate policies

based on the best advice available with full consideration of all the options. Ministers also need to be able to conduct rigorous and candid risk assessments of their policies and programmes including considerations of the pros and cons without there being premature disclosure which might close off other, better options.

Question 2

Knowledge Management (KM) is guidance available to support operational Universal Credit staff in preparing a Claimant Commitment. It is available in the Universal Credit Pathfinder only and is not accessible to all frontline Jobcentre Plus staff. We are continuing to develop the KM, building on learning from Pathfinder and other ongoing work. KM products are therefore constantly being amended and reviewed before publication. In the interests of transparency, it is our intention to make KM products accessible to staff and the wider public via a dedicated portal.

Therefore, the information you have requested is due for future publication and is exempt from disclosure under the terms of Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the Freedom of Information Act refers:

Section 22 (Information intended for future publication)

This exemption is qualified, and is therefore, subject to a public interest test. This means that the public interest in maintaining this exemption must outweigh the public interest in disclosure.

The public interest in permitting DWP to publish information in a manner and form and at a time of its own choosing is part of the effective conduct of public affairs. It is right that the general publication of information is a conveniently planned and managed activity within the reasonable control of the Department. Given that the Department has taken the decision in principle to publish, we have a reasonable entitlement to make our own arrangements to do so.

Question 3 - 5

The new form of Jobseeker's Agreement, called the Claimant Commitment will require a signature as a condition of entitlement to benefit.

Question 7

Under Section 14(2) of the Freedom of Information Act a public authority is not obliged to comply with a subsequent identical or substantially similar request from the same person.

You have already been provided with this information – see the Department's response dated 12 June 2013 at

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/claimant_commitment#incoming-398294