

Freedom of Information request 3093/2011

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Information request

“Bearing in mind

- (a) That there may be only 450,000 vacancies compared with possibly 4,500,000 unemployed but capable of working.
- (b) The need to discourage mothers with young children going out to work because of the unfavourable effect this has on the children — as well as the high cost of employing nannies.
- (c) The need to match specialist University training more closely with specialist vacancies.

surely there is an overwhelming case for a great deal of research ?

Planning in Russia

As regards (c), when I toured Russia some years ago our Intourist Guide (who spoke perfect English told us that the numbers accepted each year at Moscow State University to study English were decided by an assessment of the forecast vacancies in English speaking posts in Intourist, as interpreters and as English teachers.

It may be tempting for you to claim that such research would be a waste of time since no one can forecast with any accuracy what commitments in different specialities will be some years ahead. However, you must surely accept that some research must be of more value than none.”

DWP response

On your first point, I think it is worth emphasising that the fact that the 450,000 vacancy figure mentioned in my previous letter is a point in time estimate. It doesn't capture the full dynamism of the UK labour market or the constant turnover of new jobs as existing vacancies are filled, and new vacancies arise. Jobcentre Plus only represents a proportion of the number of vacancies coming up in the economy, however it may help to illustrate this point. The average stock of unfilled vacancies held at Jobcentre Plus at any point over the past year is around 270,000. By comparison, over the same period, Jobcentre Plus has received an average of over 320,000 new vacancies each

month. That is 3.9 million new vacancies over the past 12 months just through Jobcentre Plus alone.

However, that is not to deny that these are difficult economic times. The current unemployment level is 2.57 million, including everyone actively seeking and available to work – not just those in receipt of unemployment-related benefit. The Government recognises the need to help people into work and the adverse effect of long-term unemployment. That is why it has introduced the Work Programme. The programme will provide greater personalised support than under previous schemes, and there is a greater focus on paying programme providers for supporting claimants into **sustained** work, with greater rewards if people remain in employment.

On the issue of female employment, the Department does not want to discourage anyone from working for whom work would be a benefit.

Finally, university policy is the responsibility of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). As such, you will need to contact them regarding your final point on the need for Government to direct university training to match vacancies.