

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Central Freedom of Information Team**

freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Our reference: VTR 563 and IR97

Date: 15 March 2016

Dear Cheryl Moy,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 15 February 2016 and your review request received on 12 March 2016. You asked:

“Are we correct in thinking that the job centre can not suggest school as appropriate child care to a home educating parent claiming job seekers allowance when offered a job?

What age would the job centre expect a parent leave a child alone at home whilst they go out to work?

When agreeing the hours a home educating parent is able and looking to work, is the parent able to stipulate suitable hours such as evenings only (whereas a parent of a schooled child would only be looking for work during school hours)”?

DWP Response:

We acknowledge that in this instance, the Department failed to respond within the 20 working days; we apologise for the delay and for not keeping you updated of the progress of your request.

In reviewing your request the reviewing officer upholds your complaint as the Department failed to respond to your request within 20 days.

The response to your original request is set out below:

The Department can confirm that that the Jobcentres cannot suggest school as appropriate child care to a home educating parent claiming job seekers allowance when offered a job. There are flexibilities within the JSA regime to cater for the needs and personal circumstances of parents whilst they are looking for paid work of 16 hours or more per week, including those who wish to educate their child(ren) at home. Additionally, lone parents may restrict their availability for jobs to their child’s normal school hours until the child is 13. Parents who educate their child(ren) at home are therefore treated in the same way as all other parents.

The Jobcentre would not expect a parent leave a child alone at home whilst they go out to work. People will need to demonstrate that they have made genuine efforts to locate childcare, this will provide parents who educate their children at home with protection if no local services that meet their needs are available.

The extracts of instruction attached as Annexes 1 to 4 advise when a Jobseeker's Allowance claimant can restrict their availability if they have caring responsibilities for a child and how those restrictions should be applied to their availability for work.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI 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 FoI 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.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745