

Dear Rosie Wilson,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 20 August 2019. You asked:

“Vulnerable claimants who have a corporate appointee due to lack of capacity and safeguarding concerns are able to ring the Universal Credit helpline and make appointments or change details. It appears therefore that the helpline operators cannot see the information that the claimant has an appointee or if they can, they are ignoring it.

Please provide the following information:

- how is the corporate appointeeship recorded on a Universal Credit account?*
- is this information visible to Universal Credit helpline operators?*
- if the existence of a corporate appointee is visible to UC helpline operators what process are they guided to follow?*
- given that each of these claimants has been found to lack capacity through a Mental Capacity Act assessment, what safeguarding process is followed for Universal Credit claimants with a corporate appointee if they contact the helpline ?”*

DWP Response

The Freedom of Information Act gives you a legal right of access to any recorded information held by a public authority. We do not have to provide opinions or explanations, generate answers to questions, or create or obtain information we do not hold.

If you ask a question, rather than requesting recorded information, we will provide you with the recorded information that best answers the question.

Once we have provided the recorded information, we have met our obligations under the Act; interpreting the information provided is up to you.

Therefore, to be helpful, I have provided the following information that I hope you find useful in responding to your enquiry.

1. If a claimant has a corporate appointee, a ‘corporate appointee’ flag is added by manual intervention to the top of their claim on the agent’s view of the Universal Credit system.
2. The corporate appointee flag is visible to any DWP agent viewing the claim.
3. A corporate appointee is fully responsible for acting on the claimant’s behalf in all the claimant’s dealings with the Department. In any interaction with Universal Credit, the corporate appointee

is treated as the claimant, following standard processes and procedures. Once an appointee is in place this applies to all DWP benefits and service lines.

4. The corporate appointee flag on the claim alerts DWP agents to the fact that the claim is managed by the corporate appointee rather than the claimant. Agents are aware that the corporate appointee is solely responsible for managing the claim for Universal Credit. If the claimant, rather than the corporate appointee, makes contact with Universal Credit, no account action will be taken. The claimant will be referred to their appointee and the call will be ended.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Department 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@dpw.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
Web: ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745