

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 1 JUNE 2017 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Jobseekers

Question reference number: HS 26 (SQ17-000107)

Senator: Kakoschke-Moore

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 21 July 2017

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) My office has heard complaints that a 'reasonable excuse' does not include an illness or injury that has a medical certificate as evidence. Has the Department had similar complaints?
- b) Does a medical certificate provide evidence of a reasonable excuse?
- c) Are jobactive providers able to refuse to accept a medical certificate?

Answer:

- a) The level of categorisation available in the Department's Customer Feedback Tool does not identify complaints relating specifically to this question. Job seekers who do not agree with a departmental decision can request a review of the decision by an independent officer.
- b) A medical certificate can form part of an assessment of reasonable excuse. If the job seeker is determined as exempt from mutual obligation requirements due to the incapacity covered by the medical certificate, any failure reported for the period of incapacity will be deemed as not valid and no penalty will be applied.

If the medical certificate does not exempt the job seeker from requirements, the condition would be considered when determining whether the job seeker had a reasonable excuse for their non-compliance and for not contacting their provider prior to the event (where this determination is also relevant to the decision).

- c) Questions regarding jobactive providers should be directed to the Department of Employment.