

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome 1 - Employment

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000084

Senator Cameron asked on 11 February 2016 on proof Hansard page 66

Question

Work for the Dole - wrong advice

Senator CAMERON: Is the department aware that some jobactive providers are wrongly advising job seekers they are not required to participate in Work For The Dole when they are over the age of 50 and not required by law to do Work for the Dole?

Ms Leon: Are you saying that you think some providers are currently doing that?

Senator CAMERON: Yes. I am asking: are you aware that some jobactive providers are doing this?

Ms Leon: No, we have not been given that information.

Senator CAMERON: Could you then take on notice to see whether that is an issue?

Ms Leon: I am happy to take it on notice. But we have provided pretty comprehensive, regular and thorough information to all of the providers to ensure that they completely understand what the parameters of Work for the Dole are.

Answer

The Department's National Customer Service line has reported that there have been some complaints of incorrect advice by providers in relation to requirements to participate in Work for the Dole. These have been addressed as quickly as possible and this is not a common complaint. All employment services providers have been reminded of the parameters of the Work for the Dole programme and information on mutual obligation requirements is available in programme guidelines.

Under social security law, any job seeker between 18 and 59 years of age (inclusive) can potentially be required to participate in Work for the Dole. Job seekers 50 to 59 years of age may choose either Work for the Dole or to participate in other approved activities to meet their Annual Activity Requirement. Job seekers 60 years of age and over are not compelled to undertake an Annual Activity Requirement but are required to undertake suitable activities as appropriate.

Under social security law, job seekers aged 55 years and over may choose to satisfy their mutual obligation requirements by undertaking at least 30 hours per fortnight of approved voluntary work or paid work (including self-employment).