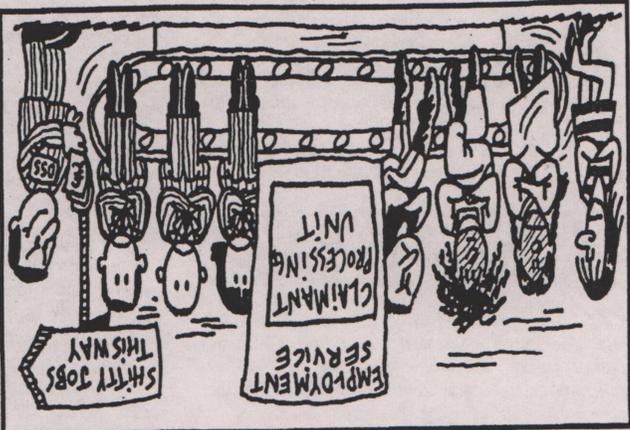


Case loading lasts for 8 weeks and is aimed at people out of work more than 6 weeks. You may have the personal attention of a Client Adviser for several weeks.

CASE-LOADING AND 1-2-1

4.2) locally for the type of work. highest rates of pay available locally. It SHOULD offer the conditions generally available expected to do, which reflects - you can reasonably be previous employer of yours. Employment Service or with a - is being handled by the one that

A Notified Vacancy MUST



Unless you have "Good Cause" for refusing to apply for a notified vacancy, SANCTIONS will be used. For what counts as "Good Cause," see CAN I REFUSE TO APPLY FOR A JOB ? Also see CREATIVE JOB SEARCH.

4.1) NOTIFIED VACANCIES / ACTIVE SIGNING

At EMPLOYMENT SERVICE INTERVIEWS, or signing-on, you may be shown job details and asked if you're interested in applying. This is what's known as a Notified Vacancy, some people call it Active Signing. They should tell you that refusal to apply could lead to SANCTIONS. If they don't then you can complain / appeal.

OTHER PRESSURE FROM YOUR "CLIENT ADVISER"

Remember - you have the right to have someone with you at interview for support or advice.

Refusal to go on voluntary schemes can be used as evidence that you are not ASW but don't be pressured. Say that you don't consider the schemes will be any use, you've heard they're crap. As long as you show that you are ASW they can't use SANCTIONS against you.

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LOCAL CONTACT

13. BYE FOR NOW

The info. in this guide is largely based on the "Unemployment and Training Rights Handbook" 3rd edition 1995, produced by the Unemployment Unit. We have tried to make it as accurate as possible. But remember, if in doubt - get advice from your local claimants group, unemployed centre or welfare advice centre.

We urge everyone to get stuck in to resisting the Job Seekers Allowance; wage slavery and all the rest of the crap. Go for it !

Produced by the Oxford Claimants Action Group - February 1996

Remember - whatever pressure they try to use at Restarts, TRAINING FOR WORK and most of the SCHEMES are voluntary. This will change with the JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE.

* Be careful about ticking advice on setting up a small business unless you want to be self employed. To qualify for Business Start Up Allowance you have to have a realistic business plan and some financial backing.

* SO, unless you definitely want to go on a SCHEME or TRAINING FOR WORK, we suggest you tick "some other help" and ask for the help or training you really need to get a job, which they can't provide, eg driving lessons, HGV, other qualifications that cost.

* If you tick "advice on benefits" you may be pressured to look for jobs that pay below Income Support / Family Credit levels. "If you work for £50 a week we can top it up, why don't you consider a job like that?" No thanks!

* If you tick "Training", you will be pressured to volunteer for TRAINING FOR WORK Job Club.

* If you tick the first 2 boxes, you will be pressured to volunteer for a SCHEME, like what's the catch ?

or otherwise remove you from the unemployment register.

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Q27 - what help do you need?

- * advice on what work to look for and where to look
- * help with job applications and interviews
- * training
- * advice on starting a small business
- * advice on benefits you may be able to get after you start work
- * some other help (please say below what you need)

Watch out for any questions designed to catch you out about being AVAILABLE FOR / ACTIVELY SEEKING WORK. But also watch out for Question 27.

At each Restart you will have to fill in a form - the UB671R. By refusing to complete it or answer any of the questions, you will be treated as making yourself unavailable for work - see SANCTIONS.

The aim of the interviews is to get you off the unemployment register or onto a scheme. Your JOB SEEKING and AVAILABILITY FOR WORK will be reviewed; you may be asked to apply for a NOTIFIED VACANCY, or you may be offered a place on a VOLUNTARY SCHEME.

If you agree to do something at a Restart, but then don't do it - you will be called back for a follow-up interview and the JOB SEEKING and AVAILABILITY question will be raised.

13 weeks after you first sign on, you will probably be called to your first compulsory counselling interview. After 6 months (26 weeks), you will have to attend a Restart interview. After this, you will be called to a Restart interview every 6 months.

You will have to attend these at regular intervals. Back to Work Plan, in which you agree to look at Job Centre Boards, the local and national press, stop windows; register with an agency; make direct approaches to employers, etc. Failure to do this can be used as evidence that you are not ASW.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE INTERVIEWS & RESTARTS

3.

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CLAIMANTS SURVIVAL GUIDE

Some things you should know about the Employment Service while you're on the dole

DO NOT LET EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF / CLIENT ADVISERS SEE YOU WITH THIS DOCUMENT

1. WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT ?

1.1) This is a Survival Guide for claimants in response to the new get tough regime at the dole office. It covers the period until October 1996 or whenever Job Seekers Allowance becomes law. It is based on what the law says. But it won't pull any punches - we don't need to be reasonable - they've long since given up any pretence of being reasonable to us.

1.2) Why are they doing this to us ? Because the government wants to cut the dole queue and dole office staff are paid more for "positive outcomes". That doesn't mean finding us a decent job - it means getting us off the unemployment register by any means necessary.

1.3) Fair enough ? - State benefits are set at survival level, so its not surprising that people are reluctant to take jobs that pay less, needing top-ups of Income Support / Family Credit. Its just a subsidy to bosses, so that they can make more profit out of our sweat. By taking a low paid job, we undermine the wages and conditions of other workers - we're all in this together.

1.4) What's the key ? Remember these two phrases - "Available for Work" (AFW) and "Actively Seeking Work" (ASW) - you have to meet these conditions to claim benefit. From the day you sign on, this is the way they will put pressure on you.

Whenever you are asked (on forms or in person), remember :

You are looking for and immediately ready (24 hours notice) to take any reasonable full time job (24+ hours pw even if short term or temporary) within reasonable travelling distance. You're prepared to work for a wage slightly less than what you got in your last job, or one that will meet your living needs (ie, equal to benefit levels).

To be on the safe side, apply for 2 jobs a week and keep proof that you have done so - see CREATIVE JOB SEARCH

Refusal to go on VOLUNTARY SCHEMES can also be used as proof of not ASW, but if you can show that you have been looking for work, they can't force you on the schemes or punish you for refusing.

- EMPLOYMENT SERVICE INTERVIEWS / RESTARTS
 - COMPULSORY SCHEMES
 - OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS
 - NOTIFIED VACANCIES
- for more details see relevant sections

AFW. These are:

also be used to show that you are not ASW / Refusal to comply with certain conditions may

This means taking steps every week to find paid work, whether permanent or temporary and being ready to start work immediately.

When you sign on, you'll be asked to sign a Back to Work Plan, in which you agree to look at Job Centre Boards, the local and national press, stop windows; register with an agency; make direct approaches to employers, etc. Failure to do this can be used as evidence that you are not ASW.

AVAILABLE FOR & ACTIVELY SEEKING WORK (AFW & ASW)

2.

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- 2) AVAILABLE FOR AND ACTIVELY SEEKING WORK
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- 4) OTHER PRESSURE FROM YOUR "CLIENT ADVISER"
- 5) VOLUNTARY SCHEMES
- 6) COMPULSORY SCHEMES
- 7) TRAINING FOR WORK
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- 9) CAN I REFUSE TO APPLY FOR A JOB ?
- 10) CREATIVE JOB SEARCH
- 11) WHAT IF I'M FORCED INTO WORK ?
- 12) JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE
- 13) THE END ?



months who have been identified as needing "extra help" at a Restart interview. This means people who:

- decline all offers of help,
- are long-term unemployed and "lack motivation or appear to have low confidence,"
- need in-work or alternative benefits advice to "encourage" them to take low paid work,
- have raised a doubt about their AFW and/or ASW.

1-2-1 is aimed specifically at 18-24 year olds on the dole for more than a year who do not agree to participate in a SCHEME, or having agreed to, don't attend or complete. It involves up to 6 interviews over a 6-12 week period. You will be asked to do things like prepare a CV, research the local labour market, etc and be re-interviewed on whether you've done these.

4.3) OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Client Advisers can "officially recommend" that you do a specific activity to "assist you to find work" if they think that you "are not properly or effectively searching for work". If you refuse to comply with these, or fail to carry them out (without good cause) you face SANCTIONS.

The Official Recommendation MUST be :

- aimed at increasing your chance of getting one or more specific vacancies or a particular type of work.
- written and specific, to include information like details of particular jobs, name & address of employers / agencies referred to, guidance on methods to be used in applying for vacancies or approaching employers, and the date by which the recommendation should be carried out.

Following a Recommendation will involve : (one or more of these)

- applying for one or more specific vacancies in local press;
- making an approach to one or more named employers or group of employers on a single site - provided they are within a specific industry, trade or profession;
- preparing a CV and submitting it to a number of named employers;
- registering with a named specialist employment agency;
- responding to a written request to attend an interview at a given time at a local ES office in connection with an existing vacancy.

What doesn't count as an Official Recommendation -

- preparing a CV on its own;
- attending a training course, Job Club, or similar;
- applying for a number of unspecified vacancies advertised in local newspaper

If you are given a Recommendation you will have a follow-up interview to see if you've obeyed. Failure could be used as evidence that you are not ASW, with the standard sanction imposed.

The run up to the JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE will see an increased use of Official Recommendations. Once the JSA is in we'll be subject to more wide-ranging and much nastier "Job Seekers Directives"

5. VOLUNTARY SCHEMES

Job Search Seminars; Job Review Workshops; Job Clubs

You don't have to take part in any of these schemes. Provided you can show that you're actively seeking work, refusal to participate cannot be used against you.

Some people find them useful, most think they're rubbish. They involve CV writing, learning to be "flexible" i.e. doing worse jobs for less money, and grovelling to the bosses.

Once you agree to do them, you will encounter extra pressure if you decide to stop. If you've agreed to it, and then walk out or disrupt them, it can be reported to the ES. You'll probably get a follow up Restart and be asked to explain why you left. Remember the schemes are voluntary - just say you discovered it was a complete waste of time.

Job Interview Guarantee - or Matching and Screening Service:

- you are told of vacancies and guaranteed interviews. Refusing interviews or offers can be used as evidence of not being AFW /ASW.

Work Trials allow employers to try you out for up to 3 weeks while you stay on the dole and there's no guarantee of a job at the end of it.

6. COMPULSORY SCHEMES

There are only 3 compulsory schemes. They are aimed at forcing people into VOLUNTARY SCHEMES, TRAINING FOR WORK, job interviews, work placements, or low paid work.

Job Plan Workshop:

This week- long course will be pushed at your 2nd Restart, after being unemployed 1 year.

Workwise :

A 4-week Restart Course (see below) aimed at 18-24 year olds unemployed for 1 year.

Restart Course (2 weeks):

You can be required to attend this at your 3rd or 4th Restart interview. A part-time course, usually consisting of supervised morning sessions and afternoon job search assignments.

Much of it consists of CV writing; pseudo-psychological analysis (what's wrong with you that you can't get a job) and the belief that the long term unemployed are "weak," lacking in self-esteem and moral fibre, etc. Most people resist this humiliating process, if only by asking questions like "I'm a fully qualified plumber - why are you trying to make me apply for a job in Burger King?" or "There aren't any jobs available - what's the point of putting us through this rubbish?"

These courses are contracted out by the Employment Service to the private sector. The trainers might get paid peanuts for acting as soft cops but don't feel any sympathy for them. Their bosses are profiting from mass unemployment. Don't let them get away with it.

Be as unco-operative as you like, you can only be asked to leave for disruptive behaviour (different from just not co-operating) and there is no SANCTION for this. You'll be interviewed, referred to another course, and expected to behave in a "reasonable non-disruptive manner". If asked to leave again you will be subject to SANCTIONS.

Any unauthorised absence, or leaving early without good cause, leads to SANCTIONS.



7. TRAINING FOR WORK

Lasts up to 12 months and is usually available only if you've been unemployed for 12+ months. Usually run by training providers, these can be TEC's, FE colleges, or just profit making companies. Involves job-specific training, work placements, NVQ study, job search stuff, etc. Providers are paid by results so they aim to get you into work. There is no minimum standard of training. At best you'll get decent qualifications and work experience - at worst it's a full time Job Plan Workshop with added skivvying thrown in.

8. SANCTIONS / SUSPENSION

Suspension or Sanction of benefit happen for:

- ✗ voluntarily leaving work (but see EMPLOYMENT TRIAL) - standard sanction
- ✗ dismissal for misconduct - standard sanction
- ✗ failure to comply with an OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION - standard sanction
- ✗ Refusing to attend or not attending / leaving early a COMPULSORY SCHEME
- ✗ Refusing to apply for a NOTIFIED VACANCY
- ✗ Not "ACTIVELY SEEKING WORK" or being "AVAILABLE FOR WORK"
- ✗ Failure to attend a 2nd EMPLOYMENT SERVICE INTERVIEW

The Standard Sanction :

No Unemployment Benefit and a 40% reduction in Income Support personal allowance for up to 26 weeks (20% if savings less than £200 and member of immediate family is seriously ill or pregnant). Exact period is discretionary; amount can be reduced if prove hardship - but its purely at their discretion.

COMPULSORY SCHEMES : the standard sanction is applied for period of non-compliance.

Sanctions for not "ACTIVELY SEEKING WORK" or being "AVAILABLE FOR WORK" vary.

Technically you don't qualify for benefit at all while doubt remains. By refusing a NOTIFIED VACANCY you can be disqualified until the vacancy is filled, then the standard sanction applies. Not attending a 2nd ES INTERVIEW disqualifies you from the date of that interview.

Appeal against any sanction or suspension of benefit. Get advice & representation.

9.

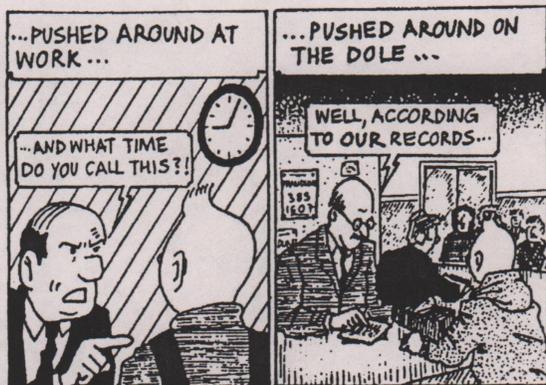
CAN I REFUSE TO APPLY FOR A JOB ?

- When you first sign on you can look for work in your usual occupation for up to 13 weeks - unless you are a school leaver; have never worked before or your previous occupation no longer exists.
- You do not have to justify refusing a job of less than 24 hours every week.
- You don't have to apply for a job, attend an interview, or accept a job offer, where you found out about the job from Job Centre boards or elsewhere - but if you ask about a job off the boards it will get entered into the computer & you'll get asked what happened.

✗ You do have to show good cause for refusing to apply for a NOTIFIED VACANCY. If you can't show good cause you'll be subject to SANCTIONS

"Good Cause" - You can refuse :

- ✓ to be a scab provided that the specific vacancy is one caused by the dispute.



- ✓ on religious or conscientious grounds, which can include:
- ✓ objecting to not being a member of a trade union in a work place where non membership is a condition of employment
- ✓ objecting to work with material which may be used for the destruction of human life
- ✓ working in abattoirs etc.

✓ Other good cause includes health; "excessive physical or mental stress" and excessive travelling time to work (more than one hour each way).

Also the Employment Service should not handle jobs:

- which involve sexual or racial discrimination;
- where the premises raise doubts under the Health & Safety Act;
- where claimants' complaints suggest that it might be "doubtful, undesirable or not genuine"

Undesirability can include "allegations of unfair dismissal; non-payment of wages or expenses; sexual harassment," misrepresentation of pay and conditions and oppressive contracts of employment.

10.

CREATIVE JOB SEARCH

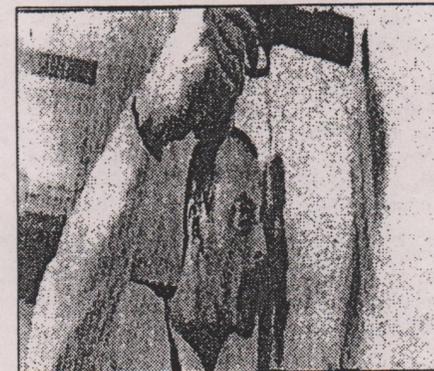
If you have to apply for a job you don't want, don't despair.

Remember - there are probably loads of other people going for the same job, several of whom will be better suited for it and actually want it.

You are the one who fills in the application form given you by the Employment Service. If you don't want the job make sure your application is nondescript or contains information about your work history or references that will put the employer off interviewing or hiring you.

If you get an interview be equally (un)imaginative. Ask employers which union represents their workforce and whether they would object to you joining it, or, if there isn't one, starting one up. Also ensure, for your own well being, that Health & Safety is up to scratch.

Above all, go out of your way to make sure the employer realises exactly what sort of a person you are and the kind of benefit they could expect for their business by employing you.



Take care : with NOTIFIED VACANCIES the Employment Service processes and keeps the application forms, and sometimes get employers to report on interviewees.

"Refusal of Vacancy" can include:

- ✗ making unreasonable conditions for accepting job;
- ✗ creating an unfavourable impression at an interview by being deliberately obstructive, apathetic or appearing to be under the influence of alcohol;
- ✗ refusing to give references
- ✗ delaying acceptance of job if offered.

If the Client Adviser thinks you're actively refusing they will fill out a UB195 form, asking you to complete UB195A by writing down your reasons for refusal. You don't have to complete

it there and then, you have a month to return it. Get advice before filling it in.

11. WHAT IF I'M FORCED INTO WORK?

11.1) EMPLOYMENT ON TRIAL - After being unemployed for 6+ months, you can take a full time job (over 16 hours) and leave after 6 and before 12 calendar weeks - THEY CANNOT TREAT YOU AS HAVING VOLUNTARILY LEFT WORK!

11.2) Otherwise - well, they've made you into a wage slave, we recommend you pay them back any way you can. Organise, agitate, disrupt - its still a Class War!

12. JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE

The new combined regime starting October 1996, unless we've managed to destroy it first. If not, the main changes to information in this leaflet are:

- ✗ The 26 week 40% SANCTION becomes a 100% suspension of benefit !!
- ✗ Job Seekers Directives will be used much more widely than OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS have been, including directing you to get your hair cut etc.
- ✗ COMPULSORY SCHEMES - most voluntary schemes will become compulsory and long term unemployed may face 13 weeks of compulsory slave labour for benefit. We kid you not!

A new Survival Guide will be needed - but much of the advice on tactics will remain sound.

RESIST OR CEASE TO EXIST!

