

# YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE ACCOMPANIED TO ALL BENEFITS INTERVIEWS!



You have the right to be accompanied to interviews at the Jobcentre and all DWP offices – **and that's official!**

A top official writing on behalf of the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus for the United Kingdom has stated:

**“On the matter of accompanied interviews....Mr McGonigle and his predecessor Bill Wilson have written to Edinburgh Claimants about this and made clear the position for interviews conducted on Jobcentre plus premises. We accept that there will always be times when customers attending our premises feel the need to be accompanied by a friend or advice worker and we will always try to accommodate this where possible.”**

(Letter copied to Edinburgh Claimants from Matthew Nicholas, Employers and Stakeholders Director Jobcentre Plus, on behalf of the Chief Executive Darra Singh, letter dated 15 February 2010. Mr McGonigle and Mr Wilson are the current and previous Jobcentreplus local District Managers)

More evidence of this right was provided on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014 when, in response to a Freedom of Information request, the DWP wrote: "Claimants accessing DWP benefits and services can have someone to accompany them to act on their behalf....."

<https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/196795/response/486014/attach/html/3/Response%20634.pdf.html>

By writing that the accompanier can act on the claimant's behalf

this statement also makes it clear that the accompanier can speak in appointments.

## **NO NEED TO FACE THEM ALONE**

Certainly if you have any interview you think might pose problems we advise you to take a friend or adviser with you. For example, if they are threatening benefits sanctions, trying to change your jobseekers agreement, or force you to go on schemes or apply for jobs you don't want, or if you are called in by the Counter Fraud team, you should NOT face them alone. If you have a benefits medical exam, you should be accompanied.

Edinburgh Claimants and Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty accompany people to such interviews, and to interviews at City of Edinburgh Council, all the time.

If anyone tries to stop your friend or adviser accompanying you, then tell them the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus says this is allowed, and show them the quotes in this leaflet.

Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty have also won the right for claimants to be accompanied by a person of their choice to all A4e, Ingeus and JHP workfare provider appointments.

**Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty [ecap@lists.riseup.net](mailto:ecap@lists.riseup.net)  
[www.edinburghagainstopoverty.org.uk](http://www.edinburghagainstopoverty.org.uk)**

**Don't be bullied or intimidated – let's support each other and stand up for ourselves.**