

PRIME MINISTER

Following the correspondence about problems faced by job seekers who try to change location, we made some enquiries of the Department of Employment about the system for circularising vacancies to other areas.

The attached note from the Department shows that there is a regular system for circulating most job vacancies to neighbouring job centres, and for circulating a proportion on a much wider basis. The figures below show that circulation to neighbouring job centres produces a significant proportion of the candidates who fill job centre vacancies, although the wider circulation of a limited number of jobs produces little success.

20 August 1980

MP Is there no "dearing house" for vacancies for skilled jobs. I heard this weekend of 6 houses in Kent that could not be completed because there are no plasterers available etc.

SW



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Don Mcbr,

- private file* Thank you for your letter of 5 August with which you enclosed one the Prime Minister had received from Mrs S Fitzpatrick of Pitteuchar, Glenrothes, seeking .. help for her husband to find a new job. I enclose as requested a copy of the reply sent by one of our officials.
- .. I also enclose for your information a note prepared by the MSC's Employment Service Division on circulation of job vacancy information. I hope this will be useful.

He Sue

ANDREW HARDMAN
Private Secretary

MSC: CIRCULATION OF JOB VACANCY INFORMATION

It is the standard practice in Jobcentres and Employment Offices to select those job vacancies notified to them where there is a possibility of interest to job-seekers who attend other offices, and to circulate those selected by the fastest available means. Although for the less populous areas, this means circulation by photocopying and first-class post, most urban areas have technological aid (facsimile transmission, computerised message-switching, or on-line data base) which allow job vacancy information to be circulated within an hour of receipt. Approximately 70% of the 1,400,000 vacancy orders notified to Jobcentres and Employment Offices in the year ending June 1980 were given this form of immediate circulation, and largely as a result of this activity approximately 300,000 people were able to find jobs in the areas of Local Offices other than those at which they discovered the vacancy.

The immediate circulation of vacancies is made to the neighbouring Jobcentres which form the natural catchment area for jobseekers, bearing in mind local transport and commuting custom. Vacancies which cannot be readily filled by this means are considered for more extended circulation to other areas from which interested jobseekers may be found, bearing in mind the attractiveness of the vacancy and the level of surplus labour in other areas. Skill-shortage vacancies are given wider circulation regardless of the likelihood of subsequent placings. This circulation is achieved by photocopying and post through a network of 18 Area Offices. Approximately 10% of vacancies are given wider circulation though the consequent placings achieved are few. There is also the capacity for circulation of vacancies throughout the European Community via the SEDOC system (International Telex).

Jobcentres and Employment Offices also have links for vacancy circulation with Careers Offices and Skillcentres. Methods of circulating vacancy information to Unemployment Benefit Offices are now being considered.

A description of the 4 methods of mechanised circulation is attached.

MECHANISED VACANCY CIRCULATION

MUFAX

Mufax is a proprietary facsimile transmission or "remote photocopying" system. Documents fed into the sending LO's transmitter are reproduced by receivers in other offices. Most Mufax systems send all the vacancies transmitted to all LO's in the system. More selective transmission has been achieved in some Mufax systems. Mufax systems are operating in Edinburgh, Leeds and Bradford, Sheffield, Manchester, Birmingham, the Black Country, South Wales, Nottingham, Brighton and Bristol. However, Mufax is gradually being replaced by computer-based message switching systems which are more versatile and produce vacancy display cards of a quality suitable for presentation in "self-service". The transmission process takes a few minutes per vacancy.

Message Switch

Message Switch is a vacancy circulation system based on a message switching mini computer (usually sited at an Area Office) connected to tele-type terminals in local offices. Vacancy details and display "cards" or other short messages are typed in and transmitted via the mini computer to one of a set of defined groups of office. Several different circulation patterns can be available for each LO. Messages can be stored by the computer until the terminal in the receiving office is free. Vacancies are transmitted from the computer to a receiving office terminal when it is available ie usually within minutes but in any case within the hour. At present Message Switch systems are in operation in London, Glasgow and Merseyside.

VACS (Vacancy Circulation and Statistics System)

VACS is an enhanced Message Switch system which, in addition to circulating vacancies, collects and collates vacancy statistics. A VACS system is already operating in the North East. A system is being installed in the West Midlands, and other systems are planned for the South West, Western, East Pennines, Scotland East and North, Wales, East Midlands, North West, Manchester and Eastern Areas.

CAPITAL (Computer Aided Placing In The Area of London)

CAPITAL is an online realtime computer system which provides registrant, employer and vacancy information storage and processing for certain Local Offices in North East London. Apart from its many other functions, therefore, it provides vacancy circulation by allowing LO staff and jobseekers to interrogate and view by means of visual display units a range of relevant vacancies from the entire library of vacancies within the system. The system also provides vacancy display cards for self-service use, as well as cancellations for cards so circulated. Vacancy data is available to all users of the system within seconds of notification. MSC plans to extend this system to cover all of London by Spring 1984, given Treasury approval.