

To Jim Otram
C/o xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-xxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx

Our Ref: VTR 2851-412

DATE 28 February 2012

Dear Mr Otram,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request that was received by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Adelphi on 31 January 2012 and forwarded on for response by DWP Medical Services Contracts Correspondence Team (MSCCT) Freedom of Information Officer.

In your email you asked to be provided with information answering the following questions:-

In response to an earlier Freedom of Information Act enquiry (24 01 12, your reference VTR 2714 – 3878) the DWP has stated:

"Provision is currently available for the recording of assessments upon request by the claimant to the office which administers the claim for benefit and Atos Healthcare. In these circumstances, Atos Healthcare will provide the requisite audio recording equipment, which will provide each party with a recording of the medical assessment."

However, the WCA Handbook (Issue date November 2011) makes no mention of this entitlement for claimants.

Please supply by email:-

- 1. A copy of the DWP's authorization for this revised procedure (i.e. note, instruction, minute, memorandum or similar).*
- 2. Copy details of the way in which claimants are advised of this important entitlement.*

In response to Q1, the Revised Work Capability Handbook, paragraph 4.1.3 details the procedure that Atos Healthcare should follow upon a request by the claimant for the audio recording of an assessment.

In reply to Q2, claimants are not currently advised of their entitlement to request a recording; however a process guide is currently being agreed by Atos Healthcare and the Department. The information still remains under production and they are therefore exempt for release under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act as it is due for future publication. We will forward copies of both guides to you on their completion. In applying this exemption the Department has balanced the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in

disclosing the information and consider there is no overarching public interest argument in favour of releasing this information.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, 5th Floor The Adelphi, 1-11, John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF www.ico.gov.uk