

To: I White
request-260052-ecb9cf13@whatdotheyknow.com

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Our Ref: FOI 1174

8 April 2015

Dear I White,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request which we received on 25 March 2015.

You asked:

'The following relates to all interviews or medicals carried out by Atos or any other company that carries out a simmilar role in assessing a person for the DWP.

A, Does this company (or any used by the DWP) need the persons/individuals consent when at an interview/ medical to proceed with that medical/assesment/interview call it what you will to divulge their personal and private health issues?

B, If consent is needed and not given and the assesment/interview terminated is the file then handed back to a "Decission Maker" (or whatever they are called now) at the DWP?

C, If the person has such a disability they cannot attend one of your "assesment centres" can they ask for a domiciliary hearing?'

In response to Q's A & B, the declaration on a claim to benefit allows for exchange of information relevant to the claim. It is in a claimant's own interest to provide all relevant medical information to support their claim to benefit as failure to do so may result in loss of benefit.

For example; the declaration which is signed by the claimant on the Form ESA50 -questionnaire explains what will happen with information gathered in connection with an application for Employment and Support Allowance:

"I agree that:

- the Department for Work and Pensions
- any Healthcare Professional advising the Department
- any organisation with which the Department has a contract for the provision of medical services may ask any of the people or organisations mentioned on this form for any information which is needed to deal with:
- this claim to benefit
- any request for this claim to be looked at again and that the information may be given to that Healthcare professional or organisation or to the Department."

The Assessment Provider is bound by the same confidentiality rules that apply to all government departments.

In answer to QC, Schedule 2.1, paragraph 10.35 of the Health and Disability Assessments Service Contract which covers a number of disability benefits, including Employment and Support Allowance, states that:

The Supplier will undertake face-to-face consultations in the Claimant's home, their place of residence, such as a hospital, or their place of work on the following occasions:

- At the Authority's request (these will be exceptional circumstances);
- If the assessment type dictates that it is appropriate;
- Some Sensitive Cases
- If the Supplier considers it appropriate;
- At the Claimant's request, if supported by medical evidence;
- When the Claimant provides confirmation via their Healthcare Professional that indicates that the Claimant is unable to travel on health grounds.

In relation to Personal Independence Payment (PIP); please refer to paragraphs 2.7.20 -2.7.27, entitled Home Consultations, of the PIP Assessment Guide which can be accessed using the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210722/pip-assessment-guide.pdf

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-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

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.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745