

To J Newman
C/o request-101172-d54d3bb0@whatdotheyknow.com

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: VTR 2813-255

DATE 17 February 2012

Dear J Newman,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request that was received by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Adelphi on 20 January 2012 and forwarded on for response by myself, the DWP Medical Services Contracts Correspondence Team (MSCCT) Freedom of Information Officer.

In your email you asked

Dear Department for Work and Pensions,

Atos HCPs are required to have specific medical qualifications to allow them to undertake WCAs.

1. What process does Atos have in place to ensure that these qualifications are renewed where necessary on time, without lapse?
2. Would Atos be aware immediately of a qualification that had expired and would they immediately suspend the HCP, reassigning upcoming WCAs to other HCPs?
3. Can Atos guarantee without fail, that at the time of every WCA, the HCP's qualifications are absolutely up to date in all respects?
4. If a HCP is found to have qualifications that have lapsed, can you confirm that all the WCAs undertaken whilst unqualified can be identified, that they will automatically be rejected as invalid and DWP advised accordingly?

In answer to **Q 1** it is the individual Healthcare Professional's (HCP) responsibility to ensure they are fully registered, and this a requirement for HCPs to continue in employment for the NHS, Atos Healthcare or for any company that employs HCPs. This means that lapsed registration, in most cases, will result in some form of management action for the person involved.

In reply to **Q 2** it is escalated to the Atos Healthcare Medical Director when there is a case of a lapsed registration of an individual.

It has been acknowledged that there have been some 'lapses' of a few days in some individuals registration with the relevant Professional Body which have been caused by logistical things, such as moving house, delay in the relevant Professional Body receiving the forms, a change of bank details which can cause a delay in payment etc. If registration lapses

while payment/form is awaited then the HCP is removed from medical assessment /filework until such times as they are back on the register.

In response to **Q 3** this question is not valid for response under the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act, and it is not possible to “guarantee without fail” that the HCPs registration is up to date. The reasons for this are stated in the responses to Qs 1, 2 & 4.

May I again remind you that the role of the Fol Act is about the supply of recorded information held by the Department rather than providing an explanation to, or confirming whether the assumptions made by the author of the questions are correct or not.

In answer to **Q 4** should these delays go beyond the last day of the current registration period then the HCP would not be considered to be on the register, until payment and the fitness to practice confirmation form has been received by the relevant Professional Body. Until the confirmation form is received by Atos Healthcare, the HCP could not undertake any assessments. If the lapse is brought to the line manager's attention after the fact then any assessments they have undertaken may need to be re-examined.

If you have any queries about this response, 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-xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@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