

To Mr J Newman
C/o <mailto:request-@xx>

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-@xxx

Our Ref: 4189

DATE 16/03/2012

Dear Mr Newman

Thank you for your communication of 15 February 2012, received by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Adelphi and forwarded, on 17 February 2012, for response by the Medical Services Contracts Correspondence Team.

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

I will close this request, but will point out that I have neither expressed an opinion nor asked you to confirm it. What I have done is state a fact that is a direct consequence of what you have said and given you the opportunity to comment if you feel it is improperly derived. If you do not, clearly you accept the statement. In this case you have confirmed that DWP has not implemented the improvements recommended by Harrington and accepted by Grayling.

In response to your considerations I would advise that you are incorrect in your final assessment.

Professor Harrington's first independent review of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) concluded that the assessment was not broken but that it was not working as well as it should. He made a series of recommendations to improve its fairness and effectiveness which we fully endorsed and have now fully implemented.

Professor Harrington's second independent review noted the improvements that have been made: 'DWP moved swiftly to make the recommendations [from his first review]. Departmental policy, DWP Operations and Atos Healthcare have enacted these policy changes. The WCA has, in my view, noticeably changed for the better'. This review also made a series of further recommendations to build on the improvements already made. The Government endorses Professor Harrington's Review; we have fully accepted the majority of its recommendations, and are conducting work to assess the feasibility and implications of the remaining recommendations.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Medical Services Contracts Correspondence Team