

To Mr Otram  
C/o WDTK

21 March 2013

Dear Mr Otram

**Freedom of Information Act - Request for Internal Review**  
**Our Reference: IR229**

Thank you for your email dated 7 March 2013 requesting an internal review of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) handling of your request in which you wrote:

*"I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Work and Pensions's handling of my FOI request 'Claimants' personal audio-recording equipment. Expenses for additional appointments required by the DWP.'."*

*Your Reference: FOI 0645*

*Claimants' personal audio-recording equipment. Expenses for additional appointments required by the DWP.*

*Your response calls black white probably because the junior clerk who produced it has no idea what claimants are currently being told by Atos.*

*Pleas pass this review to someone of an appropriate level of seniority who will bother to find out and then answer the question I actually asked.*

*I have personally been told twice by Atos that the claimants on behalf of whom I was enquiring would have to make such separate appointments to have their equipment 'corroborated'.*

*Hint. Looking at the Guidance document Atos have agreed with the DWP and to which the Atos employees concerned are referring when they so require may help you."*

I can confirm that I have conducted an independent review of your request. I have examined it afresh, and sought guidance from domain experts where appropriate. After consideration I have found the following:

In your initial request to the DWP dated 9 February 2013, you asked:

*ESA claimants are currently being told by Atos that, if they want to use personal' audio-recording equipment to record a WCA, they will have to attend an additional appointment in order to have their equipment 'corroborated' or otherwise 'verified', on a separate date prior to the WCA appointment.*

*Under CURRENTLY RECORDED policy or arrangements made by the DWP, are claimants entitled to claim the re-imbursement out of public funds of their travels expenses for such stressful additional 'corroboration appointments', or are they not so entitled*

The Department's response of 7 March 2013 (reference Fol 0645) stated:

*"In reply to your question neither Atos Healthcare nor DWP require claimants to attend for an interview, prior to the Work Capability Assessment being conducted in order to have the recording equipment checked to ensure it is able to meet the required criteria"*

The Department does not hold any recorded information that **specifically** states claimants are entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses to attend an additional appointment purely to have their personal audio recording equipment 'corroborated' or 'verified'.

As stated in our previous response, neither Atos nor DWP require claimants to attend an interview prior to their assessment in order to have their personal audio recording equipment verified. The Department verified this with Atos prior to providing you with the response of 7<sup>th</sup> March and again for this response. We have no evidence to suggest claimants are being asked to attend such appointments and under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act can not investigate this further or deal with complaints.

However, if you or a claimant has evidence claimants are being asked by Atos to do this and wish to raise a complaint to have this matter investigated further, a complaint can be raised by emailing Atos at the email address provided on their website. It would be helpful to provide specific details such as the claimant's National Insurance Number and appointment time, date and place they were asked to attend to have their equipment verified, along with any other useful details.

Although this does not contain the specific information you have requested, details on reimbursement of travelling expenses can be found on the Atos Healthcare website at the following link:

[http://www.atoshealthcare.com/claimants/faq\\_view/travelling\\_expenses\\_for\\_your\\_assessment](http://www.atoshealthcare.com/claimants/faq_view/travelling_expenses_for_your_assessment)

I find that the original response dated 7 March could have been clearer. However I am satisfied all the information that DWP are able to supply to you has been supplied.

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

Yours sincerely,

Business Management Team  
Health & Disability Assessments (Operations)  
[dwp.medicalservicescorrespondence@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dwp.medicalservicescorrespondence@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

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**Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act**

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](http://www.ico.gov.uk)