

To: Mr Patel
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DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: FOI 2035

6 July 2016

Dear Mr Patel,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request which we received on 30 May 2016.

You asked:

'Please tell me what qualifications are necessary for a DM to make someone go to a WCA or a PIP assessment ? Outside of the guidance provided by the DWP. What process is in place for the DM to make this decision and are the DMs medically qualified practitioners ?

1) When the person originally applies for PIP or ESA ?

2) When the DM thinks from Guidance the claimant is required to attend an assessment ?

Please also provided the guidance in relation to the above and a list of triggers that causes the above to happen ?'

It may be helpful to explain that DWP Decision Makers (DM) do not make the decision as to whether a person needs to attend a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Assessment.

A Health Professional employed by Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA) to undertake WCAs and either Capita or Atos Healthcare to undertake PIP assessments will carry out the scrutiny process to determine whether a face to face assessment is required.

All Healthcare Professionals employed by CHDA have passed strict recruitment and experience criteria and are registered with a relevant regulatory body such as the General Medical Council (GMC), the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or EEA equivalent. CHDA ensure that any Healthcare Professional has the following qualifications and experience:

- they are an occupational therapist, nurse, physiotherapist or doctor;
- they are fully registered with the relevant regulatory body (doctors must have a licence to practice);
- they have no sanctions attached to registration (unless they relate to disability) – in individual cases this may be waived subject to agreement with the authority;
- they have at least 2 years post full registration experience (GMC, NMC, HCPC or EEA equivalent) or for non EU graduates 2 post full registration experience unless

otherwise agreed on an individual basis by the Authority.

All Health Professionals employed by either Atos Healthcare or Capita have passed strict recruitment and experience criteria and are registered with an appropriate professional body such as the General Medical Council (GMC), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) or the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The Assessment Providers ensure that any Health Professional has the following qualifications and experience:

- are an occupational therapist, nurse (level 1), physiotherapist, paramedic or doctor;
- fully registered with the relevant licensing body (doctors must have a licence to practise);
- have no sanctions attached to registration unless they relate to disability;
- at least 2 years post full registration experience or less than 2 years post full registration experience by individual agreement with the Authority.

Please find attached a copy of the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Filework Guidelines (For HCPs) which is information relating to the pre-board check of the Limited Capability for Work questionnaire (ESA 50)

This requested document has been produced as part of a training programme for approved Healthcare Professionals to carry out WCAs. All Healthcare Professionals undertaking these assessments must be registered medical or nursing practitioners who in addition, have undergone training in disability assessment medicine and more specific training. The training includes theory training in a classroom setting, supervised practical training, and a demonstration of understanding as assessed by quality audit. This document must be read with the understanding that, as experienced medical or nursing practitioners, the Healthcare Professionals will have detailed knowledge of the principles and practice of diagnostic techniques and therefore such information is not contained in these documents. In addition, this is not a stand-alone document, and forms only a part of the training and written documentation that a Healthcare Professional receives. As disability assessment is a practical occupation, much of the guidance also involves verbal information and coaching. Thus, although the document may be of interest to non-medical readers, some of the information may not be readily understood without background medical knowledge and an awareness of the other training and guidance given to Healthcare Professionals.

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There is a separate guide used by Health Professionals undertaking PIP assessments. Please find enclosed a direct link to this guide

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-assessment-guide-for-assessment-providers#>

You can view the Freedom of Information Act 2000 via the following link:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>

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, London, 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
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