

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
Central Freedom of Information Team

freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Our reference: Fol IR372

Date: 11 August 2017

Dear Mr Slater

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 26 July 2017.

You asked:

Thank you for such a prompt response. The Department responded:
“There is no tool used by Work Coaches to determine mandatory activity of individuals claiming ESA. Activity is mandated based upon the group in which the customer is placed.”

My request for information included the following description:
“Screening Tool: Web-base questionnaire into which Personal Advisers (PAs) input claimants’ answers. These answers are then converted into a score that estimates the probability of the customer still being out of work in 12 months time without further mandatory activity.”

The Department’s response makes no reference to a screening tool that
“estimates the probability of the customer still being out of work in 12 months time without further mandatory activity.”

Please confirm is the Department uses a screening tool that provides an estimate of the probability of a customer still being out of work in any given time period. This is clearly within the scope of my request as it asked for
“something similar to the screening tool for ESA claimants”.

DWP Response:

I am of a senior grade to the person who dealt with your request, I was not involved previously, and can confirm that I have carried out an internal review. I am now in a position to respond to you.

I am content that your original request was dealt with in accordance with DWP guidelines for Fol requests.

Based upon the information you provided of the screening tool. A tool which decides if a claimant has “no further mandatory involvement” with the ESA or “may participate on a voluntary basis”. I can confirm DWP does not use a screening tool to estimate the timescales of ESA claimants being out of work or if a claimant is required to take part on a mandatory or voluntary basis.

Establishing probability of an individual being able to return to work when claiming ESA is not part of the role of a Work Coach. The timescales in which an individual may reasonably return to work (the Prognosis Date) is decided as part of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA).

While the WCA process is based upon a points scoring system, a Decision Maker would decide the prognosis date based on the evidence provided at the time of the claim and on the recommendations of the Healthcare Professional who assessed the individual. This process does not use a screening tool as each case is decided based exclusively upon the information provided.

I hope this is helpful but 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@dpw.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.

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