

To J Newman
C/o request-101538-fb6d1b35@whatdotheyknow.com

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: VTR 2922-IR91

DATE 19 March 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 February 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,

Please pass this on to the person who conducts Freedom of Information reviews.

I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Work and Pensions's handling of my FOI request 'HCP failings -'.

Thank you for all of this information, but it is clear from my question that I have read the handbook and all you have done is reproduce sections of it here rather than answer my straightforward question, so please re-read and respond.

Also, do you expect all claimants to have read the WCA Handbook prior to their WCA? If yes, where do you tell them that this is the case; if no, where do you tell claimants about all of the important issues you have explained in your response here?

I am sure you want claimants to be as well prepared as possible for their WCA.

As Reviewing Officer, I have read your letter and accepted this as a request for an Internal Review in order that I can check that the information sent to you clearly and accurately answered your request. I have therefore conducted a full investigation into your original request and the information supplied to you. I have also reviewed any decisions to withhold information and in doing so I have fully considered the public interest in disclosure.

DWP have already supplied you with full information about these matters in the letter dated 20 February 2012 (FOI 2828-298) refers.

I therefore find that the original response was correct and that all the information that DWP are able to supply to you has been supplied. I can confirm that it is not a requirement for claimants

to have read the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) Handbook prior to attending their WCA, this is because the document has been produced as part of a programme for Healthcare Professionals (HCP) to carry out the WCAs as approved HCPs.

All HCPs undertaking these medical 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 HCPs will have detailed knowledge of the principles and practice of diagnostic techniques and therefore such information is not contained in this document. In addition, this is not a stand-alone document, and forms only a part of the training and written documentation that a HCP 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 HCPs.

Atos Healthcare when issuing the WCA appointment letter include Form AL1C, as well as a map and directions to the specific Assessment Centre; form AL1C provides claimants with advice on what to expect at the WCA, as well as what they should bring with them to the WCA, which includes proof of identity, and their medication.

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-xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@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