

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: MSCCT 4824

24 August 2012

Dear Mr Newman

Thank you for the email dated 9 August 2012 that was received by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Adelphi and forwarded on to the DWP Medical Services Contracts Correspondence Team (MSCCT) to respond to.

One of many FOI requests in the name of Mr Newman was posted on the WDTK site, on this occasion making a statement that Chris Grayling's promise of more help and support for claimants is a lie. In response, DWP cannot get embroiled in communications of this nature and the purpose of this website should not be used to attempt to undermine the Minister for Employment.

The additional comments made by Mr J Newman regarding DWP deciding to ignore Chris Grayling's promise and continue on its own merry way and DWP not understanding the word "rhetorical" are Mr Newman's opinions. In response, the views expressed are a matter of opinion and do not constitute a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Mr Newman further commented that DWP offers no facility to claimants who experience a demonstrably poor Work Capability Assessment (WCA). In response, this is not the case as the majority of Healthcare Professionals (HCP) recruited for the WCA process are, or have been, General Practitioners. They must have at least three years post-graduate experience in general practice, occupational or rehabilitation medicine. HCPs with these backgrounds are chosen because they have vast experience of a wide range of disabling conditions, both physical and mental disability. HCPs are only recruited when they can demonstrate a wide range of experience in general medicine and a track record of expertise in clinical examination.

The WCA process was designed to assess benefit claimants as objectively as possible and its application should not rely solely on the views of any one party. The approved HCPs advice is based on the functional history, informal observation and medical assessment, supplemented, where available, with information from the claimant's GP or other healthcare provider.

Claimants are assessed functionally using the WCA criteria of descriptors to determine whether their overall level of disability meets the threshold set out in Regulations. The Employment and Support Allowance descriptors are not considered individually since it is the overall health assessment and score which is important.

Please be mindful that when Mr Newman is requesting an internal review of a decision posted on the WDTK website, he should direct the focus on the decision made and should identify the reasons that he is not happy with the said decision he is requesting a review of.

Mr Newman should note that the Freedom of Information Act only applies to information held at the time of the request and the Department is not able, or required, to answer any rhetorical questions. By this I am referring to questions to which no answer is required, that is as stated in the Collins dictionary, "for dramatic effect".

If Mr Newman requests an internal review of the decision VTR3078-IR163 decision dated 9 August 2012, please apply separately and advise where he considers the decision to be incorrect. I have examined the decision dated 9 August 2012 and consider it is correct and fully addresses Mr Newman's request for an internal review of the decision dated 19 March 2012.

Yours sincerely,

DWP MSCCT