

DWP Business Management Team
Health & Disability Assessments (Operations)

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

To Mr B Adams
C/o request-132251-731d10f5@whatdotheyknow.com

Our Reference: FOI 3972-3958
4 December 2012

Dear Mr Adams,

Freedom of Information Act – Request for Information

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request which we received on 5 October 2012. In that request, you asked:

LIMA uses Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) to help determine a claimants entitlement to benefit and is stated “to use current medical research with professional best practice to underpin the medical assessment process” further it is stated that reports are checked against medical standards and also use medical protocols to underpin its logic.

As a claimant is entitled to know the evidence being used to help determine their award, please could you supply me with the following information ...

- 1. What is the source of the medical research used in the EBM .. Rather than generalising using terms such as experts etc..I would require the experts names, institutions, reviews etc.. which would help identify the research/information.*
- 2. What medical standards and protocols are used*
- 3. Is the “evidence quality” assessed e.g. by (a) peer review acceptance, (b) statistical validity or if by other means please could you state what this is.*
- 4. As there would be a necessity for strict criteria for the validity of research, with the need to critically appraise the validity of the information, how is this achieved... e.g. by the use of the Cochrane Collection or other institutions*

In answer to **Q 1** Atos Healthcare do not retain a definitive list of organisations, medical texts, journals or resources of professional organisations and or experts as Atos Healthcare may approach and consult various organisations and experts, research various medical texts or journals depending on the area of being updated or the medical question being researched. However, it should be noted that references are provided at the end of each Evidence Based Protocol.

In reply to **Q 2** please find enclosed copies of the Evidence Based Protocols for the Disability Analyst. This is the information you requested which has been issued by myself as DWP’s Medical Services Contract Management Team Freedom of Information Officer.

This document has been produced as part of a programme for approved Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) to carry out medical assessments. 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.

The documents 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 these documents. 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.

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In response to **Qs 3 & 4** Atos Healthcare only use published material, however the attributes of each published document is reviewed on a paper to paper basis. I am able to confirm that Atos Healthcare use the Cochrane Collection.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Business Management Team
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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-requexx@xxx.xxx.xxx.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.

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