

To: Miss Jeff
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DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: FOI 3334

03 September 2018

Dear Miss Jeff

Request for Information – Freedom of Information Act
Our Reference: Fol 3334

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request which we received on 26 July 2018. In that request, you asked:

I would like to request the following information:

- a) *A copy of all information or guidelines for ATOS examiners and 'medical' staff responsible for PIP Assessments in relation to ME and CFS*
- b) *In making PIP assessments, what is the reasonable time period for having a wash and having a bath*
- c) *In DWP PIP Assessment Guide, Part Two – The Assessment Criteria (updated on 2 November 2017) Section 2.2.27, at the 4th bullet point it states 'In a reasonable time period – The walking speed which is deemed within a reasonable time period is 30 metres per minute. Mr Y can walk the first 60 metres in a minute or two. Although slower than normal, this is a reasonable time period for someone to walk this distance and therefore he can complete the activity in a reasonable time period'. This does not make sense as 60 metres in 1 or 2 minutes is not slow by the rate of 30 metres per minute. Furthermore, in section 2.2.24 at the 4th bullet point it states 'In a reasonable time period – Mr X can walk the first 150 metres at a normal pace before he begins to slow, but it only takes him three minutes to walk 200 metres. Although a little slower than normal, this is a reasonable time period for someone to walk 200 metres and therefore Mr X can complete the activity in a reasonable time period'. This again does not make sense, as at 30 minutes per minute it would take Mr X at least 6.66 minutes to walk 200 meters. Can you therefore please tell me the walking speed deemed to be within a reasonable time period for a said number of meters.*

Please find attached guidance issued to Independent Assessment Services (IAS) (formerly known as ATOS) Health Professionals (HP) that undertake Personal Independent Payment (PIP) assessments on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Some information contained in the document falls within the exemptions allowed by Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and has therefore been redacted. Where information is exempt under Section 43 this is due to it being commercially sensitive and release of the information would prejudice the interests of our assessment providers and DWPs future dealings with them or other service providers.

I can advise that some detail within the provided guidance has been redacted to remove case studies and multiple choice examination questionnaires because if publicly released

and if seen by candidates may lead to unfair advantage and inappropriate successful completion of the course.

In applying this exemption DWP has balanced the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information and consider there is no overarching public interest argument in favour of releasing this information as DWP is unable to prejudice its commercial interests.

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These documents have been produced as part of a training programme for approved HPs to carry out PIP assessments. All HPs 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. These documents must be read with the understanding that, as experienced medical or nursing practitioners, the HPs will have detailed knowledge of the principles and practice of diagnostic techniques and therefore such information is not contained in these documents. As disability assessment is a practical occupation, much of the guidance also involves verbal information and coaching. Thus, although the documents 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 HPs.

With regards to point B and C regarding bathing and walking, DWP do not hold any more information than is already published and accessible to you in the PIP Assessment Guide (part 2) which I have attached below, please see section 2.3 – activity 4 for washing and bathing and section 2.4 for walking.

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

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

Yours sincerely

DWP Central FoI 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@dwpgsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI 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 www.ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745