

To J Newman  
C/o request-99181-5e738029@whatdotheyknow.com

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: [freedom-of-information-xxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx](mailto:freedom-of-information-xxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx)

Our Ref: VTR 2741-38

DATE 1 February 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 4 January 2012 and forwarded on for response by DWP Medical Services Contracts Correspondence Team (MSCCT) Freedom of Information Officer.

In your email you asked to be provided with information answering the following questions:-

Dear Department for Work and Pensions,

There is divided opinion over the genuine independence of the Atos so-called "Independent Tier"

1. Does DWP accept that for the Atos IT to have any credibility and for it to perform effectively it must be genuinely independent in all respects of the two sides over which it is adjudicating – Atos and the claimant?
2. Does DWP believe that the current arrangements for the Atos IT would pass any reasonable test of independence performed by a suitably qualified professional e.g. a lawyer?

In answer to **Qs 1 & 2**, the questions in this request are not valid for response under the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act. The role of the Fol Act is about the supply of recorded information held by the Department rather than providing an explanation to, or confirming whether the assumptions made by the author of the questions are correct or not.

However I can confirm that the IT is independent of Atos Healthcare, and must remain so, in order that it can provide a genuinely independent response to the claimant surrounding the handling of a complaint by Atos Healthcare's National Customer Relations Team and/or how the medical assessment report was undertaken by the Healthcare Professional.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol 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-xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx](mailto:freedom-of-xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx) or by writing to DWP, Central FoI Team, 5<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.ico.gov.uk)