



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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Email:

freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk

Amanda Hart
[request-625551-9dd583d2@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

Our Ref: FOI2019/43469
Date 30 December 2019

Dear Amanda Hart,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 8 December.

You asked:

"Please kindly provide documents on file such as letters, memos, contract extracts sent from your department to WCA assessor Atos making it clear whether (or not) you prefer them to recommend your decision maker finds claimants fit for work.

We're interested in documents which your assessment company could rightly or wrongly perceive as desired outcome bias."

DWP Response:

The Health and Disability Assessment Service (HDAS) contract is delivered by Centre for Health and Disability Assessments (CHDA) and was awarded to them to provide health assessments on behalf of the DWP from 1 March 2015. Prior to this Atos Healthcare provided the assessment service.

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the information you requested is not held by this department.

A comprehensive performance regime drives the assessment provider to meet stringent quality standards, however, the department does not impose recommendations regarding the number of claimants found fit for work, nor do Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) employed by CHDA make decisions on entitlement to benefit. They provide advice to the department's decision makers who make benefit entitlement decisions. The role of the HCP is to provide an independent, impartial assessment of the claimant's ability to perform activities within each of the functional areas by choosing the descriptors that they consider appropriate on the assessment report they complete. CHDA provides the relevant reports for DWP Decision Makers (DMs) but plays no part in the actual decision making process and I can confirm that payment to CHDA for the services provided is not related in any way to the outcome of individual assessments.

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

Yours sincerely,

Contracted Health and Employment Services Fol Team
Department for Work and Pensions

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@dw.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, 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
Web: https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745