

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: 3517/11 & 3518/11

10 January 2012

Dear Mr Smith

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 23 November 2011 in which you asked:

I would like to see the instructions, documents (or other communications) that list / outline / detail the routine approaches, attitudes, strategies, wordings, instruments, indirect devices and any other means by which a claim is to - in effect / amount to – be dismissed, and disability denied.

I would like to see the associated targets for denial of benefits, that must surely exist?

Does the DWP have a statistic for the number of suicides resulting from the denial of sickness/ disability benefits?

I would like to know what (secret?) general instructions as to the interpretation of a patient/ claimant's case / condition are given by Government (or whoever) to DWP and ATOS about how they execute a WCA, write reports, make decisions about and assess a claimant. They surely contain tight targets and limits, and ways of denying genuine claims, but obviously not in such words, and using clever language.)

I would like to see a copy of the document(s) that for example must surely instruct an ATOS WCA assessor to miss out or misinterpret things that a claimant has said / not put things a claimant has said in the appropriate part of the report where they should be assessed, to write irrelevant and biased observations about a claimant's behaviour, dress etc on the report etc.

The body of evidence (see online forums, disability organisation websites etc.) re: unsuccessful claimants who have genuine conditions, the large number of appeals would statistically indicate institutionalised / inherent bias / inherent POLICY and POLITICS in the process. You don't need to be Sherlock Holmes to deduce this.

What (secret?) government (or whoever) instructions are causing this bias / disability discrimination? Please would you supply a copy.

Disability or ill health can happen to anyone, out of the blue, and age happens to us all. Most people want to work, yet the process of claiming benefits seems to assume all claimants as dishonest etc. These assumptions are surely discriminatory?

Information in the form you have requested is not held by the Department.

Information is available to the public and you will find this at the following links:

http://www.rightsnet.org.uk/pdfs/Lima_Oct_2004.doc, <http://www.rightsnet.org.uk/forum-archive/index4e4b.html>.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol 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 Fol Team, 5th 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