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**INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE WCA: INTERIM REPORT ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF YEAR 1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Thank you again for your independent review of the Work Capability Assessment last November. As I said at the time of publication, I believe that your recommendations will help improve the WCA, making it fairer and more effective and putting greater empathy and compassion into the process.

As you know, the Department has been working to implement all of your recommendations since November and we are making good progress in achieving this. I would however welcome an interim report from you by the end of May giving your assessment of how far and how well the recommendations have been implemented so far, or whether we are on track to deliver those recommendations not yet in place. This will be important as I am particularly keen that the revised processes resulting from your recommendations are in place for people currently on IB who are being reassessed for ESA before they start to undergo their WCAs.

Whilst I would like your update to focus on the customer journey for reassessment customers, your observations on implementation for new ESA customers would also be helpful so we can ensure that your recommendations are being implemented in the spirit which you intended.

I know that you have been meeting with Jobcentre Plus and Departmental policy officials regularly to discuss progress with implementation and their assessment of where we are up to with implementation is attached at Annex A. This separates out progress on IB reassessment and new ESA customers, and may be a helpful starting point for you. Whilst the Annex does not cover your recommendations relating to the Tribunal Service it would also be helpful to have your assessment of progress, if any, with these recommendations.

I will publish this letter and your interim report both on the Department's website and in the House Library to ensure the process is transparent and that interested stakeholders are aware of your views.

I look forward to receiving your interim report by the end of May, and to your continued support as we work to improve the WCA.

With Best Wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Grayling', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Minister for Employment

Annex A – progress with implementation of Harrington review recommendations

Professor Harrington's recommendation	IB (IS) Reassessment customers	ESA customers
No 1. Jobcentre Plus to manage and support the customer during the course of their benefit claim and to identify their chosen healthcare adviser	New customer journey in place from 28 th February 2011.	Phased national implementation of a revised customer journey commences on 6 June 2011.
No 2. Initial questionnaire, ESA50, to include a more personalised justification so that the customer can express the issues that they face in a short paragraph	Revised ESA50 available from 14 th March 2011.	Revised ESA50 available from 14 th March 2011.
No 3. In the longer term, to review the ESA50 to ensure it is the most effective tool for capturing relevant information about the customer	Use of ESA50 to be kept under review.	Use of ESA50 to be kept under review.
No 4. To review written communications to the customer to ensure they are clear, less threatening, contain less jargon and fully explain the process	New set of IB (IS) Reassessment specific communications in place from 28 th February 2011.	Main ESA forms and notifications reviewed and revised. A new customer letter introduced in revised journey (see Rec 1).
No 5. Every Atos assessment to contain a personalised summary of the assessment in plain English	Personalised Summary Statement introduced on 6 June 2011.	Personalised Summary Statement introduced on 6 June 2011.
No 6. Every customer is sent a copy of the Atos personalised summary and is able to discuss any inaccuracies with a Decision Maker	Trial of routinely copying the Personalised Summary Statement to disallowed customers from July 2011	Trial of routinely copying the Personalised Summary Statement to disallowed customers from July 2011

<p>No 7. Atos to provide mental, intellectual and cognitive champions in each medical assessment centre</p>	<p>Mental health Champions in place from May 2011.</p>	<p>Mental health Champions in place from May 2011.</p>
<p>No 8. Atos to pilot the audio recording of assessments to determine whether such an approach is helpful for customers and improves the quality of assessments</p>	<p>No decision yet made on national implementation of audio recording assessments.</p>	<p>Audio recording Pilot involving 500 ESA customers commenced on 21st March 2011 in Newcastle Medical Examination Centre.</p> <p>Evaluation Report due to be completed end of May to inform decision on further pilot or national implementation.</p>
<p>No 9. Atos to develop and publish a clear charter of customer rights and responsibilities, and to consider publishing the Health Care Practitioner guidance online for customers and advisers</p>	<p>Customer Charter displayed in all Medical Examination Centres from 31st March 2011.</p> <p>Customer Charter and HCP Guidance also published on-line.</p>	<p>Customer Charter displayed in all Medical Examination Centres from 31st March 2011.</p> <p>Customer Charter and HCP Guidance also published on-line.</p>
<p>No 10. Jobcentre Plus Decision Makers put back at the heart of the system and empowered to make an independent and considered decision</p>	<p>IB (IS) Reassessment Decision Making Learning and Development modules delivered to all Decision Makers.</p> <p>Continuous improvement practices in place including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On-site surgeries at the 	<p>ESA Decision Making Learning and Development modules to be delivered to all Decision Makers.</p> <p>Continuous improvement practices in place including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On-site surgeries at the Benefit Centres to facilitate

	<p>Benefit Centres to facilitate discussions between HCPs and Jobcentre Plus Decisions Makers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication forums for Decision Makers to share best practices; and ▪ Introduction of a Quality Assessment Framework for Decision Making standards. 	<p>discussions between HCPs and Jobcentre Plus Decisions Makers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication forums for Decision Makers to share best practices; and ▪ Introduction of a Quality Assessment Framework for Decision Making standards.
<p>No 11. A better use of the reconsideration process</p>	<p>IB (IS) Reassessment Customer journey in place from 28th February includes a touch point to contact the customer before a disallowance decision is made to ensure there is no further evidence for the Decision Maker to consider. This should ensure the right decision is made from outset and reduce the number of reconsiderations and appeals.</p>	<p>Revised touchpoint introduced nationally from November 2010 to reconsider decisions before preceding with an appeal.</p> <p>Revised customer journey (recommendation 1) will incorporate additional touch point to contact the customer before a disallowance decision is made as for IB (IS) Reassessment customers.</p>
<p>No 12. Decision Makers are able to seek appropriate chosen healthcare professional advice to provide a view on the accuracy of the report</p>	<p>As above for recommendation 10</p>	<p>As above for recommendation 10</p>
<p>No 13. Better communications between Decision Makers and Atos healthcare professionals to deal with</p>	<p>As above for recommendation 10</p>	<p>As above for recommendation 10</p>

borderline cases		
No 14. Decision Makers receive training so that they can give appropriate weight to additional evidence	As above for recommendation 10	As above for recommendation 10