

## **Freedom of Information request 2013-5602**

**Date received: 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**Date of response: 24<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

### **Information request**

I make this request with respect to Employment and Support Allowance claimants assessed via the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) nationwide over the past 12 months.

In turn, please provide me with the number of claimants:

1) For whom a DWP decision maker made a decision that was unfavourable to the claimant (i.e. they were found fit for work or placed in WRAG instead of the Support Group) and in doing so rejected some or all of an Atos HCP's recommendations.

2) For whom a DWP decision maker made a decision that was unfavourable to the claimant (i.e. they were found fit for work or placed in WRAG instead of the Support Group) and in doing so accepted all of an Atos HCP's recommendations.

3) For whom a DWP decision maker made a decision that was favourable to the claimant (i.e. found to have or be treated as having limited capability for work and/or work-related activity or placed in Support Group instead of WRAG) and in doing so rejected some or all of an Atos HCP's recommendations.

4) For whom a DWP decision maker made a decision that was favourable to the claimant (i.e. found to have or be treated as having limited capability for work and/or work-related activity or placed in Support Group instead of WRAG) and in doing so accepted all of an Atos HCP's recommendations.

Additionally please provide me with the number of WCAs that took place over the past 12 months and state in how many of these WCAs, Atos and/or the DWP formally requested medical evidence from a claimant's GP or specialist.

### **DWP response**

Anyone claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) will undergo the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). The WCA is based on the premise that eligibility should not be based on a person's condition, but rather on the way that condition limits their functional capability. Following the WCA, Atos Healthcare's Healthcare Professional (HCP) provides a recommendation of

the claimant's eligibility for ESA. The final decision on ESA benefit entitlement is made by a DWP Decision Maker (DM) informed by advice from the Atos Healthcare HCP and other available evidence.

In response to your questions 1 to 4, the table below shows the number of ESA DM's decisions compared to the recommendation made by Atos in Great Britain for assessments made in the period June 2012 to May 2013, which is the latest information available.

**Number of Employment and Support Allowance New Claims decisions compared with the initial Atos recommendation: June 2012 to May 2013**

<b>Atos recommendation</b>	<b>DWP decision</b>	<b>Number of decisions</b>
FFW	FFW	304,900
WRAG	WRAG	128,900
SG	SG	286,500
FFW	WRAG/SG	79,600
WRAG	SG	7,000
WRAG	FFW	200
SG	WRAG/FFW	900

**Source:** Data in the above tables is derived from administrative data held by the DWP and assessment data provided by Atos Healthcare.

**Notes:**

1. Data is rounded to nearest 100.
2. Figures include initial and repeat assessments for ESA new claims and exclude clerical decisions, clerical cases, and Incapacity Benefits Reassessment cases

In response to your final question, the table below shows the number of ESA WCAs undertaken for new claims.

**Number of Employment and Support Allowance New Claims Work Capability Assessments completed: June 2012 to May 2013**

<b>Number of WCAs</b>	
<b>Initial</b>	<b>Repeat</b>
482,700	432,600

**Source:** Data in the above tables is derived from administrative data held by the DWP and assessment data provided by Atos Healthcare.

**Notes:**

1. Data is rounded to nearest 100.
2. Figures include initial and repeat assessments for ESA new claims and exclude clerical cases and Incapacity Benefits Reassessment cases

It may be helpful to provide some additional information to explain the process for requesting Further Medical Evidence (FME).

- When the claimant is initially referred to Atos Healthcare, a paper based review of the claimant's case takes place.
- The Health Care Professional decides whether they have enough information to provide clinically justified advice to the DWP Decision Maker.
- The Health Care Professional may decide to request FME.
- If the FME provided gives sufficient information/clarification on the claimant's condition, the Health Care Professional may be able to provide clinically justified advice without the need for a claimant to attend a face to face assessment.
- This is the only time in the Atos Healthcare part of the assessment process that FME is sought by Atos Healthcare.
- However, the Health Care Professional may decide a face to face assessment is required to assess the claimant's case.

Form ESA113 is used to ask healthcare professionals for information in connection with Employment and Support Allowance claims and in the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2013 there were 482,200 ESA113 forms issued. This figure has been sourced from assessment data provided by Atos Healthcare and includes new claims and Incapacity Benefits Reassessment cases.