

Freedom of Information request 1853/2013

Received 29 April
Published

Information request

Please would you provide a copy of the risk assessment made for the Welfare Reform Act 2012. I'm interested specifically in the risk assessment for the withdrawal of free prescriptions for claimants found fit to work and the impact of no free prescriptions being no longer available for the period during 'mandatory reconsideration before appeal'.

I'm interested to see the report of risks given to the department such as the increase of violent crime, suicides and worse. It's a terrifying thought but I hope the assessment exists put my mind at rest.

I do hope a risk assessment was actually carried out too. If you don't have the information then please kindly provide an email address of who I should contact for this.

DWP response

The document you have requested does not exist. A risk assessment was not produced in respect of the Welfare reform Act 2012. An impact assessment was published and can be viewed here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175009/consideration-of-revision-wr2011-ia.pdf.pdf. In addition the

Department also issued an equality impact assessment which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consideration-of-revision-before-appeal-equality-impact-assessment>.

Entitlement to free prescriptions is not covered specifically in either document, however. Claimants receiving income-based Employment Support Allowance (ESA) are automatically entitled to free prescriptions. If, following a Work Capability Assessment, the Department decides that a claimant does not have limited capability for work entitlement to ESA will end. It does not automatically follow that the claimant is no longer entitled to free prescriptions.

When a passporting benefit, such as income-based ESA, is not in payment, people can also qualify for free prescriptions on the grounds of low income but

they must apply to the NHS. Further advice is available here:

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Prescriptioncosts.aspx>.