

To: Rose Cullingford
C/o request-160126-35f15a24@whatdotheyknow.com

16 May 2013

Dear Ms Cullingford

Freedom of Information Act – Request for Information
Our Reference: Fol 2081

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request which we received on 3 May 2013.

You asked:

Dear Department for Work and Pensions,

The Care Quality Commission's website states that "Our job is to check whether providers comply with the essential standards of quality and safety."

What information exists to show why the WCA contract operated by Atos was excluded from its remit? This must have been a conscious decision rather than an "oversight", so the justification will be documented, together with a risk analysis.

If not the CQC, which independent body is responsible for routinely monitoring Atos standards procedurally and medically? By independent I mean not in any way connected with or appointed by Atos or DWP?

In answer to your question the Care Quality Commission website states that it regulates primary medical services or dental and independent ambulance services, which is not an area which can correlate to be the same as the DWP Medical Services contract with Atos Healthcare, which is to provide a national advice, assessment or examination service on behalf of the DWP and Other Government Departments (OGD's) to assist DWP/OGD Decision Makers to reach fair and proper decisions on the eligibility of individuals to receive benefit.

There are no independent bodies who routine monitor Atos Healthcare; the Management Teams of DWP Health and Disability Assessment (Commercial) and DWP Health and Disability Assessment (Operations) undertake continuous monitoring of the contractors performance. Information is gathered from various sources including claimant surveys, results from mystery shopping activity (where independent visits are made to the various examination centres to observe the contractors processes in operation and the information provided to the people attending an examination), and information from complaints that have been received. Other sources of information include reports which the contractor is mandated to supply to the above named Teams, and various checks are undertaken to ensure that the reports are accurate. In addition, the Teams have access to staff working at the DWP Benefit Centres who report issues when they arise.

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

Yours sincerely

Business Management Team
Health & Disability Assessments (Operations)
dwp.medicalservicescorrespondence@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

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@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London 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 www.ico.gov.uk