



# Work and Pensions Committee

14 Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NB

Tel 020 7219 5831 Email [workpencom@parliament.uk](mailto:workpencom@parliament.uk) Website [www.parliament.uk/workpencom](http://www.parliament.uk/workpencom)

From the Chair

28 November 2017

Sarah Newton MP  
Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work  
Department for Work and Pensions

## **PIP and ESA Assessments: Mandatory Reconsideration**

As part of our inquiry into PIP and ESA Assessments, the Committee would like to understand whether Mandatory Reconsideration is functioning effectively. I would be grateful if you would please answer some questions to assist us in this task.

PCS Union, which represents DWP staff, told us:

*Our members have continually reported that there is pressure to turn out numbers, both in relation to original decisions and Mandatory Reconsiderations [...] This means that, as it is much easier to confirm the original decision than change it, more MRs simply "rubber stamp" the original decision.<sup>1</sup>*

We also noted an FOI request from May 2017, on key performance indicators for MR. This stated:

*The key measures which are used by the Department for Work and Pensions to monitor Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) performance are:*

- a) 90% to be cleared within target.*
- b) 80% of the original decisions are to be upheld.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> PEA0357 (Public and Commercial Services Union)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/402400/response/978248/attach/2/FOI%201740%20response.pdf>



1. Please could you explain how the Department ensures that the need to process decisions quickly is balanced with the need for good quality decision-making?
2. Please could you also explain how a target for upholding original decisions is compatible with ensuring that questionable reports are thoroughly investigated, and erroneous decisions identified and corrected?

I would be grateful if you would please respond by 15 December, to allow time for your response to be circulated to the Committee prior to your evidence session.

With best wishes and I look forward to hearing from you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Field', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

**Rt Hon Frank Field MP**  
Chair