



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

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Frank Field MP  
Work and Pensions Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

8 April 2019

Dear Frank,

Thank you for your further letter of 27 February about the ESA65B letter that is sent to GPs once an Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimant has been found fit for work following a Work Capability Assessment (WCA). This letter informs the GP of the outcome of the WCA and advises them that fit notes are no longer required for ESA purposes. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

You are concerned that the current wording of the ESA65B letter no longer explains to GPs that they may have to provide fit notes where an ESA claimant is appealing against a fit for work decision, and that this is causing GPs to refuse to provide claimants with fit notes.

You have asked us to consider a revision to the ESA65B letter to make it clear to GPs that claimants awaiting an appeal against a fit for work decision are entitled to fit notes.

I can reassure you that DWP is committed to ensuring that its communications products are clear, understandable and fit for purpose, and we are alive to the concerns you and others have raised regarding the wording of the ESA65B letter. We have a rolling programme of continuous improvement in place and as part of this, we are updating the current ESA65B letter with input from medical organisations. We will take account of your comments as we revise this letter to ensure absolute clarity. As part of this we will again consult the British Medical Association and the Royal College of General Practitioners on the proposed revisions through our GP Forum.

You have also requested a copy of the minutes of meetings DWP held with the BMA and the RCGP at which their agreement on the final wording of the revised ESA65B was obtained. We do not take minutes of these meetings; however, an action log is maintained. Please find a relevant extract at **Annex A**. In accordance with data protection principles the names and initials have been redacted and replaced with

the organisation the individual belongs to, but I hope this demonstrates to you the close and extensive working between DWP, BMA and RCGP on this matter.

I hope this response is helpful.

*Just.*



**Justin Tomlinson MP**  
Minister for Disabled People, Health & Work

**ANNEX A – Extract from Action Log**

**Action 11/02/2016**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Cleared</b>
17	BMA and RCGP	To provide feedback on revised ESA 74 and 65B to DWP (ESA)		

**Action 09/06/2016**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Cleared</b>
17	BMA and RCGP	To provide feedback on revised ESA 74 and 65B to DWP (ESA)	Provided	02/03/2016

**Action 04/08/2016**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Date raised</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Cleared</b>	<b>Date Cleared</b>
10	04/08/2016	DWP	ESA 65B - Consider informing GPs of new form (GP and PT bulletin and analogous routes for Scotland and Wales) +/-			

			advising patients about work leaflet				
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**Action 27/09/2016**

Number	Date raised	Who	What	Update	Cleared	Date Cleared
10	04/08/2016	DWP	ESA 65B - Consider informing GPs of new form (GP and PT bulletin and analogous routes for Scotland and Wales) +/- advising patients about work leaflet			

**Action 08/12/2016**

Number	Date raised	Who	What	Update	Cleared	Date Cleared
10	04/08/2016	DWP	ESA 65B - Consider informing GPs of new form (GP and PT bulletin and analogous routes for Scotland and Wales) +/- advising patients about work leaflet	ESA 65B likely to go live next year - DWP to contact GP&PT bulletin and DWP re Scotland and Wales		

**Action 12/01/2017**

Number	Date raised	Who	What	Update	Cleared	Date Cleared
10	04/08/2016	DWP	ESA 65B - Consider informing GPs of new form (GP and PT bulletin and analogous routes for Scotland and Wales) +/- advising patients about work leaflet	ESA 65B likely to go live next year - DWP to contact GP&PT bulletin and DWP re Scotland and Wales		

#### Action 09/03/2017

Number	Date raised	Who	What	Update	Cleared	Date Cleared
10	04/08/2016	DWP	ESA 65B - Consider informing GPs of new form (GP and PT bulletin and analogous routes for Scotland and Wales) +/- advising patients about work leaflet	ESA 65B likely to go live next year - DWP to contact GP&PT bulletin and DWP re Scotland and Wales DWP will contact the various England, Wales and Scotland bodies to inform regarding the product.		

#### Action 05/07/2017

Number	Date raised	Who	What	Update	Cleared	Date Cleared
10	04/08/2016	DWP	ESA 65B - Consider informing GPs of new form (GP and PT bulletin and analogous routes for Scotland and Wales) +/-	ESA 65B likely to go live next year - DWP to contact GP&PT bulletin and DWP re Scotland and Wales DWP will contact the		

			advising patients about work leaflet	various England, Wales and Scotland bodies to inform regarding the product. DWP to share final draft with BMA/RCGP (sent 13/03)	
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**Action 02/11/2017**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Date raised</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Cleared</b>	<b>Date Cleared</b>
10	04/08/2016	DWP	ESA 65B - Consider informing GPs of new form (GP and PT bulletin and analogous routes for Scotland and Wales) +/- advising patients about work leaflet	ESA 65B likely to go live next year - DWP to contact GP&PT bulletin and DWP re Scotland and Wales DWP will contact the various England, Wales and Scotland bodies to inform regarding the product. DWP to share final draft with BMA/RCGP (sent 13/03)	Y	05/07/2017