



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON
SW1H 9DA

0207 340 4000

www.gov.uk

ministers@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee

12 DEC 2017

Dear Frank,

Thank you for your letter of 28 November about mandatory reconsideration in Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance. You asked two questions, which I shall answer in turn.

Firstly, I am very concerned to hear that the committee has taken evidence that initial decisions are being “rubber stamped” at mandatory reconsideration. While it is important that claimants’ mandatory reconsiderations are dealt with in good time, it is also crucial that we ensure the decisions made are of the highest possible quality.

To achieve this we have introduced a quality strategy, ensuring a joined up approach across all aspects of mandatory reconsideration that keeps the claimant at the heart of all the process. As part of this quality strategy we have introduced key ‘must do’ actions for case managers, which focus on the claimant’s experience of mandatory reconsideration – one of the priority actions here is ensuring that the case manager has not only reviewed the evidence that was available at the initial decision stage, but also checked with the claimant as to whether further evidence has since become available.

Another strand of our quality strategy is active case management, whereby case managers ensure that they gather all of the right information at the right time for that individual, including contacting the claimant to explain what information we require to progress their case. This helps to ensure not only that decisions are based on robust evidence, but that the claimants are supported through the process.

In answer to your second question, I would like to take this opportunity to categorically state that there has never been a Mandatory Reconsideration target for upholding original decisions.

The 80 per cent figure, which was used in the answer to the Freedom of Information request you referred to in your letter, was an internal measurement only used to indicate areas where the quality of initial decisions may not be meeting our expected high standards, therefore enabling us to investigate and address if required.

Mandatory reconsideration is a critical element of our process and it is essential that claimants have confidence in it. Given the anxiety and confusion the 80 per cent figure has caused, we will no longer use this internal measure. We will instead assure quality going forwards by focussing more on the individual claimant journey, looking at what we could have done better and identifying any training needs and process improvements that can be made throughout the journey including at the initial decision and the mandatory reconsideration stages, as outlined above.

I will, of course, be happy to answer any further questions on this issue when I meet the committee next week.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Newton MP

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work