

31st May 2018

Dear Mr Field,

Thank you for your letter dated 14 May 2018 regarding incentives and for sharing the information regarding PIP.

Firstly, I want to reassure you that we are committed to improving the experience of people going through the assessment process and the quality of assessment reports. I am pleased to inform you that we are now achieving all of our quality measures. This includes meeting our three-month average of over 95% of reports audited by DWP graded A or B. Positive responses to our independent satisfaction survey have also reached record levels and the time people spend in the assessment process has been more than halved to 14 weeks.

To carry out our work to the standard which our customers deserve, we work hard to ensure that we are able to attract and retain the best staff. High-performing assessors are key to delivering a good service on behalf of the taxpayer as well as for customers. As part of this, we believe it is important to pay staff a competitive salary and we offer temporary incentives where appropriate.

Temporary incentives are put in place largely to encourage assessors to undertake assessments outside traditional office hours. We only provide these incentives to staff who are consistently delivering high quality assessments and any Healthcare Professional applying for incentives must meet professional standards for each of their assessment reports.

Our current incentives are for each case completed during weekend hours; for each additional case completed on a weekday and for each case completed in the evening. These help us see more customers at more convenient times for them.

It is very important for us to ensure that all customers have the opportunity to share fully their experience of living with their condition. The average time taken for each assessment is around 71 minutes. There is no fixed time limit for assessments and we consider all the conditions customers report. We train and monitor our staff so that they take the time they need with a customer to ensure we deliver a dignified experience and a quality assessment report.

To ensure that our standards remain at a high level, we have rigorous internal checks in place, which complement and add to DWP's own independent audit of our performance. We review the quality of our assessment reports continuously to ensure they meet the quality standards, and we monitor individual assessor performance. Where we have any concerns about an assessor's output we take action, undertaking additional training or mentoring as required. Any assessor whose performance does not meet our professional standards would not be eligible for any incentive programme.

We recognise that there is more to do to improve the service for every customer and welcome the recent Work and Pensions Committee report. We continue to work in partnership with DWP to improve the process and ensure every customer receives a high-quality, sensitive and respectful service.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Williams', with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr Paul Williams
Managing Director, Health Services
MAXIMUS UK