



Work and Pensions Committee

03 July 2023

Tom Pursglove MP

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work
Department for Work and Pensions
(By e-mail only)

Dear Tom,

Government Response: Health Assessments for Benefits

Thank for you for providing the Government Response to the Committee's Report, *Health assessments for benefits*.

The Committee has now considered the Response and would be grateful if you could provide further information on the following points:

1. In our recommendation at paragraph 28, we proposed that an external assessment be undertaken of the potential physical and mental health effects of the proposed changes to health assessments. The response focussed on internal work being undertaken by the Government. Does the Government have any plans for an external assessment of the effects of the proposed changes in the White Paper?
2. What is the Government's view on whether "external researchers [should] have access to good quality, anonymised data" to assist their research, as we recommended at paragraph 38?
3. The Government rejected the Committee's recommendation that assessments should be recorded by default, with an opt-out provision, and instead favoured the continuation of an opt-in approach. What are the Government's reasons and evidence for believing an opt-out option, which would still enable an assessment to not be recorded, would damage trust in the system and cause concern (paragraph 98)? Does the Government recognise that all the providers now favour recording by default?"
4. At paragraph 109, we proposed that the Department develop targeted interventions to improve awareness of Attendance Allowance (AA). In addition to the information provided in the Response, how is DWP working with organisations to raise awareness of AA?

I would be grateful for your response to these questions by Monday 31 July. As is usual practice with the Committee's correspondence, I will be publishing this letter and your response on the Committee's website.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee