



**Department
for Work &
Pensions**

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Expert volunteers for the Evidence Based Review of the Work Capability Assessment

Dear Dr Johnson

I am writing to invite your members to participate in a government review of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to see whether changes would improve its performance.

The WCA is an assessment of a person's functional capability for work which is used to assess entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), the main benefit for people who are out of work due to sickness or disability.

This exercise has arisen from an independent review of the WCA, conducted by Professor Harrington. Two groups of charities were asked to refine the assessment of mental cognitive and intellectual functioning and fluctuating conditions. The Department's challenge is to understand how the changes proposed by the charities would be an improvement on the current version of the WCA.

The Department will use Expert Panels as the standard for comparison. Experts, working in panels of three, will critically appraise medical evidence provided on claimants and make a determination of the claimant's work capability. The Panels are therefore a crucial element of the project, and we are seeking to involve a range of experts who could make valuable contributions, including some of your members.

Panel members would receive a day's training in March 2013. Then each volunteer would be involved in the Review for a total of five working days spread over a four month period, from April to July 2013. All activity will take place in central London.

As a thank you for their time, all volunteers would be offered an honorarium of £200 per day. Standard class travel expenses will also be covered.

This Review provides a unique opportunity for understanding whether we can improve the WCA. Your members could help to shape this policy which affects millions of sick or disabled people.

Please circulate this letter to your members and encourage them to volunteer.

If you or your members would like to discuss any detail of the Review, please don't hesitate to contact the team by email: evidence.basedreview@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or telephone: Bola Akinwale, 0207 340 4215 or Chris Franks, 0207 449 5945.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Gunnyeon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Bill Gunnyeon
Chief Medical Adviser
Department for Work and Pensions