



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
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17 November 2022

Dear Steve,

As you may know, Ms Mo Stewart of 10 Heron Road, Wisbech, contacted you on 11 July whilst you were Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and your former office passed the correspondence to this department on 25 October. Ms Stewart is also your constituent, and she wrote about the publication of reports and impact assessments by the Department for Work and Pensions, and also the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). I am replying as the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work.

On 15 July, the department wrote to the Work and Pensions Select Committee regarding the various concerns raised by Ms Stewart.

The Committee publishes all such correspondence and has, therefore, provided an up-to-date record of the department's position on these matters. The letter from the Secretary of State, and information relating to the department's publication of research, is available online at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/23182/documents/169468/default/>.

The WCA determines eligibility for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and the additional health-related elements of Universal Credit. The WCA assesses individuals against a set of descriptors to determine how their health condition or disability affects their ability to work, rather than assuming that their health condition or disability is automatically a barrier to work.

All healthcare professionals carrying out the WCA receive training in disability assessment. They must have at least one-year of broad-based, post-registration experience, and be approved by the Department for Work and Pensions.

We know that many people with health conditions want to work, but do not always get that opportunity. I believe strongly that we need to improve what is on offer to these individuals because, for those who are able to, work is the most effective way to improve the well-being of individuals, their families, and their communities.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to write and I hope Ms Stewart will find this reply helpful.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tom Pursglove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'P' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tom Pursglove MP
Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work