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Chris Grayling MP
Minister for Employment
Department for Work and Pensions
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25 January 2011

Dear Minister

Work Capability Assessment

As charities, voluntary organisations, associations and employment service providers from across the country, we work with some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and communities in the UK. We share a common interest in the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) and have worked hard to support the Government with its review and reform.

We welcomed your appointment of Professor Harrington to lead an independent review of the assessment. We also support his recommendations for change. We have been encouraged by your public support for Professor Harrington and the swift and positive Government response which followed. We are keen that his recommendations are implemented quickly to ensure the flaws in the WCA are addressed in a structured and effective way.

However we are increasingly concerned about the implementation of the internal Departmental review of the assessment, which was developed prior to the Harrington review and was not subjected to the same level of external scrutiny. Unlike the Harrington Review, which has received strong support from our organisations, the internal review was widely criticised. We think implementation of this internal review will:

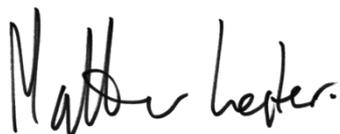
- further worsen the WCA, rendering it even less effective for vulnerable people;
- increase the level of WCA appeals being experienced;
- diminish the positive impact of Harrington's recommendations; and,
- divert limited resources from addressing the Harrington reforms.

Taking claimants through a system which is not fit for purpose and does not accurately determine a person's capability for work has caused stress and anxiety to claimants and represented significant costs to the public purse. We know the system needs a complete overhaul and believe Professor Harrington's review is the most effective way of delivering this, including through the work he has instigated around reviewing certain groups of descriptors based on the expertise within the voluntary sector.

We urge you to implement Professor Harrington's recommendations as a matter of urgency, and not divert resources and risk further problems for vulnerable people by implementing the internal review.

We would be happy to meet you and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Yours Sincerely



Matthew Lester
Director of Operations



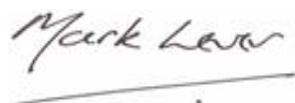
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For better
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