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**Nelson McCausland MLA**  
**Minister for Social Development**  
Lighthouse Building, 1 Cromac Place  
Belfast BT7 2JB

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**Lord Maurice Morrow MLA**  
**Northern Ireland Assembly**  
**Parliament Buildings**  
**Ballymiscaw**  
**Stormont**

**AQW 32443/11-15**

**Lord Morrow has asked**

The Minister for Social Development (i) to provide a copy of Atos Healthcare's complaints policy and procedures as held by his Department; (ii) whether all people examined by Atos Healthcare are made aware of their complaints policy and procedures; and (iii) if his Department make people aware of the option to submit a complaint against Atos Healthcare through his Department.

**Answer**

- (i) A copy of Atos Healthcare 'Caring about Customer Service' leaflet which explains the process for making a complaint is attached. A copy will also be placed in the Assembly Library.
- (ii) Atos Healthcare's complaints process is openly displayed in each of the 10 medical examination centres located throughout Northern Ireland. The complaints process is also included in relevant correspondence issued to claimants by Atos Healthcare on the Department's behalf.
- (iii) A complaint on any matter can be made through my Department and the complaint's policy and procedure is accessible from my Department's Internet site:

[http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/ssa/customer-information/ssa-customer-service/ssa\\_customer\\_complaints\\_guidance.htm](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/ssa/customer-information/ssa-customer-service/ssa_customer_complaints_guidance.htm)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Nelson McCausland MLA**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



### Why do I need a medical assessment?

The Social Security Agency ask Atos Healthcare to arrange and carry out medical assessments if they need more medical information about people claiming benefits. The purpose of the assessment is to provide a medical opinion about how your illness or disability affects you in everyday life. A fully registered, specially trained and approved healthcare professional will talk to you and, if necessary, complete a short physical assessment.

### What happens following the assessment?

The health care professional completes a medical report for the office dealing with your claim and the Social Security Agency will use this as one source of information when looking at your claim.

### Are you unhappy about your benefit decision?

If you are unhappy about the decision made by the Social Security Agency, you may ask them to reconsider their decision. If you want to do this, you should contact the office dealing with your claim, contact details will be shown on your decision letter.

### About you

(If you are a representative, please provide details of the person you are representing, their authorisation and contact details for yourself.)

Title	<input type="text"/>
Surname	<input type="text"/>
Other Names	<input type="text"/>
Date of Birth	<input type="text"/>
National Insurance Number	<input type="text"/>
Contact Address	<input type="text"/>
Daytime Phone Number	<input type="text"/>
Representatives Name (if applicable)	<input type="text"/>
Authorising Signature	<input type="text"/>
Your Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text"/>

Please tell us your comments, complaints or suggestions overleaf.



### **Can I take my complaint further?**

Atos Healthcare provides medical services on behalf of the Social Security Agency. If you continue to be dissatisfied with the service provided by Atos Healthcare, you can write to the Chief Executive of the Social Security Agency. The office dealing with your benefit claim can provide contact details for the Chief Executive. They will explain how your dissatisfaction can be handled, which can include a review by an Independent Case Examiner.

### **Do you have any comments, complaints or suggestions about our service?**

We will treat all people who undergo a medical assessment fairly and equally. Your views on the service we provide are very useful in planning improvements, so if you have any comments, please do not hesitate to let us know. (Please use the form attached to this leaflet).

We are always very pleased to have appreciative comments, which of course we pass on to the staff concerned. Any suggestions you may have for improving services will be studied with care.

### **Are you unhappy about your medical assessment?**

Our responsibility is to arrange your appointment, ask a healthcare professional to conduct a medical assessment and provide a report to the office dealing with your claim.

If you are unhappy with any part of our service, or simply feel we could do things better, please let us know.

We want to improve the service we provide and your comments will help us achieve this.



### How do you complain?

- > Please use the form attached to this leaflet or you can write or email us quoting your name, National Insurance number and the date of your medical assessment.
- > If you would like to discuss your complaint over the telephone, please contact an Atos Healthcare Customer Relations Manager who will be happy to call you back.

#### Customer Relations Manager

Tel: 0300 123 1785

customer-relations@atoshealthcare.com

### Who can help you make a complaint?

Anyone working for Atos Healthcare can advise you about making a complaint, including the healthcare professional conducting the medical assessment.

In addition, other people who can help include:

- > Welfare Rights Workers
- > A friend or family member.

If someone is to contact us on your behalf, please remember to give your signed consent to that person, either on the attached form or by separate letter.

### What will happen to my complaint?

Our aim is to deal with your complaint fairly, consistently and in a timely manner. We will acknowledge your complaint within 2 working days and keep you updated throughout our investigation.

We hope to respond to your complaint within 10 working days. However, our investigation may take longer. This is because to conduct a thorough investigation we may need to:

- > Obtain a copy of the medical report or questionnaire from the office dealing with your claim
- > Obtain information from the healthcare professional or other employees involved.

On completion of our investigation into your complaint where it is found that the medical report may contain some inaccuracies, we will notify the office dealing with your claim. Please note that Atos Healthcare cannot change the decision on your benefit or request a further medical assessment. This is for the decision maker in the Social Security Agency.

### What if I am not satisfied with your response to my complaint?

Please contact the Customer Relations Manager, explaining which parts of your complaint you feel have not been dealt with to your satisfaction. The Customer Relations Manager will arrange for a senior manager to personally review the investigation into your complaint and undertake a further investigation, if appropriate.

