

My experience with the Department of Work and Pension

Having undergone a Catheter Ablation procedure in December 2010, initially I was very sore and uncomfortable. I suffered pain from the scarring and the healing this necessitated. Then a month after the operation - I was re-admitted twice, suffering from chest pains and severe discomfort. I was observed and ultimately treated with revised medication, but my pulse levels, despite being medically controlled, were erratic and once again I seemed to be experiencing more regular bouts of AF.

Prior to the ablation my AF had been so severe that I had been unable to work and was claiming benefit due to my health condition. In November 2010, in spite of the fact that both my GP and Consultant agreed I was unwell enough to work, it was decided that after all I was fit for work! This decision was arrived at about 3 weeks BEFORE my ablation!

It is so hard to describe exactly how one feels when at the mercy of an attack, but in my case, I feel completely wiped out and sometimes have to retire to bed for comfort and relief! My nights are bad anyway, interrupted, probably as a result of the medication regimen.

I have appealed against this decision and despite the fact that I am officially able to retire and receive a State Pension, I am going to have to appear at a tribunal, with the proposed date set for after my retirement date!

The physical I was forced to attend and endure (wording carefully chosen) was based on specific answers to specific questions. I now know that it works on a ticked box system! I don't think the system embraces the rigours endured by AF sufferers and the mere fact that I am being made to attend a tribunal has only served to worsen my condition. Added to this is the fact that my wife, who suffers from coronary issues herself - was hysterical when the notification arrived and just incredulous at the way in which I, a genuine claimant, was and am being treated.

I have written to my M.P.

I have written to the Department of Works and Pensions, because although they can telephone me, I can only contact them in writing.

This situation has made life very unpleasant and the stress involved has in no small way contributed to my AF.

AFA Member