

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

12th November 2018

Jan Constituent

RE: ACCESS TO WELFARE (TERMINAL ILLNESS DEFINITION) BILL.

Thank you for contacting me recently about the special rules for terminal illness and the *Access to Welfare (Terminal Illness Definition) Bill*; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

I appreciate your concerns. It is crucial that people who have a terminal illness should receive support when they need it and with the minimum of stress. That is why I support a benefits system which reduces stress and anxiety for people with terminal illnesses.

As you will know, the rules for terminal illness were put in place to provide important support to people who have only a short time to live. This is achieved through guaranteed entitlement to certain disability benefits, with claims dealt with in a fast and sensitive way, and without the need for a face-to-face assessment.

The policy of a six-month timescale enables support to focus on individuals in the most severe circumstances, where there is greater certainty around their prognosis. However, the six-month rule should be determined by whether there is a 'reasonable' expectation of how long someone is expected to live. This approach means, for example, that around two thirds of the Personal Independence Payment caseload, who are terminally ill, have been receiving benefit for six months or more.

People with a terminal illness who are expected to live significantly longer than six months are able to claim benefits in the usual way. Everyone with a terminal illness prognosis should be treated with the utmost sensitivity and care which is why staff involved throughout the benefits process receive training on how best to handle claimants in this difficult situation.

It is for these reasons that the Government believes there is no need for further legislative change and I hope this letter reassures you of the safeguards in place for people with terminal conditions.

Finally, unfortunately, I am unable to attend the MND Association and Marie Curie event due to long-standing parliamentary commitments; however, I will be following this issue closely.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE