

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

14th August 2020

Dear Consultant,

RE: MENTAL HEALTH & BENEFITS.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of access to social security for those with mental health difficulties; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I recognise every individual with mental health conditions may face certain challenges in the application and assessment process for benefits. I am therefore pleased that special provisions have been put in place to support individuals with a mental health condition in making a claim.

As an important safeguard, claimants for both Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) with mental, intellectual and cognitive impairments, who do not return their claim form, are referred directly to the assessment provider for a face-to-face consultation, rather than ending their claim. Individuals may also bring a relative, carer, or friend to the assessment. I understand that all health professionals carrying out disability assessments also receive specific training in assessing mental health conditions.

I am assured by colleagues that improving the Work Capability Assessment for people with mental health conditions has been a central focus for Ministers at the Department for Work & Pensions. I am especially glad that mental health champions have been introduced into assessment centres to provide advice to assessors.

Additionally, the Government has accepted most of the recommendations produced by the five independent reviews of the assessment to date, and I hope this reply offers some reassurance to you overall.

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

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE