



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

12th March 2021

New Complaint,

RE: CORONAVIRUS – LEGACY BENEFITS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of support for people on legacy benefits during the pandemic; your comments upon which I have read with interest.

This is the biggest public health emergency in a generation, but I am encouraged by the clear commitment to supporting people through this challenging time, with unprecedented packages of support rolled out for businesses and individuals alike.

As I understand it from discussions with ministerial colleagues in the Department for Work & Pensions, the Government has delivered a suite of measures that can be quickly and effectively operationalised to benefit those likely to be facing the most financial disruption during the pandemic. It is important to remember that new claimants will generally be receiving Universal Credit (UC).

I would also emphasise that claimants on legacy benefits can make a claim for UC if they believe that they will be better off. However, claimants should check their eligibility before applying to UC as legacy benefits will end when a claim to UC is submitted. I must stress that claimants will not be able to return to legacy benefits in the future.

Legacy benefits were increased by £600 million (1.7 percent) from April 2020 and will receive a further £100 million (0.5 percent) increase from April 2021, as part of the Government's annual up-rating exercise. It is important to add that temporary increases to UC and Tax Credits have been part of a wider support package including mortgage holidays and income protection schemes. The increase in Local Housing Allowance rates benefits both Universal Credit claimants and legacy claimants in receipt of housing support. This significant investment cost almost £1 billion and ensures that more than one million households will see an increase, on average, of £600 per year.

Depending on an individual's National Insurance record, they may be eligible for New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). This is payable for up to 182 days where someone is unemployed or working fewer than 16 hours per week.

Finally, thank you for inviting me to the Disability Benefits Consortium's parliamentary event. Unfortunately, owing to prior parliamentary commitments, I was unable to attend the meeting on this occasion, but I shall continue to discuss the subject with my ministerial colleagues.

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