



Department for
Work & Pensions

Tom Pursglove MP
Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work
4th Floor
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
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31st March 2023

All MPs

Dear Colleagues,

SUPPORTING PEOPLE NEARING THE END OF THEIR LIFE

The Government is committed to providing support to people who are nearing the end of their lives. For people in this position, the ‘Special Rules’ allow simple and fast access to financial support through the benefits system.

I am writing to notify you of the commencement of the Social Security (Special Rules for End of Life) Act 2022, which will apply from 3rd April 2023.

The Act enables more people nearing the end of their lives to get fast-tracked access via the special rules. It applies to three, key disability benefits.

This change means that people nearing the end of their lives who meet the eligibility criteria for one of these benefits, can receive vital support in their final year, six months earlier than they can currently. Those eligible under the Special Rules get their claims fast-tracked, which means they do not have to wait as long to start getting payments. They are not required to take part in a medical assessment and in most cases, those claiming will qualify for the highest rate of benefit.

The new 12 month ‘Special Rules’ criteria aligns with the end of life approach in the NHS where, for those with 12-months or less to live, clinicians are encouraged to think about what help their patient may need, including financial help.

The Government introduced similar changes to Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance on 4th April 2022. The Act ensures a consistent approach across five key health and disability benefits.

These changes to the Special Rules for End of Life are a culmination of many years of work since the then Secretary of State, the Rt.Hon. Amber Rudd, launched an in-depth evaluation of how the benefits system supports people nearing the end of their lives in 2019. I would like to pay tribute to her and my predecessors in my role, Justin Tomlinson MP and the Rt.Hon. Chloe Smith MP for all of their tireless efforts on this issue.

I would also like to thank all the MPs who supported the passage of the Act through Parliament and the many people nearing the end of life, clinical groups and charities

that have supported the Department for Work and Pensions during policy development. Their input has helped improve the support provided by the benefits system in this area.

I hope we can all continue to support this issue and I would encourage all colleagues to support Dying Matters Awareness Week from 8 - 14 May 2023, where Hospice UK are encouraging communities across the country to come together to talk about death, dying and grief in the workplace.

I am proud to say that when someone is in their last year of life, they can now benefit from improved support from the benefits system. By expanding eligibility, we will provide thousands more people financial support to allow them to focus on sharing the valuable time they have left with the people who matter most to them.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom', with a horizontal line underneath.

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MINISTER FOR DISABLED PEOPLE, HEALTH AND WORK