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[Written Answers]

Personal Independence Payment: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Alex Sobel

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has plans to revise the assessment process for Personal Independence Payment to make it more accessible for those who live with ME or CFS by ensuring assessors are specially trained to understand the condition.

Victoria Prentis

Assessment providers are required to ensure that all health professionals (HPs) carrying out Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments have training and knowledge of the clinical aspects and overall functional effects of a wide range of health conditions and impairments. The department does not believe that it is necessary for the provider to deploy HPs who are specialists in the specific conditions or impairments of the individuals they are assessing. Instead, the focus is on ensuring that HPs are experts in disability analysis, emphasising on the effects of health conditions and impairments on the claimant's daily life.

HPs can access a wide range of clinical resources to research any conditions presented. This includes evidence-based protocols, e-learning modules or case studies, as well as keeping knowledge up to date through Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Both PIP providers have a condition insight report on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), and CPD modules for their HPs on the condition.

Claimants with ME/CFS are able to access PIP in the same way as other people with long-term health conditions or disabilities. DWP is committed to improving our services and works continuously with providers to improve the assessment process. The Shaping Future Support: The Health and Disability Green Paper, explored how the welfare system can better meet the needs of claimants now and in the future, by improving claimant experience of our services, enabling independent living, and improving employment outcomes. We are considering all the

responses to the Green Paper proposals and are considering what future policy changes might look like. These will be set out in the White Paper later this year.

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