



**Craig Whittaker MP**

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## **PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT (PIP)**

Thank you for contacting me about Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

Around £50 billion of public money a year is spent to support people with disabilities and health conditions. Spending on disability benefits has risen by over £3 billion in real terms since 2010, and will remain higher in each year to 2020 than in 2010. PIP is an important part of this. It has been designed to focus more support on people who have higher costs associated with their condition. Entitlement is not based on what condition a person has, but on how their condition affects their ability to live an independent life.

Recent legal judgments have interpreted the assessment criteria for PIP in ways which are different from what was originally intended when the Coalition Government introduced the system. For example, one ruling held that needing support to take medication and monitor a health condition should be scored in the same way as support to manage therapy, such as dialysis, which takes place in the home. A second ruling held that a person who cannot make a journey without assistance because of psychological distress should be scored in the same way as a person whose need for assistance results from difficulties in navigating, for example if they are blind. The Government says it is clarifying the criteria to ensure PIP maintains its original policy objectives and support continues to be focused on those most in need.

I am told this will not result in any claimants seeing a reduction in the amount of PIP previously awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions, and the intention is not to make any new savings. These amendments are solely intended to reiterate the original policy intent following legal judgments in which the Tribunals commented that the existing regulations were not completely clear.

PIP is an important source of support for many disabled people, and these changes will ensure those people continue to be supported.

Thank you again for contacting me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP