Dear Tim,

Oral Question – 10 March 2015: Personal Independence Payment

I am writing in response to your question in which you asked how many 16 and 17 year-olds are awaiting reassessment for entitlement to Personal Independence Payment and what actions we propose to support such claimants through the reassessment process.

As of 31 October 2014 there were 2,600 recipients of Personal Independence Payment aged 16 or 17 who had been reassessed from Disability Living Allowance, with a further 7,800 awaiting a decision on their claim. The statistics on Personal Independence Payment, including claims received and cleared, are due to be updated on 18 March and will be available from the Personal Independence Payment statistics home page: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/personal-independence-payment-statistics.

I turn now to the second part of your question on actions to support 16 and 17 year-old claimants. The processes to support claimants of Disability Living Allowance who are about to turn 16 and will need to claim Personal Independence Payment start with a letter to the parent or guardian around five months prior to the claimant’s 16th birthday. The purpose of this letter is to notify the parent that their child will need to claim Personal Independence Payment when they reach age 16, provide additional information on Personal Independence Payment and encourage a discussion about it with their child, establish whether the claimant requires an appointee and to gather bank details if the young adult is able to handle their own affairs. Around two months before the claimant reaches age 16 a further letter is sent to the parent or guardian reminding them that their child will need to claim Personal Independence Payment shortly and what will happen when they claim. These letters have been designed so that the
parent or guardian can fully support their child when they are invited to claim Personal Independence Payment at age 16.

On or shortly after the young adult’s 16th birthday an invitation to claim Personal Independence Payment is sent to either the existing claimant or their appointee. The letter tells the claimant what action is required from them, when they need to take that action and what will happen once they submit their claim to Personal Independence Payment. The letter also informs them that so long as they submit their claim to Personal Independence Payment on time, and comply with the other processes such as attending an assessment if required, their Disability Living Allowance will stay in payment until a decision is reached on their Personal Independence Payment claim. Finally, it tells them where they can get additional help and advice, including from the Personal Independence Payment enquiry line.

I should add that separate arrangements apply to young adults who are terminally ill; they do not get invited at age 16 but will be invited to claim nearer the time their existing award of Disability Living Allowance ends, although appropriate appointee action will be taken if necessary before they reach age 16.

Claimants invited to claim Personal Independence Payment are advised that they may need to have an assessment by an independent health professional. They are additionally advised that if a face-to-face assessment is required they can be accompanied by someone else to support them, for example a parent, guardian or other adult.

I would like to assure you that these processes, including the letters used in the claiming process, were designed with the assistance of the Personal Independence Payment Implementation Stakeholder Forum, a group of national and user-led organisations representing the views of disabled people, children, young adults and carers.

This letter has been sent to all Peers who spoke following Lord Touhig’s question and a copy will be placed in the House Library.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Lord Freud

Minister for Welfare Reform