



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

Minister for Work and  
Pensions (Lords)  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
LONDON  
SW1H 9DA

0207 340 4000

[www.gov.uk/dwp](http://www.gov.uk/dwp)

[ministers@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:ministers@dwp.gov.uk)

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

Dear Lord Freyberg,

Thank you for your continued interest in the Mesothelioma Lump Sum Payments (Conditions and Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations. I apologise for not writing to you following last year's debate in a timelier manner, the events of the pandemic have meant that this has been an unprecedented year. However, following the end of the Transition Period, I am now able to offer more clarity on the questions you helpfully raised in regards to research in this area.

You raised concerns around continuing collaborative cancer research with the European Union and other research-focused countries, as well as what steps the Government is taking to safeguard research initiatives across borders. We value the strong collaborative partnerships that we have across the EU in the areas of science, research and innovation and wants to continue to support these opportunities. The Prime Minister has made clear that the UK is ready to consider participation in certain EU programmes.

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) fulfils the Government's manifesto commitment to collaborate internationally and with the EU on scientific research including through our participation in the Horizon Europe programme. This will support continued partnerships between UK and European researchers and will provide a platform through which our scientists and innovators can tackle significant and shared challenges in society – including tackling cancer. Beyond funding for UK research and innovation through this programme, our participation will continue to give UK access to cross-border networks, supply chains for new products and access to global talent.

The Government has been working to stimulate an increase in the level of mesothelioma research activity. This is why we have conducted a formal research priority setting exercise, a National Cancer Research Institute workshop, and a specific call for research proposals through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). In 2018 the British Lung Foundation launched the UK's first Mesothelioma Research Network (MRN), with the involvement of key stakeholders including the Department of Health and Social Care. The vision of the MRN is to improve outcomes for people affected by mesothelioma by bringing researchers together thereby driving research progress and improving the quality of research. The Network is supported by a £5 million donation from the Victor Dahdaleh Charitable Foundation, which

matches the funding given to Imperial College by the government (from Libor fines) to establish the National Centre for Mesothelioma Research.

The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including mesothelioma research. As with other Government funders of health research, the NIHR does not allocate funding for specific disease areas. The level of research spend in a particular area, is driven by factors including scientific potential and the number and scale of successful funding applications.

You also raised the issue of data sharing across borders which is vital to many research initiatives. The EU's adequacy assessment ascertains whether UK data protection standards are 'essentially equivalent' to the EU. It is the UK's intention to secure a positive adequacy decision from the EU to allow personal data to continue to flow freely from the EU/EEA to the UK beyond the 6 months from Jan 1 2021. The UK has also, on a transitional basis, deemed the EU and EEA EFTA States to be adequate to allow for data flows from the UK.

Furthermore, you expressed interest in the steps the Government is taking to ensure communities such as Glasgow will not be left behind if there is failure to agree a way forward for research and innovation in the post-transition period. It is our ambition that the research outlined above will make great strides to improve treatment options available to all sufferers of Mesothelioma. For those unfortunately affected by the mesothelioma and other occupational diseases as a result of the industry in Glasgow we continue to deliver financial support. Industrial Injury benefits are devolved in Scotland, although under an Agency Agreement DWP continues to deliver them for our customers in Scotland. Therefore, we continue to work closely with our Scottish counterparts to share best practice and deliver services to the people who need them.

Finally, you questioned if the Customer Price Index (CPI) was the right measure to uprate these schemes and whether more should be done to support sufferers. Since inheriting the scheme in 2004, the DWP has uprated awards by the rate of inflation indicated by the CPI with the exception of 2016 when CPI was negative, in line with other disability benefits. CPI has been the default inflation measure for the government's statutory annual review of benefits since 2011. This increase reflects the change in cost of the basket of goods used to measure inflation in the twelve months ending September 2020. You raised the possibility of using Retail Price Index (RPI) however this is no longer recognised by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as a National Statistic. The UK Statistics Authority [have recently announced](#) they will address the shortcomings of RPI in full but the current position is that any changes cannot be made before February 2030. The Government therefore believes that the CPI is the most appropriate measure of price inflation for this scheme and other working age, disability and carer benefits. A copy of this letter will be placed in the library

your sincerely



**BARONESS STEDMAN-SCOTT**  
**MINISTER FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (LORDS)**