



New government help for miners

John Healey MP fact sheet May 2009

What is this new help?

The government has announced that osteoarthritis of the knee (commonly known as miner's knee) will be added to the list of 'prescribed diseases' – meaning thousands of sufferers will be able to receive Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB).

Why this change?

I and other Labour MPs have been campaigning for this condition to be recognised and for those men who suffer with this very painful condition to receive financial help. The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council recommended that miner's knee should be added to the list of prescribed diseases. The government agreed and in April 2009 the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced that the recommendation would be implemented.

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John Healey MP fact sheet May 2009

What is this new help?

The government has announced that osteoarthritis of the knee (commonly known as miner's knee) will be added to the list of 'prescribed diseases' – meaning thousands of sufferers will be able to receive Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB).

Why this change?

I and other Labour MPs have been campaigning for this condition to be recognised and for those men who suffer with this very painful condition to receive financial help. The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council recommended that miner's knee should be added to the list of prescribed diseases. The government agreed and in April 2009 the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced that the recommendation would be implemented.

How do I make a claim?

Claim forms are available from Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service (ROHAS) on 01709 428964/5/6. A workplace health advisor will be able to give you help with making the application. Alternatively you can ask your local Jobcentre Plus dealing with IIDB to send you a form – for Yorkshire phone 0845 758 5433. They can also give you advice on applying.

On July 17 I hosted a roadshow at Cortonwood Miners' Welfare when hundreds of ex-miners were able to talk to advisers from ROHAS and Jobcentre Plus. I hope to organise another roadshow in the constituency soon – please let my office now if you want to be informed when a date, time and location is confirmed.

Do I need to get a solicitor?

No – you do not need a solicitor to make this claim. If you need any help or advice with filling in your claim form you can get this for free from Jobcentre Plus or ROHAS. If you are outside Rotherham, your local PCT or council may run a similar service to ROHAS. Your local MP should be able to help you find out.

more information overleaf...

What is miner's knee?

Osteoarthritis of the knee develops when cartilage around knee joints is damaged, causing pain, swelling, stiffness and reduced mobility. It is common among coal miners because of the prolonged and frequent heavy lifting, kneeling and squatting the job entailed.

Who is eligible?

To be able to receive this benefit, you will normally have to have worked underground for 10 years or more before 1986 – this guideline is based on the expert advice of the independent Industrial Injuries Advisory Council.

The government estimates that thousands of ex-miners will be better off because of this new scheme.

How much benefit might I get?

This depends on your age and the seriousness of your disability and will be based on an assessment by a doctor.

What else is the government doing to support miners and their communities?

In 1999 the government set up a scheme for miners suffering from respiratory disease and vibration white finger. Up to now more than 20,000 ex-miners and their families in Rotherham have received over £120 million in compensation and in Barnsley over £250 million has gone to more than 40,000 claimants.

Bursitis of the knee, also suffered by miners (sometimes known as 'beat knee') is a different condition to osteoarthritis. It is already on the list of prescribed diseases and can be claimed by people in any occupation where their job involved manual labour causing severe or prolonged external friction or pressure on the knee.

Since the Coalfields Regeneration Trust was set up 10 years ago more than £11 million has been given to community and voluntary groups in Rotherham and £4 million has gone to Barnsley. Last year, as local government minister, I launched the trust's new grants programme – when another £53 million was made available to mining communities like ours.

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