



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 MPs have been campaigning for this condition to be recognised and for those men who suffer with this very painful condition – who often had to give up work earlier than planned – 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.

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 contact Jobcentre Plus on the phone number below, or my office may be able to help.

How do I make a claim?

You should contact the Jobcentre Plus dealing with IIDB for our area. You can write to Castleford IIDB Centre, Leodis Way, Leeds LS88 8AQ or phone 0845 758 5433. They will send you a form which you can fill in and return to them immediately, although claims will not start being processed until mid-July, when arrangements for the scheme will be in place. You can also download a form from the Department for Work and Pensions website:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/advisers/claimforms/bi100a_print.pdf

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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