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Cost of Living Crisis and the Terminally Ill:

With food prices increasing, heating bills going up and taxes rising, I know this is a very difficult time for many people and that disabled people are among those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. For example, disabled households tend to spend more on essential goods and services such as heating, food and travel, and many disabled people find it difficult to keep warm if their movement is restricted. Some disabled people need to purchase more expensive foods if they have specific dietary requirements or have difficulty preparing raw ingredients.

With regard to the social security system and the support it provides to people with terminal illnesses, I welcome that, last year, the Government implemented reforms in this area after a long – and in my view unnecessary – delay. Under “Special Rules” introduced in 2022, it is now possible for those with terminal illnesses to avoid a medical assessment. It is hoped that this will make it faster and easier to access Universal Credit (UC) and Employment Support Allowance. I am following the implementation of this new system closely as it is extended to cover recipients of Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance.

With regard to the cost-of-living crisis, more widely, I believe the Government is not doing enough to help and that many of its decisions have exacerbated matters. For example, with its mini budget in September 2022. I hope that Ministers in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will commit to work closely with disabled people and disabled people’s organisations to find a solution to this crisis. I note that the Minister for Disabled People told MPs in June that the DWP is planning to do an evaluation relating to its policy of providing cost-of-living payments later this year. I hope that the Government will publish the results of that evaluation in the interests of transparency so that disabled people and others can see the data because I note that 80% of disabled people have said that the cost-of-living support they are currently getting is not enough to live on.

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