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Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
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Your ref: SB121724

Our ref: MC2023/72001

5 October 2023

Dear Steve,

As you may know, your email of 12 June to the Department of Health and Social Care on behalf of Mo Stewart, about the Health and Disability White Paper, and the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), was forwarded to this department. I am replying as the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work.

“Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper” was published on 16 March 2023. It sets out reforms to ensure disabled people have the right support, opportunities, and incentives, to move into, and remain in, work. As part of this reform, we will:

- Transform the benefits system for the future, so that it focuses on what people can do, rather than on what they cannot.
- Step up our employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions.
- Ensure people can access the right support at the right time and have a better overall experience when applying for, and receiving, health and disability benefits.

Furthermore, the Government wants to ensure our welfare system encourages and supports people into work, while providing a vital safety net for those who need it most. We recognise the world of work has transformed over recent years. More people today can benefit from the

advantages and opportunities of flexible and home working. At the same time, employers better understand the accessibility needs of their staff, and are doing more to help disabled people and people with health conditions at work.

We appreciate that the WCA has not kept pace with these changes, with the activities and descriptors last comprehensively reviewed in 2011, meaning many disabled people, and people with health conditions, may be missing out on opportunities for support. We are, therefore, consulting on the WCA criteria to reflect these changes and support more disabled people to engage with work.

Through the consultation, we can hear from disabled people, and people with health conditions, as well as the organisations that support them, before any decisions are made. More information on the consultation can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/work-capability-assessment-activities-and-descriptors>.

More broadly, I have noted the views expressed in relation to the wider White Paper reform agenda and the delivery of it ahead.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to write and I hope you will find this reply helpful.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom', with a horizontal line underneath.

Tom Pursglove MP
Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work