



New government help for miners

Mary Creagh MP fact sheet
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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 many of my Labour colleagues 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 Government has listened and on 13 July 2009 Osteoarthritis of the knee in miners, commonly known as 'Miners' Knee', will be added to the list of diseases covered by the Industrial Injuries scheme. Miners who worked underground for ten years or more may be eligible to claim Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

How do I make a claim?

You can get an Industrial Injury Claim form from our region's Jobcentre Plus Industrial Injury Disablement Benefit Centre at Castleford. Phone 0845 758 5433 and ask them to send you a form.

Alternatively you can write to:
Jobcentre Plus Castleford IIDB Centre, Leodis Way, Leeds LS88 8AQ

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 your local Citizen's Advice Bureau on Tel: 0844 499 4138. The National Union of Mineworkers may also be able to help you complete the form. Phone Mr K Hartshorne on 01977 511879 for more information.

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.

How else is the government supporting mining 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 nationally have received over £120 million in compensation and in 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 256 grants worth £9,852,227 to has been given to community and voluntary groups in Wakefield.

Last year, the Government launched the Trust's new grants programme – when another £53 million was made available to mining communities like ours.

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