



Department
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Pensions

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Stephen Brien
Chair
Social Security Advisory Committee
Caxton House
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3 March 2020

AMENDED REGULATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE SOCIAL SECURITY (CLAIMS AND PAYMENTS, EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE, PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT AND UNIVERSAL CREDIT) (TELEPHONE AND VIDEO ASSESSMENTS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2021

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 1st March following the Social Security Advisory Committee meeting that took place on the 27th January.

As you are aware, the Department is laying regulations to reflect a multi-channel approach to health assessments, making it clear that telephony and video can be used as delivery channels in addition to paper-based and face-to-face assessments across Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB), Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Universal Credit (UC).

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, face-to-face assessments were predominantly used as a way to determine a claimant's eligibility to benefit however since the start of the pandemic, we took the decision to safeguard our claimants and staff by suspending face-to-face assessments. These changes to the regulations make clear that a range of different channels can be used to assess claimants based upon their individual circumstances and allow claims to be progressed when there are restrictions on face-to-face contact.

I understand that, at its meeting on 27th January the Committee raised some concern over the current evidence base. I would like to provide you with assurance that officials will share our evaluation plans with the committee and then return to discuss

the findings when available. We will also consult the Committee on the draft Departmental guidance once the policy and delivery of a multi-channel assessment strategy has been agreed.

My officials are happy to provide further information as needed.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Justin." followed by a long, sweeping horizontal flourish.

Justin Tomlinson MP
Minister for Disabled People, Health & Work