Department for Work & Pensions

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Date: 23 March 2020

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Dear (REDACTED)

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) Assessment Service

Lot 2 - Contract Reference: UI_DWP_100430

Subject: COVID-19 Service Impact

Further to our discussion on March 18th and my letter dated March 14th I am writing concerning the departments ongoing review arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition to the decision to suspend face to face assessments from 17th March 2020 our priority is to ensure individuals can access financial support. This means that processing new claims, change of circumstance cases and SRTI cases is our priority.

In order to ensure we have sufficient capacity both across DWP and across our assessment providers so as to maintain activity in the priority areas and to cope with increased demand across DWP benefits we now think it is necessary to suspend re assessment activity from DLA to PIP apart from where the claimant notifies us of a change in their condition which triggers a move to PIP. This would include all activity to proactively move working-age claimants over from DLA to PIP as well as activity to transition young people from DLA to PIP when they reach 16.

We will also be suspending all activity to proactively review existing PIP claims ("Award Reviews"). We will however continue processing "Unplanned Reviews" where a claimant has notified us of a change in their needs.

In the circumstances referred to above and pursuant to clause F10 of the PIP Contract the Department has determined that it needs to take specific action in connection with your ongoing delivery of the Services because a serious risk exists to the health or safety of persons. On that basis the Department is now stepping-in and directing you to not commence work on any award reviews or individual reassessment and we will work with you to agree how these cases are managed by the department going forward. This change will commence from 21st March.

We will initially be undertaking this suspension for 3 months. With regards to cases that are currently in flight within your operation, I can confirm that any claimants who have already have an appointment should continue to remain with you for completion of an assessment via agreed methods.

We are currently working to agree mechanisms to return cases that are sitting with you but where a claimant has not been contacted by you, we will liaise with you once we know next steps for these cases.
As previously indicated we recognise the impact this situation will have on your organisation and are committed to working closely with you during this challenging period, including in relation to how we manage the impact of costs in a sustainable way. I welcome your support in implementing this approach as a key way of protecting claimant welfare.

Yours sincerely,

(REDACTED)