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The Scottish Parliament
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12 December 2024

Dear Collette,

I am writing to provide the Committee with an update on Employment Injury Assistance (EIA).

Our consultation on next steps for the delivery of this new benefit closed on the 25 June 2024. The consultation received 28 responses, and I am grateful to the individuals and organisations, which included trade unions, Disabled People's Organisations, personal injury law organisations and local authorities, who responded.

The Scottish Government has today published the analysis of the consultation alongside our response to the consultation. These can be accessed here:

Employment Injury Assistance (EIA) delivery – Next Steps: Analysis of Consultation Responses; <https://www.gov.scot/ISBN/9781836019480>

Employment Injury Assistance (EIA) delivery - Next Steps: Scottish Government Response; <https://www.gov.scot/ISBN/9781836019497>

As our consultation paper outlined, the Industrial Injuries Scheme (IIS) was introduced in 1948 to provide social security support to workers, typically from heavy, historically state-owned, industries who became disabled or developed a long-term health condition as a result of their employment. Although some minor statutory changes have been made in the decades since its introduction, the structure and administration of IIS has undergone little reform by successive UK Governments.

The current IIS is in need of reform and delivery of a like-for-like replacement would in any event be complex and unlikely to deliver value for money. Our intention, supported by the largest number of consultation responses, is therefore to prioritise longer-term reform so that EIA better reflects the modern workforce and occupational health in Scotland in the future.

The consultation committed to establishing a stakeholder group to facilitate continued engagement with stakeholders and people with experience of receiving Industrial Injuries benefits during the next phase of policy development. This group will provide valuable input

into the work to address many of the unique complexities associated with the delivery of EIA. Stakeholders will receive invitations to the first meeting of the group shortly.

I have written to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to request, in principle, an extension to the Agency Agreement, which currently runs to end March 2026, to provide time for Employment Injury Assistance to be delivered in a way which best meets the needs of people in Scotland. This will allow both governments to work together to protect the payments people rely on.

I hope you find this update useful, and I look forward to continuing to work with you and the Committee during ongoing policy development of Employment Injury Assistance.

Yours sincerely,

SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE