

Fast-tracked access to benefits extended to more people nearing end of life

- From today (Monday 4 April 2022) fast-tracked access to Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance will be extended to more people in the final year of their life.
- The changes will extend eligibility to this end of life support from six to 12 months.

The changes mean people who are thought to be in their final year of their life will be able to receive vital support through 'Special Rules', six months earlier than they were able to previously.

This applies to people on Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Those who are eligible will not be subject to a face-to-face assessment, and in the majority of cases they will receive the highest rate of benefits.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Chloe Smith MP said:

Helping more people in the final year of their life get faster access to vital financial support is the right thing to do.

I hope by extending this support it will alleviate the financial concerns of those nearing the end of their life and their families in the most challenging of times.

National Clinical Director for End of Life Care at NHS England, Professor Bee Wee said:

I am really pleased to see this change which will enable earlier and faster access to financial support for people who are likely to be in their last year of life.

This additional support is of such vital importance to many people, and those important to them, during this difficult time.

Marie Curie chief executive, Matthew Reed said:

We are delighted to see this important change come into force today for Universal Credit and ESA claimants, following years of campaigning.

This will help ensure more dying people can concentrate on making the most of the limited time they have left, rather than worrying about their finances.

Marie Curie look forward to continuing to work with the Department for Work and Pensions to communicate this important change and ensure everyone now eligible gets the support they need quickly and efficiently.

CEO of the Motor Neurone Disease Association, Sally Light said:

I am pleased that as of today long fought-for changes to the Special Rules for Terminal Illness will come into effect for Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit.

We now hope that more people living with complex and unpredictable terminal illnesses like motor neurone disease will be able to access the support they need via those benefits swiftly and sensitively.

A person who makes a new claim for Universal Credit under the Special Rules for End of Life (SREL) could receive an additional £354.28 per month for having limited capability for work and work-related activity of from day one of their claim.

If eligible for New Style ESA, a person making a new claim could receive the highest rate of benefit of £117.60 per week from day one of their claim to support them in the last months of their life.

Clinicians still have discretion under the updated rules and will be supported by a realistic and straightforward definition, which aligns with current NHS practice.

The changes to SREL will be extended to Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

Additional information

- Special Rules for End of Life were previously referred to as Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI).

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