



Stephanie Peacock MP

Member of Parliament for Barnsley East
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Dear Chris,

I am writing to update you on an important issue I have been working on which affects former miners here in Barnsley and around the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Miners gave years of their life to powering our nation as they worked down the mines, and many were sadly left with underlying health conditions caused by industrial diseases as a result of coal dust inhalation.

During the coronavirus outbreak, the Government has relaxed rules on death certification by medical professionals, which may reduce the referrals to coroners of potential cases of deaths caused by industrial diseases. If deaths are attributed on death certificates to COVID-19 rather than underlying industrial diseases caused by service down the pit, this could impact on the rights of ex-miners' families to receive the support and compensation they are entitled to.

After this issue was raised by the National Union of Mineworkers, I, along with 19 of my Labour colleagues, wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to highlight this important issue.

We asked the Government to outline its plans to protect the wellbeing of miners and their families, to provide additional funding for services which support miners, and to provide funding for research into industrial diseases and whether they increase susceptibility to COVID-19. We also pressed the Government to ensure that industrial diseases are considered in the event of an ex-miner sadly passing away.

Miners here in Barnsley and around the country have given so much to our nation. They deserve support in their retirement. Yet sadly, alongside the injustice and unfairness of the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme, ex-miners are now facing a disregard of the health impacts of a life spent working underground. This is unacceptable.

You can find further information on my work on this here:
https://www.stephaniepeacock.org.uk/industrial_diseases

I wanted to write to keep you updated on this important issue, and to reassure you that I will continue to do all I can to ensure that ex-miners are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. If I can support you further with this or any other issue at this challenging time, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Peacock
Member of Parliament for Barnsley East

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