[Your full address]

[Date]

Dear [MP’s name],

I am a constituent living in [where you live], and I am writing to let you know the impact that the proposed changes to disability benefits will have on [me/my family/my friends/my patients], and on people with epilepsy across the country.

[A little bit about your own experience, e.g. “I have epilepsy and have been receiving PIP for six years. This money helps me to pay for taxis to get to work and to appointments. I can’t drive because of my seizures, and there aren’t any direct public transport options that I could use. PIP doesn’t cover the full cost of this, but it does help to cover part of the cost. Under the new rules, I will no longer be eligible for PIP, and I will lose access to the transport that allows me to get to work. This means I will have to leave my job, because the cost of transport will be more than I am able to afford.”

Another example:

“My daughter has epilepsy, and receives PIP and universal credit. She is not able to work as she has regular seizures that can leave her fatigued and unwell for days. The benefits she receives help her to pay for a carer, who can accompany her on trips out of the house once a week. Without these benefits, she will lose even more of her independence, and she will no longer be able to afford a carer. This means she won’t be able to do her own shopping, attend appointments, or take part in any aspect of public life, as it isn’t safe for her to go out alone. Her epilepsy has a huge impact on her life, but that impact will not score highly enough under the new PIP assessment rules, and she will lose her support.”]

There are 630,000 people living with epilepsy in the UK, and someone is diagnosed with epilepsy every 20 minutes. It can affect anyone, at any time.

Epilepsy can come with a lot of extra costs. There are lots of different types of seizures and epilepsy treatments, with their own varied side effects. This means epilepsy doesn’t affect everyone in the same way. Some of the added costs that people with epilepsy face can include:

* **Transport**. People who one or more seizures a year aren’t able to hold a driving license, meaning they have to rely on public transport and taxis.
* **Seizure alarms and monitors**. Many people with epilepsy use seizure alarms and monitors which can alert other people when a seizure occurs. This can be crucial to keep them safe and prevent epilepsy-related deaths. These monitors are expensive, and are rarely paid for by health or social care.
* **Carers**. For people who are having regular seizures, having access to a carer can be vital. Carers can help them with daily tasks they aren’t able to do safely, such as cooking and washing. They can also provide freedom and independence to many people with epilepsy who aren’t able to leave the house alone.
* **Unpaid care**. For people with epilepsy who are cared for by family members or friends, removing their access to the daily living component of PIP will also mean their carer is no longer eligible for carers allowance. This could mean people with epilepsy will receive even less care than they currently do, as their carers can no longer afford to look after them.
* **Safety equipment**. There are many different pieces of equipment that people with epilepsy may use to keep themselves safe, from helmets for drop seizures to adapted and specialised wheelchairs that allow tonic clonic seizures to occur with fewer injuries. These items are often expensive, and are an additional cost on top of the costs of daily living.
* **Higher utility bills**. The use of safety equipment is often accompanied by an increase in electricity usage, and higher utility bills. The rise in utilities across the country will hit people with epilepsy even harder.

Epilepsy has the second largest pay gap of any disability, with people with epilepsy being **paid 26.9%** less than their colleagues.

There is also a lot of stigma around epilepsy, which impacts how often people with epilepsy are hired. In a 2024 survey, Epilepsy Action found that **42% of employers would not hire someone with epilepsy**, even though they knew it would be illegal to discriminate based on a health condition. **60% of people with epilepsy report experiencing discrimination at work**.

This means that people with epilepsy who are able to work are already receiving less pay than others, and have to contend with the extra expenses that epilepsy brings. Benefits such as PIP do not cover those costs for most people under the current system. By changing the eligibility criteria, you will be taking those benefits away from people with epilepsy, making the financial gap between those with and without epilepsy even wider.

**Please don’t make the lives of people with epilepsy even harder**. Please help us instead, by:

* Publicly opposing the changes to PIP eligibility criteria
* Asking the government to allow PIP to be given to people who achieve a lower score across many PIP assessment criteria
* Asking the government to place more importance onto the assessments of medical professionals who know the applicant when deciding whether to award benefits, rather than using the opinions of an assessor who is not an expert in epilepsy and has not met the applicant before
* Encourage local employers to undertake epilepsy awareness training, to overcome the stigma and help more people with epilepsy into work ([Epilepsy training - Epilepsy Action](https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/training))

Thank you for your support in this, and I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

[name]