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The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Victoria Atkins MP

39 Victoria St

London

SW1H 0EU

Wed 24 January 2024

**Re: The Minimum Income Guarantee / social care charging for local authorities 2024/25**

Dear Secretary of State

We write to you to request information on the government's plans for the statutory Minimum Income Guarantee, which, under the Care Act (2014), ensures non-residential social care charges do not reduce a person's income below a certain amount.

The Disability Poverty Campaign Group are aware, thanks to a response from the Department to a 2021 Freedom of Information Act request by Inclusion London, that: "there is no statutory duty on the Secretary of State to link [the statutory MIG rates] to, or to increase [them] in line with welfare benefits." Further, the Department clarified that: "there is no statutory duty on the Secretary of State to make increases to the level it is set at."

Secretary of State, you will share our acute concerns at the growing evidence of local authorities at risk of issuing Section 114 notices, and the pressure on local government to increase social care charges above the rate of inflation—the latter risk raised by ADASS in their 2023 Autumn Report. We have concerns that these pressures will result in those local authorities that currently opt to provide residents with a discretionary local uplifting of the MIG, reducing or ending that local uplift.



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This will create unacceptable pressures on low-income disabled people disproportionately experiencing poverty—including deep poverty—that is exacerbated by the rate of inflation, food costs, energy costs, disability related expenses and benefit levels.

The statutory MIG rates have failed to keep track with annual rises in inflation since the implementation of the Care Act in 2014. This is due—as you will be aware—to the decision of former Secretary of State Matt Hancock MP to freeze the statutory MIG rates at every one of his annual reviews.

We welcomed the decision of your predecessors, the former Secretaries of State Sajid Javid MP, and Steve Barclay MP, to raise the statutory MIG with inflation, in recognition of that historic injustice. We were also grateful for the support in achieving this outcome which we received from members of your own party, including Flick Drummond MP and Chloe Smith MP.

Could you please clarify what decision you took regarding MIG at the 2024 annual review, or plan to take? We understand the review takes place in January.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Rowlands (Inclusion London)

Dan White (Disability Rights UK)

On behalf of the Disability Poverty Campaign Group