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The Rt Hon Mel Stride MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
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15 May 2023

Dear Mel,

On behalf of the Economic Affairs Committee, I want to thank your Department for submitting its response to our report published in December last year, *Where have all the workers gone?*

As I am sure you are aware, we concluded that the reduction in labour supply has been mainly driven by an increase in economic inactivity, in particular among 50-64 year olds who do not wish to return to work. We recommended that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) should use the announced Workforce Participation Review to understand the potential link between certain pension arrangements and economic inactivity, as well as the impact of furlough on inactivity. We also made several other recommendations that relate to DWP's Workforce Participation Review, including recommending the Department carry out further work to understand the potential effect of NHS waiting lists and long COVID-19 on labour supply.

While the Response to our report sets out measures introduced by the Government to address labour supply, we have noted that there was no mention of the Workforce Participation Review. We also note that at the Autumn Statement 2022 the Chancellor said: "The Department for Work and Pensions will thoroughly review workforce participation. This work will conclude in early 2023."¹ Could you therefore provide an update on the Review's progress, and its expected publication date?

Yours sincerely,

George

Lord Bridges of Headley MBE
Chair of the Economic Affairs Committee

¹ HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2022](#), 17 November 2022