THE RT HON MEL STRIDE MP
Secretary of State for Work &
Pensions
Caxton
House
Tothill
Street
London, SW1H 9AJ

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee

4 December 2023

Dear Stephen,

DWP use of artificial intelligence (AI)

Thank you for your letter on DWP's use of artificial intelligence dated 26 October 2023 and my apologies for the delay in the response.

DWP has a strong track-record of designing and delivering digital innovation and automation to deliver our services efficiently to our customers. AI is the next step in digital transformation, and we have adopted a test and learn approach to AI so we can build evidence to support whether AI use cases can add best value for customers and colleagues.

The Department is piloting AI to scan our inbound contact channels to alert for potential risks of harm. Our 'White Mail' AI technology has further increased the speed at which we are able to identify vulnerable people from the around 22,000 letters the department receives each day. This process, which now takes a day rather than weeks, means those most in need can be more quickly directed to the relevant person who can help them.

We are exploring how Generative AI can be used across the Department through our Lighthouse Programme. The programme is exploring the use of AI in several use cases which include:

- Trialling AI-enabled projects to complement the services work coaches provide to customers in job centres;
- Trialling how AI can write, update, or organise code to address the current digital skills shortage in areas like software engineering;
- Trialling productivity tools for all colleagues to use, such as rapidly summarising policy documents or providing simple tools to gather information for frontline colleagues.

As we pilot the use of AI, we will ensure this work is developed within a robust governance and ethical framework. In particular, we are committed to ensuring that the interests of our vulnerable customers are protected, and any decisions that could affect the continued payment of benefits to customers are made by colleagues rather than by machines. We have also created an AI steering board which consists of representatives from across all functions of DWP and is chaired by DWP's Chief Digital and Information Officer. The DWP Executive Team, via DWP's Chief Data Officer and DWP's Data Protection Officer, monitor the department's compliance with our Personal Information Charter.

I have appointed Minister for Lords (Viscount Younger of Leckie) to oversee this from a Ministerial perspective.

With every best wish,

Rt Hon Mel Stride MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

26 October 2023

Rt Hon Mel Stride MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
(By e-mail only)

Dear Mel,

DWP use of artificial intelligence

The Committee had a recent discussion on how, and the extent to which, DWP uses Artificial Intelligence (AI). Please could you set out:

- how DWP is currently using AI;
- what potential further uses have been identified by DWP so far; and
- how will privacy and data security concerns be safeguarded in current and future use of AI.

I would be grateful for your response to these questions by Monday 13 November. As is usual practice with the Committee's correspondence, I will be publishing this letter and your response on the Committee's website.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee