



Work and Pensions Committee

13 December 2023

Rt Hon Mel Stride MP

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
(By e-mail only)

Dear Mel,

Benefit Levels in the UK

Thank you very much to you and your officials for giving evidence to the Committee on 6 December as part of our inquiry into benefit levels in the UK. We recognise the time and effort required to prepare for these sessions and the number of people involved in doing so. It was helpful to hear the Department's view on the processes used to make decisions on benefit levels, and its thinking around recent policy announcements.

In the session, you said it would be possible to share further information with us on several areas:

- The number of Disability Employment Advisers and confirmation of whether they are in every job centre;
- The number of people transferred by DWP from Incapacity Benefit to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), who were incorrectly not paid the income-related-component of ESA;
- The number of people paid compensation for this error and the size of the average compensation payment made;
- The latest departmental data on benefit sanctions;
- Data on the number of expected RTI errors and the number of RTI disputes raised by claimants; and
- The number of Universal Credit claimants in the Social Rented sector who the Department expect will be affected by the 53 week rent year in 2024–25.

In addition it would be helpful if you could also share:

- Whether the Department has taken any action to remedy all those adversely affected by the migration to ESA and who were not included in its Legal Entitlements and Administrative Practices (LEAP) exercise; and
- The number of people affected by the migration to ESA who have contacted the Department to request a [Special Payment](#) because they feel their circumstances are exceptional.

I would be grateful for your response to these questions by Thursday 11 January. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Stephen Timms'.

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