



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP  
Secretary of State Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

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Cat Smith MP  
Chair of the Procedure Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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7 January 2024

Dear Cat,

Thank you for your letter regarding Written Parliamentary Question performance in my Department.

I agree that performance below expectations under the last government was unacceptable, given it obstructs transparency and scrutiny. To address this, since becoming Secretary of State I have taken a number of steps.

I have asked my officials to improve the quality of drafts to limit the need for revisions which inevitably take time and can cause delays. I issued a PQ guide and asked my Parliamentary Team to deliver a series of talks and sessions for staff to outline the importance I place on Parliamentary work in general, and Parliament holding Government to account. I have also asked for the process for clearing draft responses to be streamlined and widened the oversight of the process by my political team.

I will continue building on the work we began in July to deliver high-quality work and push performance higher.

Yours sincerely,

**THE RT HON STEVE REED OBE MP**