



Work and Pensions Committee

Tuesday, 25 June 2025

Monday, 19 January 2026

Torsten Bell MP

Minister for Pensions
Department for Work and Pensions
(By e-mail only)

Dear Torsten

Chair of the Pensions Regulator

Thank you for your letter, dated 3 June, informing the Committee of the appointment of Kirsten Baker as interim chair of the Pensions Regulator, and setting out the timetable for the appointment of a full-time chair. I note that a preferred time for a pre-appointment hearing by the Committee has been included in the timetable, and we will factor that into our future programme.

I would just like to take this opportunity to put on record the Committee's appreciation for the current Chair, Sarah Smart. She has been an excellent Chair, and under her leadership this Committee and its predecessor have had a good working relationship with the Pensions Regulator. We wish her well for the future.

There are a couple of points I would like to raise in response to the letter:

1. We received your letter on 3 June, which in annex B states that the "advert goes live" in w/c 2 June. Paragraph 15 of the [Cabinet Office Guidance: pre-appointment scrutiny by House of Commons select committees](#) states that "the Department should consult the Chair of the select committee about the proposed selection process before a recruitment exercise begins". Furthermore, paragraph 17 states "Having provided the information in paragraph 15 to the Chair of the relevant select committee, the Department should allow for at least one week for the committee to meet, consider the information and to feed back its views". Given the timings set out in your letter, we do not wish to hold up the launch of this important recruitment campaign, so will not be providing our views. It would be helpful in future for the Committee to be given the appropriate amount of time to contribute to the process.
2. Your letter says that the amount of time needed to run a full recruitment campaign was not possible. Given that Sarah Smart announced in February that she was going to stand down, can you please provide more information on what the issues were launching a recruitment campaign then, with the aim of having somebody in post in August?



Work and Pensions Committee

As is usual practice with the Committee's correspondence, I will be publishing this letter and your response on the Committee's website.

Best wishes

Debbie Abrahams MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee