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& Industrial Strategy

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Dear Darren,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 April and the opportunity to provide clarity on the operational status of the BEIS Common Frameworks.

The UK Government recognises the importance of the parliamentary scrutiny process in the Common Frameworks Programme and will continue to ensure that parliamentary scrutiny happens as soon as practical and in line with the Devolved Administration Ministers.

I can clarify that five out of the seven BEIS Common Frameworks are currently operating between the UK Government and the relevant Devolved Administrations on an interim basis in line with Cabinet Office guidance. These Frameworks are Company Law, Late Payment, Specified Quantities and Packaged Goods, Emission Trading Scheme and Radioactive Substances. The operational Frameworks are using the agreed governance structures outlined in the Framework Summaries to allow policy issues to be discussed as appropriate.

The remaining two Frameworks, Services and Recognition of Professional Qualifications, are yet to be agreed with the DAs, pending the outcome of DA elections and ongoing related policy work, and therefore not yet operational.

The timeline for development of these Frameworks is being collectively agreed with the Devolved Administrations, with the aim to complete the Frameworks and have these fully scrutinised by the Committee by the end of 2021.

I will now turn to the specific questions (in italics below) you have raised in your letter.

Which specific aspects of [these] Frameworks are operational?

These frameworks reflect and build upon established ways of working, such as official level working groups, between the administrations and are therefore considered to be already in operation at official level across the UK. This arrangement will remain in place until the Northern Ireland Executive is in a position to complete the provisional confirmation process and while the necessary work to

fully implement Common Frameworks continues. In practice, this means that policy teams will make use of the forums and structures laid out in the provisional frameworks to engage with one another as appropriate.

What definition of 'operationality' you are using in response to the above?

Working on an interim basis at official level means that the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations are utilising both existing ways of working and the arrangements and processes set out in frameworks. These allow officials to meet and, for example, discuss potential divergence, how it may be managed, and to sight senior officials and ministers when appropriate.

Thank you for your continued engagement on the Common Frameworks programme. I am also copying this letter to the Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kwasi Kwarteng', written in a cursive style.

RT HON KWASI KWARTENG MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy