



**LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL
LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
THE RT. HON. JACOB REES-MOGG M.P.**



The Rt. Hon. Caroline Nokes M.P.,
Chairman, Women and Equalities Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our Ref: JRM/MP1518
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Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding Ministerial attendance at Committee meetings.

I certainly agree with you that ministerial appearances before select committees are essential in allowing MPs to hold ministers to account and ensuring that Parliament can uphold its democratic function of scrutinising the Government. It is of course important that committees are able to take evidence in a timely way and ministers should make every effort to provide evidence to committees. I would like to assure you that the Government's commitment to scrutiny remains as strong as ever and I am confident all ministers take their duties to Parliament and its committees extremely seriously.

My office has raised your concerns with the Government Equalities Office (GEO) who have assured me of their enthusiasm to engage with your Committee. I am aware that ministers attended an oral evidence session on Wednesday 7 July and with regards to your inquiry into the Gender Recognition Act, they have advised me that there has been engagement through correspondence, written evidence and, as you point out, oral evidence from the Parliamentary Under Secretary at Department of Health and Social Care. In addition, the Government will of course respond to reports from the Committee within the usual timeframes. I appreciate this does not go as far as you have requested, however, I do not agree it constitutes a failure to account to Parliament. Nevertheless, I am happy to remind the GEO of the importance of strong engagement with the Committee. I firmly believe that good scrutiny leads to better government and I am, therefore, copying this letter to the Minister for Women and Equalities as well as Mr Speaker and the Chairman of the Liaison Committee.

I look forward to appearing before your Committee shortly for your inquiry into a Gender Sensitive Parliament (House of Commons).

With every good wish,

Yrs sincerely,
Janet Kenyon.