



Work and Pensions Committee

House of Commons | London | SW1A 0AA

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Guy Opperman
Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion
Department for Work and Pensions

From the Chair

5 October 2021

Dear Guy,

Delays to state pension payments

The Committee has asked me to write to you about the backlog in processing state pension applications, which has left some pensioners without their state pension entitlement.

In response to a written question, you said that there has been a ‘small number’ of new State Pension claims that have been subject to delays and the Department is prioritising overdue payments. You also said that ‘normal service will be resumed by the end of October 2021’.

The Committee would be grateful for more information about this delay, in particular:

- 1. What has caused these delays? What steps are you taking to prevent a recurrence in the short and medium term?**
- 2. It has been reported in the press that “thousands” of people have not received their state pension entitlement on time. How many people have received their entitlement late?**
 - a) How many people are still waiting for their state pension?**
- 3. It has been reported that people have been waiting up to six months for their entitlement. What is the average amount of time that pensioners whose entitlement has been delayed have waited for their state pension since these problems began?**
 - a) What has been the longest wait?**
 - b) What has been the average processing time for new state pension claims in 2021 versus in 2020?**
 - c) Can you guarantee that new claimants will not be subject to delays after October 2021?**

In response to another written question, you have said that 'the Department is re-deploying circa 700 staff from other areas across DWP to help to stabilise the service further'.

- 4. Pensioners have reported having to make multiple calls, long waiting times and poor service when contacting the Department. How many staff have been redeployed to ensure that the backlog is processed quickly and efficiently? For how long will staff be redeployed?**
 - a) How is the Department communicating with pensioners about these delays?**
- 5. What impact do you expect the redeployment of staff to have on the work from which they have been redeployed?**
- 6. Does the Department have any plans to compensate pensioners who have incurred costs – for example, because they have had to borrow money - because of the delays?**

We would be grateful for a reply by **Tuesday 19 October**.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Timms', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP
Chair