



Work and Pensions Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 8976 Email workpencom@parliament.uk

Peter Schofield
Permanent Secretary
Department for Work and Pensions

15 December 2021

Dear Peter,

Guaranteed Minimum Pension

Further to your letter of 12 August 2021, I am writing about the work that the Department is doing to respond to the PHSO's finding that DWP failed to make its external communications about GMP sufficiently clear.

The Ombudsman recommended that the Department should:

Within three months of this report, review and report back on to us on the learning from this investigation, including action being taken to ensure that affected individuals receive appropriate communication from the DWP about their state pensions. In particular, the DWP should ensure that their literature clearly and appropriately references that some individuals, who have large GMPs and reach State Pension Age in the early years of the new State Pension, may be negatively affected by the changes. The DWP should advise individuals to check their circumstances, and should provide instructions for how to do this.

DWP proposed to respond to this recommendation by publishing a factsheet. In your letter of 12 August 2021, you told us that the factsheet had that day been published on gov.uk and would be formally reviewed after a period of six months. You have told us that that review will include:

- an analytics review to establish usage of the GMP factsheet page, including mapping the routing in and from the factsheet
- a thematical feedback review on feedback received through GOV.UK Feedex
- a review of the contacts triggered by the factsheet to establish if people contacting are those that have been targeted from the policy intent

In advance of that review, I am writing to set out some points that the Committee would like to see covered, as follows:

- 1. What steps have been taken to promote the factsheet to people who might be affected, and how effective has that promotion been;**



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- 2. If the factsheet has been accessed by a very small number of people, and if you have received very little feedback on it, what more will be done to test the factsheet on users;**
- 3. How many people have contacted DWP as a result of the factsheet, and whether you have had enough contacts to provide a robust evidence base for the review;**
- 4. Whether you have consulted the complainants whose cases were upheld by the Ombudsman, and others who have been negatively affected, to hear their feedback about the factsheet, and if not, why not;**
- 5. Whether the Department considers that it has fully met the PHSO's condition that the factsheet should properly convey the potential for significant financial impact, and what its evidence is for that;**
- 6. Whether the Department considers that it has fully met the PHSO's condition that the factsheet be tested on "a relevant group of those affected/those that have knowledge of GMPs", and what its evidence is for that;**
- 7. Whether the Department considers that the factsheet adequately explains to people "what to do next if they think they have been negatively affected", as required by the Ombudsman, and what its evidence is for that.**

One of the purposes of publishing the factsheet is to help people to understand "what to do next if they think they have been negatively affected". The Department has already made payments to the two complainants in recognition of the injustice they have suffered, in line with PHSO's recommendations. When you gave evidence to the Committee on 24 November, you said that you would let us know how many people have applied for compensation.¹

- 8. Is there a mechanism for people in the same position as the two complaints to apply for the same payments in recognition of the injustice they have suffered?**
 - a. How many people have applied for compensation?**

I would be grateful for a reply by 13 January 2022.

¹ Q 102



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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Timms". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP

Chair, Work and Pensions Committee