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2 September 2019

Dear Dr Witcher,

ANNUAL UPDATING OF SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE – POLICY PAPER AND ANALYTICAL REPORT

As you will recall, I wrote to the Scottish Commission on Social Security (SCoSS) on 6 June 2019 indicating that shortly after the Scottish Parliament summer recess, I would provide a comprehensive report, including analytical evidence, on the updating measures that could be used to uprate devolved social security assistance. The Policy Paper and Analytical Report are provided with this letter. They set out the options available for updating devolved social security assistance and the Scottish Government's proposed approach based on the available evidence.

I have invited the SCoSS to consider the updating measures report in accordance with section 22(1)(b) of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 and to report on their views on this matter. I would welcome the SCoSS's input into the scrutiny of these updating measures and their views on the Scottish Government's proposals. I understand that my officials have been invited to the SCoSS meeting on 10 September to respond to any questions that you may have from your scrutiny of the report which I hope will be helpful.

The Policy Paper and Analytical Report has also been provided to the Scottish Parliament Social Security Committee and I have been asked to attend the Committee on 10 October to respond to any issues that they may raise. You may wish to inform the Committee and I of any points you wish to make in advance of this meeting.

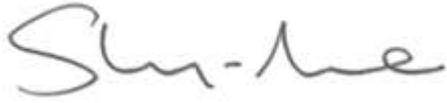
I also indicated, in my correspondence of 6 June 2019, that I would welcome the SCoSS's views by mid October in order to inform the preparations for the Scottish Budget 2020/21. However, as I will be attending the Committee on 10 October it seems appropriate to extend this deadline to 31 October.

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I look forward to receiving your report which I will consider closely before responding to any issues that you raise.

Yours sincerely,



SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE

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