



Scottish
Commission
on Social
Security

Scottish Commission on Social Security
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23 April 2020

David Wallace
Chief Executive
Social Security Scotland

By email only

Dear Mr Wallace,

On behalf of the Commission, I would like to note our appreciation of the efforts being made by the staff of Social Security Scotland to continue delivering vital assistance at this time of great need. The challenges posed by COVID-19 are no doubt substantial and we wish you and your colleagues well in your ongoing efforts to respond effectively. We hope you and your colleagues are keeping well and staying safe at this extraordinarily difficult time.

In view of the obvious challenges, the purpose of this letter is to explore whether there may be implications for meeting the expectations set out in the Social Security Charter. While clearly the Charter was developed at a time when the current situation could not have been foreseen, as you will be aware, SCoSS has statutory functions in relation to the Charter, namely: to report from time to time on whether the expectations in the Charter are actually being met and to make recommendations for improvement if we do not believe that they are being met. SCoSS must consider reporting on the Charter if it receives evidence that expectations are frequently not being fulfilled.

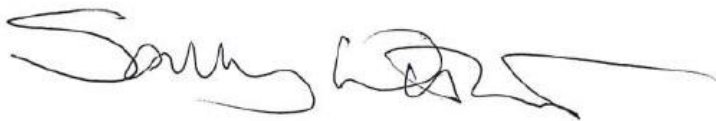
When we looked at the Charter expectations at our board meeting of 7 April, we thought there may be particular challenges in fulfilling some of them, while the importance of doing so may be even more important than usual. We are therefore giving some thought to our approach to the Charter. To that end, it would be very helpful to understand whether the current crisis has led Social Security Scotland to make any adjustments

to its own approach with regard to meeting Charter expectations and/ or to data collection to gauge whether they are being met. Any update you can provide on the development of a measurement framework that was already in progress would also be much appreciated. Social Security Scotland has previously confirmed that it would be willing to share its management information with SCoSS. I would be grateful if this is something you could also provide for us.

I do, of course, understand that you have other pressing priorities at the moment. However, as noted, your response will help SCoSS to consider how best it can undertake its own statutory duties relating to the Charter, as set out in the Social Security (Scotland) Act.

Finally, for your information, I enclose a copy of my letter to the Cabinet Secretary in which I outline some thoughts on how SCoSS could perhaps add value during the current period, while stressing that it is far from our intention to generate unnecessary additional work for the Scottish Government or for Social Security Scotland.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Witcher', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr Sally Witcher OBE
Chair of the Scottish Commission on Social Security