Dear Gillian & Derek

I am writing to you about the DWP’s Help to Claim service, which Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland have been funded to deliver since 2018/19. When DWP first announced the new service, which replaced Universal Support, the Committee welcomed the news. But we also cautioned that any changes must go beyond the cosmetic. Universal Support fell far short of what many claimants needed to enable them to claim Universal Credit successfully.

Now that the new service has had some time to bed in, might you please update the Committee on how it is working? In particular:

1. To what extent does Help to Claim funding cover the costs of helping claimants set up and make their Universal Credit applications?
2. Might you provide an estimate of the overall proportion of your Universal Credit advice work that is covered under Help to Claim?
3. Have you made any estimate of the number of claimants who have accessed support through Help to Claim to date?
4. Are there services or types of advice that you would recommend DWP fund under Help to Claim that are not currently funded by the service?

With best wishes and I look forward to hearing from you.

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee