Many thanks for your letter dated the 28th November and the Committee’s support for the reappointment of Anthony Arter to the post of Pensions Ombudsman for a further two years. In coming to the decision to reappoint Anthony I considered that The Pensions Ombudsman Service (TPO) is performing well and there has been positive feedback that made particular reference to:

- the successful incorporation of the disputes resolution service from The Pensions Advisory Service to TPO
- The increase in the number of cases resolved informally
- The rollout of the digitalisation programme
- The relocation of TPO to Canary Wharf.

Re-appointing Antony allows time for him to embed these changes.

As a non-departmental public body, TPO is subject to a Tailored Review at least once in the lifetime of a Parliament, and this will take place in early 2019. Therefore renewing Anthony’s contract for a further two years, until July 2021, will allow time for him to implement any recommendations arising from the Review.

In addition, I have recently renewed the contract of the Deputy Pensions Ombudsman (DPO), Karen Johnston, until June 2020. Extension of Anthony’s contract until 2021 will allow recruitment and induction of a new DPO before Anthony leaves, ensuring continuity and stability within the Ombudsman service.
I am happy to give assurance that the Work and Pensions Select Committee will have the opportunity to conduct pre-appointment scrutiny when Anthony’s successor is appointed.

Guy Opperman MP
Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion