From the Chair

4 February 2019

Sarah Newton MP
Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work
Department for Work and Pensions

Dear Sarah,

**ESA assessment for victims of modern slavery**

You will be aware that the Committee has an interest in how victims of modern slavery are supported through the benefits system, following our 2017 report, *Victims of modern slavery*.

The Human Trafficking Foundation have informed me that Darrell Simister, a high-profile victim of modern slavery who was enslaved on a farm in Wales for 13 years, has had a distressing experience going through a recent Work Capability Assessment, and subsequently has had his ESA entitlement reduced.

Might you please confirm:

1. What training Jobcentre staff receive on working with claimants who are possible or confirmed victims of modern slavery?

2. What (a) training and (b) guidance WCA provider staff receive on working with claimants who are possible or confirmed victims of modern slavery?

3. What formal guidance exists on eligibility and assessment for confirmed victims of modern slavery for (a) Universal Credit and (b) Employment and Support Allowance?

In 2017, the Committee recommended that the Department introduce a specific easement for victims of modern slavery, similar to that for victims of domestic violence, which the Government rejected. Might you please re-consider this recommendation?
With best wishes and I look forward to hearing from you,

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair