Rt Hon Frank Field MP  
Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA  

14 February 2019

Dear Mr. Field,

I am writing on behalf of Parkinson’s UK to thank you for inviting us to give evidence to the inquiry on the welfare safety net.

There are some additional points that we think may be relevant to your inquiry which we were not able to raise during yesterday’s session. We have outlined these below.

In addition, the Disability Benefit Consortium will be releasing an impact assessment of the disability benefit changes over the past ten years and we would be happy to share it with the committee when it is released in May.

**What impact will the upcoming changes have on the welfare safety net?**

Our biggest concerns with the upcoming changes to the welfare safety net are the cuts to disability related benefits that have been built into Universal Credit. Specifically, the exclusion of the Severe Disability Premium and the Enhanced Disability Premium, as well as the termination of the Work-Related Activity Group component.

People who would have been entitled to these three elements will see their income reduced by up to £5,700 each year when they claim Universal Credit. The cost of living with Parkinson’s, and other health conditions, can be up to £300 each week. People who face these unavoidable costs cannot afford to lose so much money from their income.

The Disability Benefit Consortium conducted a survey in 2017 which showed 40% of respondents who had lost the Work-Related Activity Group component struggle to pay for food.

Although transitional protection will help the situation, eventually it will come to an end and then every person with a disability that claims Universal Credit will lose out because of these cuts. This can only lead to higher levels of poverty among people living with a disability.

We hope that this information proves useful and please do not hesitate to get in touch should you require anything further.

Once again, thank you for inviting us to give evidence on this Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Griffin  
Senior Policy and Campaigns Adviser

Parkinson’s UK 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ  
T 020 7931 8080  F 020 7233 9908  E enquiries@parkinsons.org.uk  W parkinsons.org.uk