Thank you for your follow up letter of 19 December following our correspondence related to the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children, in particular the statistics related to its operation.

I would like to firstly reiterate the statement that there are no circumstances where an application for an exception would be denied or rejected, provided the claimant’s application is complete. It is paramount to us that where a claimant may be a victim of abuse, or has conceived their child non-consensually, that we have sensitive procedures which allow access to the right support.

In my previous letter, I explained that for a variety of reasons it is difficult to define an application’s start. For example, we do not track the outcome of phone conversations which can form the part of an application process.

Following this, you have suggested tracking the number of completed forms we receive from claimants seeking to claim the non-consensual conception exception and comparing this number to the number of exceptions granted. Unfortunately, this is not currently possible.

Within Universal Credit, the receipt of any evidence related to an exception, be that the NCC1 form for non-consensual conception or other, is handled in a manual process, rather than automated. This process is simply confirming whether the evidence meets the requirement e.g. the NCC1 form has been filled in correctly. Provided this is all correct, the exception will be granted. At the point of granting, this is traceable and we have released data to this effect.

However, if a form is incorrectly filled in or is incomplete, the claimants will be asked to provide an updated form. As this is a manual process, we are unable to track the numbers of these requests or separate out which exception has been applied for as the process is the same for all evidence types.

It is possible that at this stage, some claimants fail to return another, correctly filled out form. This is clearly something we would like to avoid as they may be entitled to support that they cannot otherwise access. We are not currently in a position to track
the number of these occurrences. Consequently, we have no information about the number or type of applications for exceptions that have been started but not completed.

The Department continues to develop its approach to capturing accurate, aggregate data on claimants, including vulnerable people. This work is ongoing and has been prioritised for the current Universal Credit development phase. The Department will report back to the Work and Pensions Select Committee with an update on its progress in late spring 2019.

best wishes,

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS