Dear Frank,

Chair - Social Security Advisory Committee

This note is to inform you that Paul Gray, the current Chair of the Social Security Advisory Committee, has decided to step down at the end of his second term of office in July 2018. As this role is subject to pre-appointment scrutiny by your Committee, I am writing to inform you of the proposed selection process before the recruitment exercise commences on 1 November 2017.

This exercise will be run in line with the Governance Code relating to public appointments. I will be closely engaged throughout the process.

DWP Public Appointments Team will manage the recruitment process throughout. In order to find good candidates and encourage them to apply, DWP is engaging with the Cabinet Office Public Appointments Talent Team, the No10 Public Appointments Team, Special Advisors and the SSAC Chair to reach out to potential appointees.

The Advisory Assessment Panel (interview panel) will consist of Pete Searle, Strategy Director for Working Age Benefits and Devolution, as Chair; Gill Aitken, HMRC General Counsel and Solicitor, will act as a member; Colin Godbold, SSAC’s current Vice Chair, will be the representative from the Body; and Rosie Varley, a former OCPA appointed Public Appointments Assessor, is the independent member. All panel members will be involved in the long and shortlisting process and my views will be sought on the suitability of the field at the end of the search as well as both sift stages in line with Governance Code procedures. I expect to meet all appointable candidates before discussing with Secretary of State and agreeing a name to put forward to your Committee. I have attached the role description and person specification for you to see.
SSAC is an independent statutory body, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It is the UK Government’s advisory body on social security matters.

Please let me know if you have any comment on the proposed selection process or the person specification. I would appreciate a reply by 31 October 2017 so that DWP may launch the vacancy on 1 November 2017.

DWP officials will liaise with your Clerk to discuss the timings of any hearing.

Best wishes,

[Signature]

Baroness Buscombe
MINISTER FOR WORK AND PENSIONS (Lords)
SSAC Chair Role and Responsibilities

Role of the Chair
The Chair will be required to demonstrate strong leadership as he/she sets the strategic direction for the Committee and harnesses effectively the expertise and experience of a diverse Committee membership ensuring that it operates effectively as a team. The successful candidate will have the ability to build constructive relationships at senior levels (both in Government and with external stakeholders) and demonstrate good judgement.

The Chair will ensure the Committee provides an independent view (independent of both Government and other interested parties) which reflects a wide range of perspectives.

Scrutinising, and where the Committee so decides, reporting on draft regulations entails mastering complex legal and technical detail, as well as understanding the operational context in which legislation will be brought into effect. The Chair will be able to draw on the considerable knowledge and expertise of the Committee membership during the scrutiny process, however they will need to have the capability to pick up on detailed proposals quickly in order that he/she can communicate credibly with Ministers, stakeholders and the media as appropriate.

The Chair also develops and maintains productive relationships with Ministers, Departmental officials and the Committee’s external stakeholders to inform SSAC’s work. The Chair does this through a mixture of formal and informal visits, attendance at events and conferences and through chairing the Committee’s own stakeholder events.

The Chair and Members have access to sensitive proposals from time to time. These are shared with the Committee in confidence.

Essential Criteria
- Strong leadership qualities with the ability to set and shape the strategic direction of the Committee, and to harness effectively the expertise and experience of a diverse Committee membership ensuring that it operates effectively as a team;
- Ability to operate constructively and build positive relationships with Board level and senior stakeholders (for example in this role you will regularly work with Ministers, senior Whitehall officials, Parliamentarians and other senior stakeholders) - communicating effectively/persuasively and demonstrating sound judgement;
- Ability to understand, evaluate and advise objectively on complex issues relating to social security;
- Ability to take an independent view (independent of both Government and other interested parties) which reflects a wide range of perspectives. To be credible, the Chair will need to be able to demonstrate their independence from the Committee’s primary stakeholders; and
- An understanding of Government policy and the political and financial context in which social security policy operates.

Desirable Criteria
- An understanding of finance and governance issues