From the Chair

1 July 2019

Peter Schofield
Permanent Secretary, Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

Dear Peter,

Remuneration of senior DWP officials

I would be grateful for some clarification about the remuneration figures set out in the Department’s Report and Accounts for 2018/19.

Neil Couling, the Senior Responsible Owner for Universal Credit, received a bonus of £5-10,000, on top of a salary between £145,000 and £150,000. JP Marks, Interim Director General, Universal Credit Operations, received a bonus of £10-15,000, on top of a salary of between £125,000 and £130,000.

You will appreciate that it is difficult for outside observers to understand why senior civil servants responsible for Universal Credit might be given such bonuses.

1. Might I please ask you to set out for us the reasons for which these awards were made, and the performance measures which were used to determine eligibility for a bonus?

Ministers and senior officials are always, quite rightly, very keen to stress to the Committee the crucial role that Work Coaches play in supporting Universal Credit claimants. The Department’s own communications about UC have highlighted some of the excellent work that individual Work Coaches have done.

2. Might you therefore please let us know:

i) how many Work Coaches received a bonus in 2018/19, and what proportion of the total number this represents;
ii) what was the a) mean and b) median bonus paid to Work Coaches;

iii) what the lowest and highest bonus amounts for Work Coaches were;

iv) the performance measures that are used to decide which individuals are eligible for a bonus.

3. Given the increasing importance of Universal Credit service centres, might you please let us have the same information for frontline staff in service centres?

With best wishes and I look forward to hearing from you,

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair