Rt Hon Frank Field MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Work and Pensions Select Committee Inquiry into Modern Slavery Response

We know that you are keenly awaiting the Government’s response to the report produced by the Work and Pensions Select Committee inquiry into victims of modern slavery in the last parliament. We share your belief that modern slavery is a horror that must be eradicated, and we are committed to stamping out this vile abuse and protecting and supporting those who have been victims of this crime. We are grateful for your efforts to shine a light on the experiences of victims in England and Wales, and we wanted to reassure you that Government is committed to responding to your report as soon as possible.

As you acknowledged in your report, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the system that identifies and supports victims of modern slavery in the UK, is currently under review. In considering the future of the NRM, we have found your report invaluable, and, alongside consultation with NGOs, local authorities and support providers, your findings have helped to shape the future of this essential system. We are keen to ensure the outcome of the review is reflected in the Government’s formal response to the Committee.

This does not mean that Government is complacent in our efforts to improve the experiences of victims of modern slavery both during and after the NRM process. As a result of the Select Committee, DWP enhanced its training for frontline staff, and has developed links with support providers across the country to ensure victims can smoothly transition from specialist support into mainstream benefits, and thereby avoid some of the issues that you uncovered. The Home Office has also produced a leaflet which outlines the immigration options for victims of modern slavery, so that everyone is informed about their potential options.
Ahead of our formal response, we would be delighted to meet you to discuss our proposed reforms to the NRM.

Sarah Newton MP
Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability

Damian Hinds MP
Minister for Employment