Dear Frank,

**PIP and ESA claimant experiences: Government response**

Thank you for your letter dated 13 September 2018, which followed the Government response to the Work and Pensions Select Committee’s Seventh Report of 2017–18, on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) assessments. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Responding to each of your queries in turn:

1. **Your initial response committed to beginning research on revising application forms over summer 2018. Your response dated July 2018 implied this work had not yet been commissioned. Might you please supply a revised timetable for completing this important research?**

   The Department announced its intention to commission external contractors to conduct independent research in order to identify whether, how and what aspects of the ESA/PIP claim forms could have the potential to cause distress to claimants.

   The 'Improving the application forms for PIP and ESA research' will be commissioned in October 2018. We expect the fieldwork to take place between January and April 2019 and a report summarising the findings published later in 2019 on gov.uk.

2. **The Department committed to make audio recording a “standard part of the process” for PIP assessments, and to explore options for video recording. Might you please provide an update on the Department’s work to date on this, and provide indicative timescales for when you expect audio recording by default to be implemented?**

   The Department committed to make recording the PIP assessment a standard part of the process and explore potential options to test the recording of assessments,
including video recording. As part of this commitment, over the summer we have gathered views from claimants, representative bodies and Health Professionals on video recording in order to inform a pilot we are planning to begin later in the year. The results gathered from the pilot will be used to inform wider rollout decisions.

If you have any further queries please do contact me again.

Best wishes,

Sarah Newton MP

Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work