Justin Tomlinson MP
Minister for Disabled people, health and work
Department for Work and Pensions

October 2019

Dear Justin,

I was pleased to learn that DWP intends to develop a new partnership between RNIB and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) staff, to better train JCP staff in supporting claimants with sight loss into work.¹

You will be aware that the Committee has repeatedly emphasised the need for specialist support for disabled people in Jobcentre Plus (for example, in our report on Assistive technology). Improving JCP staff understanding of the challenges that sight loss can bring should help staff to better support those claimants.

I would be very grateful if you would please provide some more detail on the training, and the Department’s plans for developing this part of its service.

1) Might you please provide an overview of how the training will work in practice? For example:
   a. Will it be available across the JCP network?
   b. Which DWP staff will be eligible to receive training, and what proportion of JCP frontline staff do you expect to take it up?

2) Sight loss affects two million people across the UK.² What proportion of JCP’s caseload do you expect to benefit from this training, and how?

3) How much funding are you allocating to this programme?

4) It is important that, once put in place, the training is effective. The new Secretary of State has told us in evidence that she is “driven a lot by data analysis” and keen to ensure DWP’s policies are working well.³ How do you plan to evaluate the training to ensure that this is the case?

5) Do you have any plans to extend this model of partnership working to organisations that support people with other health conditions or complex needs?

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³ Q246
I would be grateful to receive your answers to these questions by Wednesday 6 November so that the Committee can progress with its inquiry work.

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

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee