



Work and Pensions Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From the Chair

27 November 2018

Sir Amyas Morse
Comptroller and Auditor General
National Audit Office

Dear Amyas

Carer's Allowance: Overpayments

The Committee has this morning received information from the Permanent Secretary that reveals a truly shocking position regarding the overpayment of Carer's Allowance. The table below is taken from the Permanent Secretary's letter. It sets out the highest, lowest and range of Carer's Allowance overpayments for each of the last 5 years.

Year	Highest value (£)	Lowest value (£)	Range (£)
2014/15	34,002.10	65.20	33,936.90
2015/16	37,203.90	65.20	37,138.70
2016/17	47,826.25	65.23	47,761.02
2017/18	42,004.00	67.14	41,936.86
2018 YTD	48,560.30	67.10	48,493.20

It is deeply concerning that the Department has allowed claimants to accrue such eye-wateringly large overpayments—nearly £50,000 at the top end of the range. More than just oversight, these figures suggest that systemic failings or gross incompetence—or a combination of the two—are at play.

It is carers who will bear the brunt of these failings, as the Department seeks to claw back the money from people who can ill afford to lose it.

I am attaching the letter from the Permanent Secretary. I recognise that there are many demands on your time and resources, but I very much hope that the National Audit Office will urgently investigate this issue.

Best wishes and I look forward to hearing from you,

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee