

Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government

10 July 2019

Benefits in Wales: Options for better delivery

Dear Minister

Thank you for giving oral evidence to the Committee on this inquiry. We would like some additional information on a number of issues.

### **Social Union**

As you will recall we explored with you the concept of the social union. Can you provide greater clarity as to which benefits you feel devolution of would weaken the social union? It would be helpful for the Committee to better understand exactly what the Welsh Government considers ‘off-limits’.

### **Definition of administration**

Another issue we explored was the definition of ‘administration’. We understand the complex inter-play between administration, legislation and policy in this area, as the Director of Communities and Tackling Poverty highlighted to us. You said that the WCPP had been commissioned to look at the ‘devolution of administration’ of welfare benefits, and we would like further clarity as to how you defined ‘administration’ for the WCPP.

### **Inter-governmental relations**

One of the issues the Committee has been exploring is the role of inter-governmental frameworks. For example, do you think there would be merit in strengthening the current JMC arrangements to provide a more formal framework to discuss impacts of policy decisions at both devolved and non-devolved level on the other nations of the UK. Will the issue of social security be covered by the review into how UK Government departments deal with devolution which was announced by the Prime Minister on 4 July?

**Incorporating the views of people with lived experience in policy design, implementation and evaluation.**



One of the strongest messages we took away from our recent visit to Scotland, was how central people's lived experience was to the design, implementation and evaluation of the changes to the benefits system. It was clear that this is something that was taken seriously by all those involved in the system. We heard positive feedback from the third sector about how meaningful this engagement was, and how it was helping to design a more people centred system.

During the evidence session the Director of Communities and Tackling Poverty talked about how engagement with the public was "core" in the Government's approach to policy design, citing the changes to the application process and eligibility criteria for the Discretionary Assistance Fund. The Committee would welcome some further detail on how you engaged with people with lived experience in designing these changes. Did you also include people with lived experience as part of any subsequent evaluation of the changes?

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke for the 'J' and a trailing flourish at the end.

John Griffiths

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

