Dear Secretary of State for Scotland

Invitation to appear before Welfare Reform Committee

On behalf of the Welfare Reform Committee I would like to invite you to give formal evidence to the Committee. Over the coming months the Committee will be taking evidence on the issue of possible links between food bank usage and welfare reforms, the operation of benefit sanctions and the implementation of Personal Independence Payments. The Committee will also be taking evidence from the Expert Working Group on Welfare and Constitutional Reform on the medium and long term options for a welfare system in an independent Scotland. To inform this work we wish to take evidence from you to discuss the Committee’s findings on these issues.

During your evidence session with our colleagues on the Health and Sport Committee you discussed the importance of greater interaction between Westminster and the Scottish Parliament. Since our Committee was formed in 2012 this has been something we have been keen to encourage. Unfortunately to date the Committee’s invitations to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and the Minister for Welfare Reform to give evidence to the Committee have been declined. The Committee will continue to pursue these invitations, even if you accept our invitation. It is important that the Committee is given the opportunity to take evidence from the Ministers with principle responsibility for welfare matters.

It is important that as part of the Committee’s work it is able to take formal evidence from UK Government Ministers to discuss issues where UK Government policy on reserved matters impacts on devolved responsibilities.

The preferred date for you to provide evidence to the Committee is Tuesday 10 June, however if this date is unsuitable we would be happy to hold the meeting at an alternative time, preferably before the Scottish Parliament’s summer recess.
I look forward to your response and hope they you will accept this invitation.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL MCMAHON MSP
CONVENER