Thank you for your kind words on my appointment as Secretary of State.

Since my appointment I have been pleased to discuss with Scottish Government Ministers the good collaborative working between my department and the Scottish Government to support the devolution of benefits. As you have indicated, the introduction of the Social Security (Scotland) Bill in June was a significant milestone and I understand the Social Security Committee will have an important role in scrutinising the Bill as it progresses through the Scottish Parliament.

I am happy to appear before the Committee to discuss the important role my Department is playing in supporting the devolution of benefits to the Scottish Government. I believe it would be useful for the Committee if we were to meet in early 2018 once the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare has had a further opportunity to meet. I would expect to be in a better position then to provide evidence concerning my department’s supportive work to the Committee, given that by that point, the Scottish Government’s intentions concerning the exercise of their new powers ought to be clearer. This would lead to a more valuable discussion.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland.