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You may recall at our meeting on 25 May to discuss our approach to the Social Security (Scotland) Bill, that I raised the matter of independent scrutiny of the Scottish social security system. As I said at the time, I am not committed to any particular approach and I am keen to hear the views of your members on this important issue. You kindly agreed to discuss the matter further with the Committee to determine the best way forward.

I recently met with Jim McCormick, the Chair of the Disability and Carer's Benefits Expert Advisory Group (DCBEAG), and took the opportunity to raise this matter with him. I have now written to the group formally asking them to provide advice and recommendations on scrutiny of the Scottish social security system.

I wanted to make you aware of this, as your members may consider it beneficial to discuss the matter with the DCBEAG as part of the Committee's work around independent scrutiny. Having spoken with Jim, I believe such a meeting would be useful and productive.

I look forward to hearing the Committee's thoughts on appropriate scrutiny, including any feedback from discussions with DCBEAG. I would therefore welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your members to discuss this further.

I would be grateful if you and your clerking team could contact my Private Office, at MinisterSocSec@scot.gov to discuss the arrangements.

Kind regards

JEANE FREEMAN