Mr Bob Doris MSP  
Convener  
Social Security Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

29th May 2019

Dear Mr Doris,

I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak at the Committee’s evidence session for Social Security Support for Housing.

At the Committee meeting we agreed to follow up a number of points in writing, and the information is provided below.

1. **When someone is on fortnightly payments and their Universal Credit statement continues to record them as monthly payments.**

   We are looking at this and hope to deliver something this year. This will provide improvements to the statement to help claimant understanding and will reflect that the claimant is on a more frequent payment cycle.

2. **How many claimants have had their benefits sanctioned in the past year?**


   In summary 2.80 percent of people subject to conditionality had a drop in benefit due to a Universal Credit (UC) sanction in November 2018. The average UC sanction lasted 31 days.

   On 9th May the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, announced a change to the sanctions policy and a review into how the sanctions system supports people into work. Under the change, the length of the maximum single sanction a claimant can face will reduce from 3 years to 6 months. Further information can be found in the [press release on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-sanctions-statistics-to-october-2018).

   For the benefit of the Committee’s understanding we thought it might be helpful to expand on a point made by Derek Kilday when he discussed sanctions and specifically mentioned that no sanction would be applied without a managerial check. The managerial check referred to applies in all
cases where there is a possibility of escalating or multiple sanctions and/or cases where complex needs, vulnerability or health issues are identified.

3. Statistics or figures that show how well the whole system for paying money and the relationship with the landlord and the tenant are working compared with those who are having problems? Particularly figures that show how we have improved i.e. now 85% paid on time and what the position is with the remaining 15% - i.e. information on the average delay for people within that 15 per cent.

The latest figures show 86 per cent of new UC claims are paid in full and on time, this compares to 78 per cent in February 2018. 95 per cent of all claims are paid in full and on time, this compares to 88 per cent in February 2018. The next update will be published on 13 August 2019.

There is no single main reason why claims aren’t paid on time. It is a combination of people who are paid one or more of the elements of their award late due to, for example, housing or children not being verified by the payment date. Or people who have a combination of not having completed a claimant commitment, or awaiting a habitual residence test outcome, or various other outstanding actions which prevent a payment being made.

Our latest internal data shows that for claims due their first payment in July 2018, 94 per cent of claims were paid in full within five weeks of the payment due date, with close to 99 per cent receiving at least a partial payment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Received Payment in Full</th>
<th>Within 5 weeks of payment due date</th>
<th>6-10 weeks after payment due date</th>
<th>More than 10 weeks after payment due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received a Partial Payment</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I hope the Committee finds this information helpful.

Yours Sincerely

Pete Searle
Policy Director, Working Age Benefits