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Bruce Crawford MSP
Convener
Devolution (Further Powers) Committee
c/o Clerk to the Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

4 March 2016

Dear Bruce,

Thank you for inviting both myself and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to appear before your meeting of 3 March 2016 on the Fiscal Framework and the Scotland Bill.

The Committee asked about the transfer of welfare powers in the Scotland Bill and queried the role of the Joint Exchequer Committee and the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare in overseeing these. I thought it would be helpful if I set out some of this detail to the Committee.

As outlined in the Fiscal Framework Agreement, the implementation dates for welfare will be agreed by the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare. The Joint Exchequer Committee will oversee the transfers of funding.

The published terms of reference for the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-ministerial-working-group-on-welfare>. I anticipate the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare will convene following the Holyrood elections. At this meeting I expect the Group's terms of reference to be updated and revised to reflect the responsibility of the group in overseeing the implementation of welfare powers. I fully expect these terms of reference to be made available to both the UK and Scottish Parliaments.

As I stated in my previous letter to the Committee, it will be important for both Governments to work constructively to ensure the effective transfer of these considerable powers in a sensible and managed way, which does not cause detriment to claimants. I look forward to working with the Scottish Government to achieve this.

I am copying in the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Rt Hon DAVID MUNDELL MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND