



Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee

The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

economy@parliament.scot

Rt Hon Alister Jack MP
Secretary of State for Scotland
UK Government
Sent by email only

19 August 2020

Dear Alister,

UK Government information

The Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee is carrying out an inquiry on the impact of COVID-19 on Scotland's economy, workers and businesses. As part of that inquiry, the Committee has written to the UK Government on a number of occasions seeking to obtain data about UK Government business support schemes. The Committee has also written to invite a UK Government representative to appear before it on these matters. Links to the relevant correspondence are attached in an annexe to this letter.

The request to appear before the Committee was turned down. Whilst the Committee was provided with available information in correspondence, and other requested information was published, the Committee found that the exercise of seeking the information has highlighted a gap in inter-parliamentary and governmental relations.

The Committee would like to suggest that a reciprocal protocol on the provision of information to committees could be developed between the Scottish and UK Governments and Parliaments (potentially involving the other devolved institutions). This could clarify how committee requests for information from both governments will be responded to. The protocol could also set out expectations in relation to requests for members of both governments to appear before committees of each parliament.

The Committee would ask you to consider pursuing the agreement of such a protocol with your counterparts at the Scottish Government (and possibly other devolved institutions). I would be grateful if you could take this forward along with appropriate colleagues in the UK Government.

I am writing in similar terms to Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs. I am copying this letter to the Ken Macintosh, Presiding Officer, Bruce Crawford, Convener of the Finance and Constitution Committee and Christine Grahame, Deputy Presiding Officer, in her capacity of Chair of the Scottish Parliament's Conveners Group.

I would be grateful to receive a response within five weeks of the date of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle", with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Michelle Ballantyne MSP

Convener

Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee

Annexe: EEFW Committee correspondence with the UK Government on its COVID-19 inquiry

[Letter to the UK Government on 16 April](#)

[Response from the UK Government on 11 May](#)

[Letter to UK Government on 26 May](#)

[Response from UK Government on 5 June](#)

[Letter to UK Government on 16 June](#)

[Response from UK Government on 29 June](#)