



Gordon Lindhurst MSP
Convener
Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Email: economy@parliament.scot

9 November 2020

Dear Gordon,

I am writing in response to your predecessor Michelle Ballantyne, who wrote to me regarding the development of a reciprocal protocol between the Scottish and UK Governments and Parliaments on the provision of information to committees.

I understand the great importance of obtaining data relating to the support available for the economy, businesses, and workers in Scotland. I am pleased that the Committee was provided with information in correspondence and the geographical data on the schemes CJRS and SEISS, which was made available by the UK Government on 11 June. This data will be published online by HMRC on a monthly basis with the next release of data expected on 19th November 2020.

The UK Government has been publishing the UK-wide applications and approvals from all three lending schemes on a weekly basis since 12 May. I would like to reassure you of the UK Government's commitment to continue to publish regular information about its economic support schemes.


The UK Government is committed to close and constructive engagement with the Scottish Government and to share information when possible. The UK Government's Ministers are accountable to the UK Parliament for the operation of these schemes in all parts of the UK and the UK Government attends regular Finance Ministers' Quadrilateral meetings with the finance ministers from all three devolved administrations.

As you know, the Scottish and Welsh governments have agreements in place with their respective legislatures to report on the outcomes of intergovernmental fora. The UK Government is exploring a number of options to build in greater accountability to IGR, similar to their arrangements, including through measures to improve transparency, reporting and parliamentary scrutiny of IGR. These will be focused primarily on our arrangements with the UK Parliament, in line with our lines of accountability.

As part of the joint review of intergovernmental relations, my ministerial colleague, the Minister for Constitution and Devolution Chloe Smith MP, is considering how to improve transparency and accountability jointly with her DA counterparts. Discussions are ongoing on a number of options in relation to transparency and reporting.

Regardless of the outcomes of these policies currently in development, we must continue to recognise that the UK Government is, first and foremost, accountable to the UK Parliament. We must, therefore, consider the requests to provide evidence to and appear in front of your committee, and other devolved committees and legislatures, on a case-by-case basis.

I am copying this letter to the Minister for Constitution and Devolution, Chloe Smith MP.

Yours sincerely,


**THE RT. HON ALISTER JACK MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND**