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Dear Margaret

As you may be aware, the Social Security (Scotland) Bill was introduced to Parliament on 20 June and it completed its Stage 1 process on 19 December. The conclusion of the Parliament's Stage 1 scrutiny process on 19 December of the Social Security (Scotland) Bill marked the next significant milestone in our journey to create a social security system in Scotland that places dignity, fairness and respect at its heart. An important aspect is that it is a rights based approach and that when people disagree with the outcome of their entitlement decision they can challenge it and be able to seek independent adjudication to the First-tier Tribunal.

As part of the work to create a new chamber in the Scottish Tribunals that will hear appeals in relation to the Scottish social security system, six sets of regulations will need to be in force. While not all of the regulations required here are subject to the affirmative procedure, I am of the view that a public consultation, on the full suite of regulations, would be appropriate over and above the consultation with senior members of the judiciary that the Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014 requires.

I wanted to advise that today, the Scottish Government launched its public consultation on those regulations. The consultation will run for 12 weeks and close on 16 April. I am providing an electronic copy of the consultation document.

Once the consultation closes, the Scottish Government will analyse the responses in order to finalise the draft regulations. These will then be sent to the President of the Tribunals and the Lord President for consultation, in accordance with the Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014 before they are laid in Parliament. Although the lead Committee for the Social Security (Scotland) Bill is the Social Security Committee, the suite of regulations will be considered by the Justice Committee. It is expected that the regulations will be laid in Parliament on 15 June 2018.

I hope you find this helpful and I would be happy to provide further information if required.

Kind regards



JEANE FREEMAN