



GOVERNMENT WHIPS' OFFICE  
HOUSE OF LORDS  
LONDON SW1A 0PW

FROM THE BARONESS BARRAN MBE  
GOVERNMENT WHIP FOR DFT, DHSC HO AND MOJ  
020-7219 6802

Telephone 020-7219 3131  
[www.lordswhips.org.uk](http://www.lordswhips.org.uk)  
[holgovernmentwhips@parliament.uk](mailto:holgovernmentwhips@parliament.uk)

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Dear Alf,

During the debate on Inequalities in the UK, the Deaton Review and the UN Special Rapporteur on Thursday 13 June, I promised to write to those noble Lords who raised points that I was unable to respond to at the time. I am sorry for the delay in doing so.

The Earl of Listowel spoke about the pressures health visitors are facing and asked me to write to him about what can and is being done to support them.

The Government values the vital role that health visitors play in supporting families and helping children to the best start in life, and their leading role in delivering the Healthy Child Programme. We are working with Public Health England (PHE) on modernisation for the Programme, with an initial focus on the first 1,000 days and early years, to improve a range of childhood outcomes including early development and school readiness. There is also an ambition to ensure a stronger link with pregnancy and preconceptual care. The refresh of the Healthy Child Programme also provides an opportunity to link with the refresh of the health visitor and school nurse service model which PHE are undertaking.

Baroness Osamor asked me to write to her updating her on the status of the Government's complaint to the UN and the ongoing discussions between the Government and the UN in relation to Professor Alston's report, measures we are taking to ensure unearned income is properly taxed, race and regional disparities in the workplace and the status of the UN Sustainable Development Goals report.

The Special Rapporteur's report, and the UK Government's response were published on Friday 31 May. Both are available online and copies have been deposited in the libraries of both Houses. We take the issues raised in the report extremely seriously. It is right that any Government is held to account for the effectiveness of its approach to tackling poverty, which will always be one of our key priorities. However, as Ministers said at the time, we were disappointed by the language and tone used by the Special Rapporteur and have made our concerns clear to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Government has taken steps to ensure those with the broadest shoulders bear the greatest fiscal burden, including on unearned income. We have reformed dividend taxation so very large

shareholdings attract more tax and ensured the capital gains that non-residents make on UK property are taxed. In addition, we have reduced the amount of tax-relieved pension savings an individual can accumulate over their lifetime and ended permanent non-domicile status.

This Government is committed to support people from every region and ethnicity. There are 3.7 million more people in work since 2010, with over 60% of the increase attributable to regions outside London and the South East. Over the same period, ethnic minority employment has risen 44%.

The Government acknowledges that there are real concerns over issues on transparency and progress on inequality as raised in the debate by Baroness Osamor. As you know, the cross-departmental Race Disparities Audit, co-ordinated by the Cabinet Office, was specifically established by the Prime Minister to make the disparities in the experiences of those from different ethnic groups more transparent and inform decisions by both Government and wider society. We are proud of the audit's work in revealing what are, sometimes, very uncomfortable truths.

Significant actions are being taken. For instance, we have announced a Race at Work Charter, which sets out effective practices that support fairness at work. We are setting new ambitions in key public services to increase the proportion of senior leaders who come from an ethnic minority background and encouraging Government suppliers, through public procurement, to adopt fair employment practices.

The UK's Voluntary National Review (VNR) has been published by the Department for International Development, and is available on gov.uk. The VNR sets out the UK's action both domestically and internationally in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, and outlines key challenges and next steps on a range of issues, including Goal 10: Reduced Inequality. For example, our Race Disparities Audit is the largest in the world and we have launched Ethnicity Facts and Figures, a website of unprecedented scope highlighting ethnic disparities across services and outcomes. The UK Office for National Statistics has also carried out an Equalities Data Audit that considered data quality and areas for improvement.

Lord Ravensdale asked me to assure him that renewed focus will be given to revitalising areas outside the capital and, importantly, that the Midlands will not be excluded from these initiatives. We are investing in every region so that people across the country can benefit from the rise in productivity. As highlighted above, this investment is driving jobs and growth, with 3.7 million more people in work since 2010, and over 60% of the increase attributable to regions outside London and the South East. The Midlands has received over £1.8bn from the Local Growth Fund since 2015 to invest in local priority projects. We have also committed to a refresh of its ambitious Midlands Engine Strategy this year, building on success of the existing strategy in bringing together local stakeholders to address key barriers to productivity and deliver on the existing economic potential of the region.

Baroness Young of Old Scone asked me to write to her assuring her that the flaws in universal credit will be addressed.

The Government has responded quickly to feedback on Universal Credit (UC), making numerous improvements to ensure that claimants receive the money they need as soon as possible. No claimant should wait five weeks for their payment, as they can secure an advance of up to 100% of their first month's payment. In the 2018 Budget, we announced we would enable claimants to repay their advances more slowly, as well as providing more upfront support to people moving to UC from the existing welfare system, including by extending several benefit awards for an additional two weeks during their transition to UC.

Your debate raised some important issues which I hope I have now addressed. I am copying this letter to those Peers who spoke in the debate and will also place a copy in the House library.

With very best wishes

Diana

**BARONESS BARRAN**

Lord Dubs  
House of Lords