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 Social Security Scotland

Dear Mr Neil Gray MSP,

I am writing to make you and your members aware that, on 3 November, Social Security Scotland will publish its Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-21. During this period we continued to deliver seven previously launched benefits as well as three new benefits. I look forward to discussing this Report further, when my colleagues and I meet with Committee on 2 December and I'm grateful to you and your clerking team for making this possible.

As you are aware, on 1 April 2020, full responsibility for all of the benefits devolved to Scotland by the 2016 Scotland Act was transferred from the UK to the Scottish Government. This was a significant event as it means that we are now fully accountable for all spending on devolved benefits, even though much of this is still delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions on our behalf under agency agreements.

In the usual way, our Annual Report is divided into three sections – a Performance Report, Accountability Report and our Financial Statements. The Performance Report sets out an account of the work that Social Security Scotland delivered in 2020-21 in furtherance of the strategic objectives set out in our Corporate Plan. It also explains what we did in order to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst continuing to deliver benefit payments to our clients.

You will see that we have included some insights from our clients, staff and partners. This provides feedback from those who had experience of our services during the reporting year, using their own words. Details of all of the insights and feedback gathered are also included in the Charter Measurement Framework document which is being published alongside our Annual Report on 3 November.

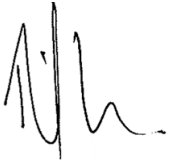
I am pleased to say that our insights and engagement findings show that most client, staff and stakeholder's experience over this reporting period has been positive. You will see that 92% of those who took part in our Client Survey said that their overall experience of our organisation was either 'very good' or 'good'. I am also happy to say that our survey of a sample of our staff showed that our people continue to feel engaged, as 96% of staff who took part said that they had felt that they had 'very good' or 'good' support from their line manager during this last year. Put together, these findings suggest that we are delivering in line with our key commitments, including the commitments in our Charter.

Dignity, fairness, respect.

All that said, I do recognise that there are areas we still need to improve upon, and we will feed this analysis into our ongoing continuous improvement activity. This will help us continue to get better at what we do, in line with our Charter commitments.

As you and your members will have heard on your visit to Agnes Husband House this week, there are still great challenges ahead and much work remains to be done – and I will be writing to you again shortly, to pick up on some of the points raised in discussion while you were at our headquarters. In the meantime, I hope you find these publications show that we continue to make progress in delivering the devolved benefits to our clients.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Wallace', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

David Wallace
Chief Executive
Social Security Scotland