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**Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Andrew Dilnot CBE**

Rt. Hon. Stephen Timms MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

28 June 2012

Dear Stephen

**WORK PROGRAMME STATISTICS**

Thank you for your letter dated 30 May regarding a speech made by the Minister of State for Employment and concerns you have about statistics relating to the Work Programme.

The National Statistician has explored with statisticians at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) the question of whether official statistics on the Work Programme are being produced and prepared for publication as quickly as they reasonably can be. In light of her advice, I am content that this is the case. While we understand your concern about the statistics not being available until the autumn, based on what we have been told, we expect the DWP's planned statistical release to clarify many of the points you have raised. We would welcome your views in this regard following the publication of the release itself.

DWP statisticians have told us that, prior to the Minister's speech being delivered, an error was identified and corrected in respect of the outcome period for those with job outcomes from the Work Programme. However, the published version of the speech was not itself corrected. We understand that arrangements are being made for the published version of the speech to be amended. Guidance issued by the then Cabinet Secretary in 2009, encouraged all those working in departments to seek and follow the advice of statistical professionals in respect of good practice in the use of official statistics. We understand that DWP statisticians were not involved in checking statistical aspects of the final version of the Minister's speech.

In your letter you suggested that a figure of 19 per cent achieving 3 months' employment (after nine months of the Flexible New Deal) was quoted by the Minister in a parliamentary answer on 20 January 2012 and that this figure seems to compare not unfavourably with the 22 per cent estimated to have entered employment through the Work Programme, based on early management information about Work Programme job outcomes. DWP has announced that its statistical release on the Work Programme to be published in the autumn will contain finalised data on job outcomes – we hope that this will provide all users of these statistics with opportunities to make informed comparisons.

I am copying this reply to the Minister of State for Employment, Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling MP, to the Permanent Secretary to the Department for Work and Pensions, Robert Devereux, to

Dame Anne Begg MP, Chair of the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, and to the National Statistician, Jil Matheson.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Dilnot". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'D'.

**Andrew Dilnot CBE**