



Department
for Work &
Pensions

GUY OPPERMAN MP
**Minister for Pensions and Financial
Inclusion**

Jeane Freeman MSP
Minister for Social Security
St Andrews House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Sunday 16th July 2017

Dear Ms Freeman,

Thank you for your letter of 22 June on the Scottish Government's devolved welfare powers and your ability to support people in Scotland who may be affected by changes to the State Pension.

It is to be welcomed that you acknowledge that there are powers available to the Scottish Government that could be used to support people before they reach state pension age, including those who may be affected the equalisation of the state pension age.

As your correspondence sets out, it may be the case that there is no one power that provides the Scottish Government with a single solution to the policy challenge that you have raised. Nonetheless, the range of powers that you have are substantial and could be used in combination to meet a range of challenges that you may wish to address. For this reason, I do not accept your point that the devolved welfare powers are overly or unnecessarily restrictive, as you conclude in your letter.

As the UK Government has always maintained, it is a matter for the Scottish Government how you use the devolved welfare powers. This importantly includes any determination you may have made on whether you can, in reality, provide this support. It also extends to choices you have in how to fund your priorities, either using the substantial resources the Scottish Government has or using your significant tax powers to raise additional funding.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Yours ever, Guy Opperman

GUY OPPERMAN MP
MINISTER FOR PENSIONS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

