



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**LONDON SW1A 0AA**

11 December 2018

**Dear Colleague,**

Since being appointed as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions I have seen what a huge force for good this Department can be.

For example, today's (11 December 2018) UK employment figures show that:

- Wage growth has outstripped inflation for the ninth month in a row
- The employment rate is 75.7%, a joint record high up 5.5 % points since 2010
- The unemployment rate is 4.1%, down 3.9% points since 2010
- Today's figures also reveal the youth unemployment level at a near record low and women in employment stands at 15.24m, up 1.6m since 2010.

Nonetheless, I want to do even more to build a visibly fairer society, and I know that many of you share that ambition.

**In my first few weeks at the Department I have heard colleagues express concerns about the time it takes to get money to claimants and making sure claimants have the ability to pay their rent on time.**

**I have listened to those concerns**, and I will work to ensure that as we leave the European Union we have a benefit system that gets help to people when they most need it, represents the best of British values and has women and children at its heart.

And as we approach the next stage of rolling out Universal Credit I hope I can count on your support because, while I know there are some aspects of it that must be improved, I believe thoroughly that UC can be a force for good and we must never forget the unfit-for-purpose and discredited system we inherited from the Labour Party.

It has, for example, helped many people into work by offering them the ability to tailor their hours to suit their needs.

Today's statistics show the continued strength of our jobs market, with wages up above inflation for the ninth month in a row and the unemployment rate close to its lowest in 40 years.

But while we celebrate these terrific numbers we must remember why they are so important.

And it's because behind every employment number is a person and a family whose self-esteem, mental wellbeing, economic circumstances and life chances are all vastly improved by being in the workplace.

As a government that supports everybody no matter their circumstances we must do everything we can to ensure everyone across the UK has these opportunities.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Amber Rudd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP**  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS