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Dr Thérèse Coffey
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
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5th October 2020

Dear Secretary of State

Safeguarding vulnerable claimants

I am writing to express the concern of Disability Rights UK on your recently expressed view that DWP has no statutory responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable claimants.

Your evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee, that the statutory safeguarding responsibility to vulnerable claimants falls to councils, social services, doctors and others but not the DWP, is deeply shocking.

Whether or not DWP has a statutory responsibility, it is right that all public servants have a duty of care in relation to safeguarding vulnerable customers. We would therefore expect all DWP staff to be trained in respect of this duty. Safeguarding should be at the heart of DWP policies and in the minds of every DWP advisor.

The need to safeguard vulnerable customers is understood across the private, public and voluntary sectors and we do not believe that DWP is exempt from this responsibility.

We believe the DWP should have a statutory duty to safeguard vulnerable claimants. I would ask that you confirm if you will consider making this legal change.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kamran Mallick".

Kamran Mallick
Chief Executive
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