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I am writing again to raise the concerns of a large number of my constituents with regards to the Equitable Life Payment Scheme.

Although the Equitable Life (Payments) Act has certainly offered victims of the scheme a helpful first step in recuperating what is, for many, a hard-saved lifeline for retirement, I continue to receive frequent correspondence from constituents who feel the applied system of remuneration is often lengthy, drawn-out and incomprehensive. Indeed, many constituents have complained of substantially incomplete and severely delayed payments.

I have had countless discussions with EMAG members at constituency surgeries and events in and around Bromley and Chislehurst over the past eight years, and whilst holders of the scheme welcome the Government's efforts in making ex-gratia payments, incomplete reparation only seems to add weight to the growing perception that we are merely interested in tokenistic gestures and have not fully kept our word. You and I know that this is not true, but we need further action to demonstrate that. I feel this has now become an issue of honour, and we must do the right thing for all our constituents by going further and building upon the progress that has already been made.

I appreciate the ongoing economic pressures that we must deal with, as you very clearly set out in yesterday's Autumn Statement, but I do believe now is the time to revise the Ombudsman's recommendation and reassess whether we are able to bridge some of the gap between the £1.5 billion currently available and the estimated £4 billion which was lost by scheme holders in total. As a Government we have always stated our commitment to giving hardworking people peace of mind in retirement. We need to take further concrete steps to demonstrate that to Equitable Life victims. I am afraid that the letter and Written Statement sent by the Economic Secretary to the Treasury on 25 November still did not adequately address the points raised.

I highlighted these issues with the Economic Secretary at the EMAG APPG last month, where members of the EMAG Committee gave a detailed account of the central failings of the scheme. Many of us had hoped that the Autumn Statement would give an opportunity to address this and I am frankly disappointed that you did not do so. The sums in hand are comparatively small in the overall scheme of public expenditure and I hope that you will still find time to deal with this issue in the life of this Parliament.

I look forward to your response.