

Foreword

When unemployment started rising last year, the Government committed to providing real help for people hit by the recession.

We learned the lessons of previous downturns and were determined not to repeat the mistake of leaving people to struggle alone. We wanted to avoid the deep scars of long-term unemployment the country experienced in the 1980s and 1990s.

That is why we pledged £5 billion to help get people back to work. We expanded the help in Jobcentre Plus, and provided extra support, more young people's jobs, extra training and apprenticeships. We also made sure we pressed on with welfare reforms to avoid the big increases in inactivity we saw in the past.

That action has made a difference. Unemployment has risen, and is expected to rise further, but the increase has been much lower than people expected and lower than in previous recessions. In addition, employment has fallen by less than in past recessions and fewer people have become inactive.

Now we need to look forward. We are also determined to apply the lessons of the past to the recovery. The real damage of previous decades was not just inflicted during the downturn, it also stemmed from a lack of sufficient action to get people back to work once the economy recovered. As a result, unemployment continued to rise for years after the recessions ended. We must not let that happen again.

Now is not the time to pull back our help for the unemployed. Families across Britain still need support. And lowering unemployment helps the public finances too – saving billions on benefits and increasing tax revenues as the economy and employment grow.



The White Paper sets out how we will combat the effects of this recession and continue on the path to our ambition of 80 per cent employment. It lays out our plans to get thousands more young people into jobs and training more quickly, our plans to help older workers, and our plans to deliver a more flexible, personalised service.

Our aim is not just to get people into jobs, but to help people stay in work, progress in work, and find employment that is satisfying and that fits with the rest of their lives. This White Paper lays out the steps that will take us ever closer to full, fulfilling employment: helping people back to work, giving people the opportunity to progress in their job and giving people the chance to balance their work and family lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yvette Cooper', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**The Rt Hon
Yvette Cooper MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions**