

Appendices

Appendix A – Responses to the public consultation *No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility*

Background

1. We published our Green Paper, *No-one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility*, on 21 July 2008 and opened it up for a full public consultation until 22 October 2008.
2. More than a thousand postal and electronic responses were received during the consultation period. This report draws on a representative sample of them and outlines the Government's next steps. More detailed information on how the Government is taking each policy forward is given in the relevant chapters of the White Paper.
3. In consulting on our wide-ranging welfare reform proposals, our aim was to ensure that everyone interested in contributing had an opportunity to comment, and to enable us to gain a better insight into people's opinions on the proposals.
4. For those who were able to attend consultation events, or participate in on-line or media discussions, opportunities were provided to debate the proposals more thoroughly. This helped us to understand where we need to be clearer about explaining the direction we think reform should take, and why we think it is the right direction for a modern day welfare state in which everyone has a positive and contributory role to play.
5. The volume of responses received, and the time and thought people have invested in giving us detailed and constructive feedback, has reflected the understandable level of interest in the future of welfare reform, and the impact it has on all our lives.

Making information accessible

6. We wanted to ensure that as many people as possible were able to access information on our proposals and produced the Green Paper in a wide range of formats. These included: Large Print; Easy Read; Quick Read; Braille; Audio and a British Sign Language DVD. PDF versions of the main paper and Easy Read version, as well as a Welsh Executive Summary were also available on line at www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/noonewrittenoff. Alternative formats were available at consultation events, and were also distributed on request throughout the consultation period.

What we consulted on

7. The Green Paper set out our commitment to bringing forward measures to:
 - reduce welfare dependency;
 - support more people into work;
 - provide greater support and control for disabled people; and
 - strengthen parental responsibility.
8. To facilitate the consultation process, the Green Paper included 28 consultation questions, built around the Green Paper proposals, and we invited people to respond to them or to submit their response in any way they preferred. Some people responded on every Green Paper proposal, others on a few, and some on just one of particular interest.

How we consulted

9. National consultation events in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Newcastle were attended by key stakeholders, including the general public. Workshops at the events enabled people to find out more about the Green Paper proposals, raise questions, and offer ideas for how they saw welfare reform being taken forward.
10. Throughout the consultation period, Ministers and officials responsible for developing welfare reform policy participated in regional and local consultation events, and also visited provider and training projects across England, Scotland and Wales, giving unemployed people, employer groups, providers and organisations representing key stakeholders more opportunities to air their views about the proposals.
11. Ministers hosted round-table discussions on welfare reform with key stakeholders and discussed proposals with the public through on-line forums, and radio phone-ins.

12. Ministers also visited Jobcentre Plus offices across Great Britain to ensure staff had opportunities to discuss the proposals with them from the perspective of those who will be delivering reforms to unemployed people.
13. Details of the events, visits and meetings associated with the consultation, as well as written responses to the consultation, were distributed to Ministers and officials involved in developing welfare reform policy. Further details on the range of consultation events can be found on www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/noonewrittenoff/consultation.asp

How written consultation feedback was evaluated

14. Consultation responses were evaluated by the Department for Work and Pensions. A separate evaluation was also commissioned to provide an external perspective on the consultation feedback. Separate public opinion research on some of the Green Paper measures, conducted by GfK Social Research, will be available soon at www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/noonewrittenoff/consultation.asp

Volume of responses

15. In addition to the feedback received at consultation events, and through media and on-line discussions, more than 1,000 written and electronic responses to the consultation were received from the general public, organisations and Jobcentre Plus staff. Responses from Jobcentre Plus employees are expressed as personal opinions and are not necessarily representative of the view of Jobcentre Plus.
16. Responses were received through: the Department for Work and Pensions mailbox; postal correspondence; on-line consultation forms and the House of Commons website. Comments on lone parent and parental responsibility measures were also captured from the Netmums forum. Details are in Table A.1.

Table A.1: Volume of responses to the Green Paper consultation

Response type	Number of responses
From organisations * 7 organisations submitted more than one response	396*
From the general public	303
From Jobcentre Plus staff	136
Captured from Netmums Forum	290
Total	1,125

What you told us

17. We received an overwhelming response to the Green Paper. The majority of those responding welcomed our commitment to increasing employment and skills opportunities for out-of-work people, particularly for those with the most extensive barriers to returning to work.

We support the Government's objective of helping disabled people and those with health problems into work. Employment is an important source of independence, self-esteem and social inclusion for everyone, and is particularly important for many people with learning disabilities or mental health needs.
(United Response)

Being a person with a disability I was worried how this paper would affect me if my disability got worse and I was unable to do my current job. After some reading I find that I am in agreement and feel that this could have a very positive effect...a person's self esteem can only be improved by being able to provide themselves and their families with a better quality of life.
(Jobcentre Plus employee)

Whilst we support the goal of moving one million incapacity benefit claimants from benefits to work, it must be recognised that employer attitudes to recruitment of people with health conditions and disabilities still pose a barrier as do complexities and 'traps' in the benefits system.
(Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities)

The board is generally supportive of the direction of reforms in the Green Paper – particularly the proposals to create more personalised support to help with job search and improve employability skills, and which recognise the different barriers people face.
(Greater London Authority and Mayor of London)

18. Many people welcomed the fact that disabled people and those with health conditions are at the forefront of our proposals to reform the welfare state.
19. Towards the end of the consultation period, people raised understandable concerns about the impact of the economic climate on job availability and security. Some felt this was a reason to retreat from reforms, fearing that undue pressure would be put on people to find employment in a highly competitive market.
20. Others, and we agree with them, felt that now is not the time to turn our backs on people and encouraged us to press on with our reforms. Preparing for a return to work, and developing the skills employers need, is an investment worth making.

We would urge the Department to stay on course with reform, and remain steadfast in pursuing the central objectives of reaching those furthest from the labour market, and eradicating child poverty. As recession sets in and unemployment levels rise, it will take some grit and determination to hold firm with proposals which support those people who did not attain sustainable work even in a time of economic prosperity.

(Turning Point)

The changed economic climate does not mean the pace of reform should be slowed. It would be easy to assume that the current economic downturn lessens the need to push forward with radical reform of the way we support people in to work. But in reality, the reverse is true. The CBI believes that the economic downturn creates an imperative for action.

(CBI)

21. Overall, people broadly welcomed:

- more support to help people back to work, particularly for those with the most employment barriers;
- an increased focus on ability rather than disability;
- a greater focus on offering lone parents, disabled people and people with health conditions the chance to improve their work skills;
- more promotion of volunteering opportunities;
- improved support for benefit claimants who are problem drug users;
- a stronger sanctions regime for those who seek to defraud the system;
- more expectations of employers;
- the doubling of the Access to Work budget;
- more support to help people return to their jobs after a period of ill-health;
- full child maintenance disregard in all out of work benefits;
- measures to increase parental responsibility;
- simplification of the benefits system;
- giving disabled people the right to request an Individual Budget; and
- increased devolution of services for out-of-work people to local areas and local providers.

22. Concerns were raised, or greater clarity or reassurance was sought on:
- what will be expected of those who are referred to the 'Work for Your Benefit' pilot;
 - the implications of increased conditionality for different customer groups and whether such conditionality will increase job outcomes;
 - whether safeguards are in place to ensure that disabled people are not sanctioned inappropriately;
 - whether sufficient childcare is available to enable parents to work;
 - whether employers will offer jobs to people with mental health or fluctuating health conditions;
 - whether the review of the Work Capability Assessment is premature;
 - the suitability of those conducting the Work Capability Assessment and whether they have sufficient understanding of fluctuating and mental health conditions;
 - whether Personal Advisers have sufficient understanding of fluctuating and mental health conditions;
 - how the needs of carers will be met in a reformed welfare system;
 - how some measures will be delivered in the devolved administrations;
 - whether increased provision of services from the private sector, and outcome-based contracts, will benefit those with the most employment barriers.
 - whether people would lose out, in real terms, during the rate alignment process of Incapacity Benefit and the Employment and Support Allowance.

An obligation to work

23. In Chapter 2 of the Green Paper, *An obligation to work*, we set out our vision of a welfare state in which people do not become dependent on benefits and become detached from the labour market.
24. We said that we wanted to look at escalating sanctions for the significant minority of people who fail to comply with requirements designed to help them return to work.

25. Responses were mixed on this. Some respondents were in favour of increased sanctions for those who abuse the system; others recommended they were used with care, and some raised concerns about the consequences of benefit sanctions on family income.

Barnardo's believes, as the Green Paper acknowledges, that the majority of claimants want to get back into work. Therefore, for those that have not moved into work, there may be some significant barrier preventing them from doing so. It is crucial therefore that compulsion is seen as a last resort only after a claimant has been fully supported to overcome identified barriers.

(Barnardo's)

Personal Advisors should take into account that people with significant disabilities in particular people with learning disabilities may not be able to understand and comprehend the request made by them...as a result of this they may incur sanctions.

(Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE))

...while sanctions may act as a helpful incentive in some cases, it is a fairly 'blunt instrument' and great care must be taken to avoid it becoming counter-productive, with people feeling they need to prove why they can't work rather than building aspirations and tackling barriers so they can work.

(Papworth Trust)

Skill recognises the need to have sanctions on benefits but would like flexibility to be built into the fortnightly reviews...transport might be inaccessible or difficult particular for some people with mobility impairment.

(Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities.)

How the Government is taking this forward

We intend to bring forward legislation which will mean that those who ignore a mandatory appointment under the Jobseeker's Allowance regime will be subject to a benefit sanction of no less than one full week of Jobseeker's Allowance. We will also ensure that further failures to attend would result in a sanction amounting to the loss of two weeks benefit.

We will ensure that each individual's circumstances are carefully considered before imposing a sanction. We will also maintain the safeguards which are already in place to prevent unfair use of sanctions on anyone, including vulnerable people. We support, and will look to pilot, Professor Gregg's principle of sanction escalation for those who repeatedly fail to attend appointments or undertake required activity.

26. We also asked people to let us know what they thought about proposals for:
- testing up to six months full-time work experience ('Work for Your Benefit') for people who have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for two years or more;
 - strengthening the Jobseeker's Allowance regime to deter benefit fraud;
 - expecting problem drug users on benefit to take appropriate steps to support a return to work; and
 - requiring lone parents and those in the Work Related Activity Group of the Employment and Support Allowance to improve their work-related skills.

Work for Your Benefit

27. In the Green Paper, we announced our intention to pilot mandatory work experience for the small percentage of people who are still unemployed at the end of the Flexible New Deal period. Claimants who reach this stage are likely to have become detached from, or possibly never connected with, the labour market and may have significant barriers to work.
28. Some respondents were opposed to the principle of anyone working for their benefit while others thought it was reasonable that people who had been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for a protracted period were expected to take up the opportunity to get back into the habit of work.

We are strongly opposed to forcing an individual to work full time in return for their benefits.

(Poverty Alliance)

Once someone has been on Jobseeker's Allowance for 12 months, I think they should be made to work part time for their benefit. Once they've been on Jobseeker's Allowance for 2 years, the requirement should be full time.

(Individual)

Broadway broadly welcomes the principles behind the Work for your Benefit scheme.

(Broadway)

29. Three consultation questions were posed on Work for Your Benefit to draw out people's views on how long it should last, how it could be incentivised, and whether it could be used as an alternative to a benefit sanction. Examples of responses to all three questions are provided below.

Question 1: How long should 'Work for Your Benefit' last at different stages in the claim?

A person should work for their benefit until they enter on to a work/skills related training programme or find employment.

(Joint Partnership response: Wakefield Skills Enterprise and Work Partnership)

There is little evidence that workfare increases the likelihood of finding work. It can even reduce employment chances by limiting the time available for job search and by failing to provide the skills and experience valued by employers.

(Child Poverty Action Group)

Work for your benefit should only be used as a last stage, for repeat claimants, and where fraud is suspected.

(Summary of response from group of London Housing Association residents)

...if the community work continues for more than 12 weeks and the customer is meeting the requirements of the person managing their work, they should be paid the minimum wage for the number of hours work they undertake, rather than Jobseeker's Allowance.

(St. Mungo's)

It should become a permanent feature after 12 months of claiming Jobseeker's Allowance to give people both work and social skills and should be presented positively rather than as a stick and promoted as helping the individual find work and overcome barriers.

(Individual)

Would depend on why the person is being required to work for their benefit. It should be an experience that gives the claimant the reality of full time work as well as the opportunity to get to know the organisation, staff team and clients well. Where possible, training should be linked to the placement and for some there may a need to develop social skills.

(Sunderland City Council)

Question 2: How could capacity and capability to provide full-time work experience in the community sector be provided and incentivised to produce the best employment outcomes for participants?

It is critical...that it is structured and helps to create a pathway to sustained employment. This will require a range of activities to be available, in line with the greater personalisation of welfare to work services.

(Employment Related Services Association (ERSA))

Given the Government's commitment to full-cost recovery for the voluntary sector, Rethink believes that community sector organisations should be paid for providing this kind of work experience.

(Rethink)

We need investment in work programmes as there simply are not jobs that could provide a living wage in a lot of areas.

(Individual)

DWP should made additional funds available to support the voluntary sector create and sustain suitable opportunities for individuals to undertake targeted activities that will meet their specific developmental needs.

(Welsh Assembly Government)

People need to do activities that build confidence and self esteem alongside developing their skills base. They need to feel that working for their benefits is not about doing low skilled, unrewarding and unrecognised work.

(Barnet Service User Group)

Question 3: Is full-time Work for Your Benefit as an alternative to a sanction or loss of benefit for non-compliance with work search requirements an effective option for some job seekers? How should it be targeted?

Work for Your Benefit is likely to be an effective option, and a far more positive step than imposing sanctions through withdrawing benefits.

(ECAS)

No, both tools should be utilised. Sanctions exist as a penalty for not complying with the conditions for receiving benefit.

(Jobcentre Plus employee)

continued

No one should be forced into menial low paid work. Might be useful to encourage claimants to do a period of voluntary work whereby they would not lose benefit but would gain experience and extra reward for trying. i.e expenses or small remuneration for effort'.

(Individual)

...making 'sanctions' interchangeable with 'work for your benefit'; will reduce the credibility of work experience with both claimants and the community sector. If work for benefit is not to be regarded as a punishment for being out of work then we can see no advantage to this proposal.

(National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers)

Work for Your Benefit is preferable to loss of benefit because it should help people move towards a lifestyle which includes the routine of working.

(South Essex Partnership NHS)

How the Government is taking this forward

We will pilot providing up to six months full-time work experience through Work for Your Benefit to test whether the support provided helps long-term unemployed people back to work. We will test the programme in a number of Jobcentre Plus districts, requiring participation from a proportion of those who are still out of work at the end of the Flexible New Deal period, and as a discretionary power for Personal Advisers for those they believe they would benefit.

Penalties for committing benefit fraud

30. We believe that benefit fraud is theft of taxpayer's money and that effective deterrents and punishments need to be in place. Many people agreed that more effective deterrents were needed to reduce benefit fraud and some felt there was a correlation between lack of work opportunities and fraud.

The penalties should be the same as for any other stealing...there should be zero tolerance...this crime should be taken more seriously.

(Individual)

The best way to stop people committing benefit fraud is to make the work opportunities available and the salaries paid (e.g. a higher minimum wage) to make work more attractive to people.

(Safer Bristol Partnership)

31. Examples of responses received on the two consultation questions on benefit fraud are given below.

Question 4: What penalties do you think would be most effective to deter more people from committing benefit fraud?

...serious cases of fraud should be dealt with through the processes outlined in the Green Paper and through HM Courts as currently occurs and in less serious cases by reduction of benefit according to the value of over claim or payment.
(Nottinghamshire County Council)

Whilst it is of course very important to prevent fraud within the benefits system, it is also crucially important not to focus so much attention on benefit fraud that the entire benefits system is stigmatised.
(Leonard Cheshire Disability)

The penalties that exist at the moment are adequate...many people fail to claim benefits to which they are entitled as the complexity of claiming and a climate of suspicion trap many in abject poverty.
(Individual)

Anyone who has been proved to have committed benefit fraud by a court of law should not be permitted to apply for benefits for period of time unless the application is genuine by confirmation from the medical profession.
(Individual)

Question 5: Do you think it would be appropriate to reduce or withdraw entitlement to benefit after a first offence? How long should the sanction period be?

Yes, until a process of repayment has been agreed and some repayments have been made.
(Jobcentre Plus employee)

Yes. For as long as it takes the person to pay back the amount stolen plus interest.
(Kent Supported Employment)

We believe it is right to withdraw support after a first offence but only after extensive enquiries have taken place as to the reason for the offence such as illness.
(Association of Disabled Professionals)

continued

No. This could lead to further, even violent, crime rather than a reduction in crime.

(Individual)

Some sanction after a first offence is certainly necessary but there should be a correlation between the penalty and the offence.

(Individual)

For penalties to be an effective deterrent to benefit fraud they need to be well publicised and easy to understand. Claimants need to know when and how they should inform the benefits office of changes in circumstances: communication channels need to be clear and quick, and changes should be implemented without delay.'

(London Borough of Lambeth)

How the Government is taking this forward

The White Paper confirms that we intend to introduce a new sanction to reduce or withdraw entitlement to benefit for four weeks after a first benefit fraud offence. This will extend the penalty to cover those who commit a first offence which results not only in convictions, but also administrative penalties and formal cautions.

Breaking the cycle of drug dependency

32. We think that an holistic approach is needed to help problem drug users tackle their drug and benefit dependency. We received valuable feedback from individuals and organisations with considerable experience of working with drug dependant people.
33. There was general support for the principle of helping drug misusers with chaotic lifestyles to re-integrate with society, and, by doing so, reduce the burden on the taxpayer.
34. Some respondents had concerns about the potential impact of sanctions on drug misusers for failure to disclose use of heroin and cocaine. Others highlighted the important role employers have in making a return to employment a viable option for people recovering from drug misuse.

The Terrence Higgins Trust welcomes the commitment to improve joint agency working to provide support for drug users and agrees that helping individual back to work can be a key strand within this.

(Terrence Higgins Trust)

The majority of people on our service user panel had children and had concerns around whether declaring their drug using status to Jobcentre Plus would include referral to social services (children's services)...Fear of social services intervention is already a major factor preventing parents and particularly mothers from coming forward for drug treatment.

(Addaction)

Research suggests that to minimise perceived risks for employers an engagement programme providing both information and support to businesses and support to problem drug users once they are in employment will be required.

(UK Drugs Policy Commission)

35. Examples of responses to the two consultations questions on our drugs proposals are given below.

Question 6: Do you agree with the proposed approach for identifying problem drug use? How should it be implemented? Do you think that everyone claiming a working-age benefit should be required to make a declaration of whether or not they use certain specified drugs?

The proposal to consider the implementation of a 'treatment allowance' is encouraging. This recognises that treatment can be the most effective route into employment and will enable the client to focus on rehabilitation without the threat of benefit sanctions in doing so.

(ACT- together tackling addiction)

We think it highly unlikely that people dependent upon illegal drugs (even supposing that they define themselves as 'drug dependent') would declare their dependency to Jobcentre staff. Many of those with drug dependency are likely to be experiencing other serious mental health conditions, either a result of, or a trigger to, their drug addiction.

(Social Security Advisory Committee)

GLADA welcomes the integration of drug treatment with employment support and believes that close cooperation between these two sectors could lead to better treatment outcomes. However in order to support improved employment outcomes for people with a history of problematic drug and alcohol use, a range of other barriers in addition to dependency may need to be overcome.

(Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance (GLADA))

Question 7: What elements should an integrated system of drug treatment and employment support include? Do you agree that a rehabilitation plan would help recovering drug users to manage their condition and move towards employment?

Rehabilitation programmes which include life skills training...supporting people into stability and then helping people into work. Assistance with transition to work, with a focus on appropriate life skills training and support for clients
(*Westminster Drug Project*)

While 12 weeks retention in drug treatment is used by the National Treatment Agency as a minimum benchmark for treatment 'effectiveness', research has established that recovery journeys out of long-term drug dependency can take many years.
(*Drugscope*)

As someone exits rehabilitation it is important to engage them quickly in employment programmes if that is the recommendation of the drugs specialists with whom they are working.
(*Work Directions*)

The arrangement could include mandatory welfare to work action planning, with engagement on job readiness programmes as an essential part of their treatment plan. The advantage is that the process would focus on individual need, as is the intention of the Green Paper.
(*Compass*)

How the Government is taking this forward

In England, a new drug and employment support programme will be developed to provide integrated and personalised support for drug users on Jobseeker's Allowance or the Employment and Support Allowance. Claimants who are drug users will be referred for an initial assessment with a healthcare professional, who will decide whether they should be referred to the programme. Whilst on the programme they will receive a Treatment Allowance. We are continuing to explore with the Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly Government if these measures can be extended to Scotland and Wales.

Improving people's work skills

36. In the Green Paper, we described proposals for improving the employment skills of lone parents and people on the Employment and Support Allowance. Having the skills that employers need is even more important in the current economic climate and people were generally supportive of proposals to increase people's work skills, with some notes of caution about attaching a mandatory element to them.

Skills are an important area for employers as too often they are sadly lacking... we welcome the plans to require Jobseeker's Allowance claimants and encourage Employment and Support claimants to improve their skills.

(Institute of Directors)

If a claimant has an identified skills need and there is provision available that meets their individual needs (in terms of childcare and flexibility etc) and will have a significant impact on their employment, earnings and progression then they should be expected to undertake it.

(London Skills and Employment Board)

Skills for people on the Employment and Support Allowance

37. People who have been on Incapacity Benefit for a long time may lack the skills needed to get into sustained employment. We asked people for their views on when we should expect people on the Employment and Support Allowance to take a skills health check.

Question 8: When is the right time to require Employment and Support claimants to take a skills health check?

We would advocate giving Employment and Support Allowance claimants a right to a skills health check at the earliest opportunity and to early opportunities to undertake training to gain identified skills and ongoing development opportunities.

(RADAR)

We believe that Employment and Support Allowance claimants should take a skills health check when they move into the Work Related Activity Group. This would help to ensure that skill needs are assessed at the start and help inform the development of individual action plans.'

(Reed in Partnership)

'Where necessary skills checks should be available from day one; this would ensure that if there is a skills problem it can be addressed immediately. Any reform should...and respond to individual needs when addressing skills

(Federation of Small Businesses)

For new claims onto Employment and Support Allowance, skills health checks should be undertaken at 13 weeks as proposed. For Incapacity Benefit clients, skills health checks should be undertaken just after the Work Capability Assessment has taken place and local assessment centres should be made available.

(Welsh Assembly Government)

continued

13 weeks into the claim would be a good time to check the customer's skills as they would have had time to start their recovery. It is also after the time most short claims have ended thus reducing the number of customers needing to go through this part of the regime.

(Jobcentre Plus employee)

38. We also asked people for their views on whether people claiming the Employment and Support Allowance should be required to attend training to improve their skills. Here are some examples of how people responded.

Question 9: Should ESA customers be required to attend training in order to gain the identified skills they need to enter work?

Full training, based on programmes that provide individuals with the basic skills and mobility skills required to enter work, could be helpful with the appropriate support.

(Welsh Assembly Government)

If the skills check and accompanying training were made mandatory we would be concerned that without appropriate support people with autism could face sanctions for missing the skills check or training.

(National Autistic Society)

...would depend on the skills they already have, or if a return to work would depend on them developing new ones.

(Individual)

...it must be ensured that the training and skills provider is fully accessible.

This means that the premises need to be physically accessible, the content of the course needs to be accessible to all impairment groups and also that the trainers delivering the training are trained on making adjustments for disabled learners.

(Employer's Forum on Disability (EFD))

For anyone with a long term condition including ME, during this training time, and if training has to stop for health reasons, they should not be penalised, and their full benefits should be continued.

(BRAME)

How the Government is taking this forward

We will run eight pathfinders, requiring the Employment and Support Allowance claimants to undertake some work-related activity, to ensure that they engage with the personalised support we offer. Customers may agree with their personal advisers that skills training would be an appropriate work-related activity, and will be encouraged to do so where this is a barrier to work. If a customer has an identified severe skills need, but refuses to take any action to address this, we may require them to do skills training as their specific work-related activity.

Skills for lone parents

39. Our Green Paper proposed a requirement, where necessary, for lone parents, to attend a skills health check when their youngest child reaches five. It also proposed a pilot requiring lone parents whose youngest child is five or six to attend relevant skills training. Respondents were also asked to comment on a proposal to pilot a 'skills for work' premium to encourage lone parents with pre-school children to voluntarily take part in these activities in return for the premium.
40. There was general approval for the principle of offering lone parents skills health checks and skills opportunities, and encouraging them to take up such opportunities, but less enthusiasm for introducing any mandatory element.

It is imperative that parents move into suitable, sustainable, and well paid employment. Improving claimants' skills is therefore vital and Barnardo's welcomes the Green Paper's proposals to help claimants, particularly lone parents, to improve their skills.

(Barnardos)

As a single parent, I would welcome a skills health check to identify my strengths and weaknesses for prospective employment as if I had been out of the field for a lengthy period, I would find that helpful.

(Lone parent on the Netmums Forum)

Any moves to require lone parents to perform specific activities (skills health check and training) in return for benefits involving the use of benefit sanctions risks causing severe financial hardship among families.

(One Parent Families, Scotland)

Home educating lone parents as customers cannot enter employment under the planned arrangements, as they are unable to leave their home, or their children.

(Individual)

A compulsory skills interview may be a useful way of ensuring that lone parents know of the provision available. Compulsory participation however is unlikely to enthuse lone parents about the benefits of learning, and relies too much on discretionary adviser decisions.

(One Parent Families)

41. Some of those responding on the general issue of measures to help lone parents into work stressed the importance of available, affordable childcare.

...much progress has been made in the supply and funding of childcare but this does not mean that provision is always available when parents need it at the right quality and at a price they can afford. Daycare Trust is concerned that the drive to encourage more lone parents into paid work could be fatally undermined by a shortage of childcare for older children.
(*Daycare Trust*)

42. Examples of responses to the consultation questions on lone parents and skills are provided below.

Question 10: In view of the need to help lone parents develop the skills they need to find work, are we right to require lone parents to have a skills health check and training as a condition of receiving benefits?

It is reasonable to give lone parents the opportunity to participate in training at the earliest possible opportunity i.e. when their youngest child is five. This ensures that when they are eventually in a position to participate fully in the labour market they have the skills to do so. This should be in the wider context of making sure it is worthwhile for everyone, but especially lone parents, to be in work.

(*British Chamber of Commerce*)

We welcome the focus on skills as part of a strategy to increase the sustainability of employment...we are unconvinced that compelling participation in training for parents with children aged 5 – 7 yrs is the right way forward. A compulsory skills interview may be a useful way of ensuring that lone parents know of the provision available. Compulsory participation however is unlikely to enthuse lone parents about the benefits of learning, and...relies too much on discretionary adviser decisions.

(*One Parent Families*)

What we are also concerned about is that if a skills gap has been identified in the skills health check it is up to the lone parent adviser to decide in agreement with the lone parent whether and what kind of training s/he should take up.

(*Single Parent Action Network*)

How the Government is taking this forward

The White Paper confirms our intention to introduce a skills health check for lone parents. In the light of the Professor Paul Gregg Review, we want to expand our proposals to include broader work preparation activity. We therefore intend to pilot measures for lone parents with younger children to address skills gaps that have been identified as a barrier to starting work as well as participation in other work-related activity.

Question 11: Should we pilot extra benefit payments for lone parents in return for training, and, if so, when the youngest child is what age?

In our experience, where a lone parent understands that training will have a positive impact on their 'job readiness', they will voluntarily engage, as long as childcare is accessible and affordable. Many clients will engage with training without a financial incentive to do so.

(Work Directions)

In our view the age of the youngest child should be irrelevant; parents themselves are the best judges of whether engaging in training is appropriate for their family, if a lone parent is willing to take up training it should be encouraged. The scheme should be voluntary.

(Family Action)

Yes, this would assist women and the age of the youngest child should be 5 years old as this is the critical time for women to enter the labour market.

(Women Like Us)

We welcome the proposal to provide extra benefit payments for lone parents to undertake training courses, and if voluntary, do not feel that a minimum age is necessary – no parent should be excluded if they are able to access appropriate childcare to enable attendance."

(Citizens Advice Bureau)

How the Government is taking this forward

As set out above, we intend to pilot measures for parents with younger children to address skills gaps. We will consider the responses to this question in this context.

Improving access to full-time training

43. The Green Paper described the recently introduced flexibilities to the 16 hour study rule in Jobseeker's Allowance so that it is no longer a barrier to employment-focused training for people who need it, and have a pathfinder in the West Midlands to test the new approach. This will enable eligible people to take part in full time employment related training for up to eight weeks. Respondents were broadly supportive of this new arrangement.

We fully support the 8 week flexibility and the notion of giving consideration to extend the eight-week period if innovative proposals are put forward that would require this.

(Association of Learning Providers)

We have welcomed the announcement that the 16 hour study rule in JSA will no longer be a barrier to employment focused training, and the introduction of a training allowance for undertaking full-time employment-related training for up to 8 weeks.

(Citizens Advice)

The Association of Scottish Colleges proposed a modified Jobseeker's Allowance, where benefits would support longer-term full time students, and the Social Security Advisory Committee stated that they "would welcome a general review of the 16 hour study rule in JSA and more thought being given to policies which lift barriers to access to training, incentivise those who participate in training and create a positive attitude towards education and training.

44. We asked stakeholders to tell us about other circumstances which they feel make it difficult for people to get the skills they need to enter employment. Although the question was intended to focus on any barriers presented by any benefit rules, some respondents highlighted other barriers that people experience in gaining the skills they need. Examples of what they told us are given below.

Question 12: Are there any other circumstances where customers cannot get the skills they need to enter employment under present and planned arrangements?

We recommend that, as a minimum, services are flexible to need, for example, vocational options could be integrated more widely with Further Education colleges so that training is work focused, flexible and demand led, directed by the employer and local labour market. Funding streams should be flexible enough to support the radical new proposals – we must allow clients to access the help they need, when they need it, without bureaucracy getting in the way.

(Working Links)

continued

There is a lack of personalised Information Advice and Guidance about possible education, work and career options via careers service or other sources. The “unknown” – disabled people do not know that support such as Access to Work is available in employment.

(Employers Forum on Disability)

More support, especially in Housing Benefit is needed for vulnerable claimants to enable them to train for sustainable employment, rather than be pushed into low-skilled, low paid and insecure work which may result in repeat homelessness.

(Scottish Homelessness and Employability Network and Scottish Council for Single Homeless)

Volunteering and developing skills for work

45. In the Green Paper, *No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility*, we acknowledged that voluntary activity can keep unemployed people in touch with the labour market. We invited views on ways in which we can encourage people to volunteer while retaining a clear focus on moving off welfare into paid employment.

Question 13: How might we build on the foundations of the current rules so that they do not discourage unemployed people from volunteering as a deliberate back-to-work strategy, while retaining a clear focus on moving off welfare into paid employment?

...if customers can embark on voluntary work safe in the knowledge that they are not liable to be recalled from it any moment, they will be able to develop the routines and habits that in turn allow them to regain confidence and skills such that they reach a point where they do feel able to take on more responsibility. When they then take on paid work, they will have developed the self-sufficiency required to deal with the new challenge.

(Action for Blind People)

Develop strategic partnerships and action plans on volunteering for unemployed people; Allocate resources to implement action plans on volunteering by unemployed people; Incentivise Department for Work and Pensions front line staff to refer claimants to volunteering; keep Department for Work and Pensions front line staff up to date with current policy/rules on volunteering while on benefits; Develop/strengthen local partnerships between Department for Work and Pensions and volunteer centres; send out a positive public message about volunteering while on benefits.

(Volunteer Development Scotland)

We believe that Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus should do more to communicate the breadth of volunteering opportunities to claimants and to Jobcentre Plus Advisers.

(Volunteering England)

How the Government is taking this forward

Jobcentre Plus is following through with the project proposed in the Green Paper. This will involve key players in the third sector and will look at how we could further promote volunteering opportunities to claimants, and ensure the benefit entitlement rules for volunteers are understood by all.

46. We received valuable feedback, much of which focused on the importance of clear communications to our customers on the rules around volunteering and maintaining eligibility for benefits.

No-one written off

47. In Chapter 3 of the Green Paper, *No one written off*, we described the increased employment support we want to offer disabled people and people with health conditions, and also talked about the vital role employers have in helping their employees to remain in sustained employment.
48. We asked people to tell us what they thought about proposals to make assessments for disabled people and people with health conditions more work-focused; what we should expect of people who will be able to prepare for a return to work; what assistance they might need, and how employers can do more to support employees back to work after a period of ill-health.
49. We know from responses received that some disabled people and organisations representing them are concerned that our proposals do not acknowledge the very real difficulties some disabled people experience in managing their day-to-day lives.
50. For many people who are capable of preparing for work, this is the first time they will have been given the opportunity and support to do so. Advisers will be able to tell them more about the help that is available to support them into work.

In the past, if your health was poor or you developed a disability, it meant that you were unable to do your job and were likely to be signed off sick and potentially heading towards Incapacity benefit. The capability assessment does signal a real step-change in approach, and in that sense, is to be wholeheartedly welcomed.
(*Shaw Trust*)

continued

Despite very positive elements, including the development of the Access to Work programme, initiatives to tackle work related stress and an increase in supportive employment schemes – I am deeply concerned that the Green Paper and its proposals lack a real understanding of the needs of people with complex mental and physical illnesses.

(Individual)

I have helped lots of people back to work who have been claiming Incapacity Benefit or Income Support for long periods of time...I work with a fantastic group of people who are dedicated to helping people back to work.

(Jobcentre Plus employee)

51. We expect the Employment and Support Allowance to be a temporary benefit for the majority of people. Work Focused Health Related Assessments (WFHRA) will be conducted at key points in the Employment and Support Allowance claim to identify the type of work people in the Work Related Activity Group will be able to do when they are able to return to employment.
52. Many of those who responded were in favour of the Work Capability Assessment and Work Focused Health Related Assessment being refocused, but stressed that the assessments needed to take account of individual needs, particularly for those with mental health and fluctuating health conditions.

Question 14: Do you agree that the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) and Work Focused Health Related Assessment (WFHRA) should be refocused to increase work-related support?

We support the emphasis in the new Work Capacity Assessment towards what individuals can do rather than what they cannot, although this will require assessors to be fully competent to judge the impact of a mental disorder on an individual's capacity to work in both the short and long term.

(Mental Health Foundation)

We support the proposals to re-focus the WCA and the WFHRA on work-related support. We agree that a large proportion of current IB claimants could work, given the right help and assistance. We caution, however, that incentives for individuals are important too, and that without the right incentives, individuals may be unlikely to move off benefits and into work.

(Association of British Insurers)

Yes, work related support should encompass a wide range of personalised support. Opportunities for confidence building and skill building activities/ courses are essential for those who have not worked for some time. Also, once people have taken the step back into suitable employment the personalised support should continue for an appropriate period.

(Mental Health Aberdeen)

continued

It may be that an individual is able to undertake a number of tasks on their own, and other tasks with support. We therefore believe it is vital for the assessments to include work-related support if this increases their opportunity to undertake employment.

(Metropole Learning)

The medical test must also take account of a recipient's mental state. This includes treating conditions such as Aspergers Syndrome as learning disorders.

(Individual)

53. We will expect people in the Employment and Support Allowance Work Related Activity Group to undertake work-related activity so they are better prepared for the time when they are ready to enter or return to work, and will offer them personalised support.
54. We asked people what expectations there should be of people in this group and whether the activity they undertake should include job search.

How the Government is taking this forward

We will evaluate how effective the Work Capability Assessment is at identifying the level of disability and health problems among claimants throughout next year and will publish a report. We will also review how cases are handled once entitlement has been determined. We will establish a maximum of two years between medical assessments and look at how renewals are handled.

Question 15: What expectations should there be of people undertaking the personalised support we will now be offering in the Work Related Activity Group? Could this include job search?

Requirements placed on people receiving personalised support should be directed towards them understanding the benefits of work and having sufficient time with a skilled adviser to build a relationship of trust. Once this is established, what is offered should be based on evidence of what works in terms of supporting people into work.

(Sainsburys Centre for Mental Health)

Mind believes it is reasonable to expect individuals to participate in discussions and make informed decisions about the sort of activity that they are able to cope with and that they want to participate in...Mind is opposed to extending these requirements to include job search. This blurs the distinction between the benefits of Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance and may well force people into stressful and unsuccessful interviews for jobs that they are not ready to take up.

(Mind)

What is essential is that the individual has had the appropriate preparation and support before being pushed down the work route. There needs to be flexibility in the process which is not time limited and ensures that the individual is ready. Without this, there is a risk that an individual will be pushed into a job that is unsuitable, or at too early a point. This will ultimately not lead to sustained employment. We would also emphasise that people with a learning disability are all individuals and with different talents and skills to offer an employer. A 'specific' job search must not pigeon hole people with a learning disability into certain job roles.

(Mencap)

Jobsearch is an essential skill empowering people to move back into work, but it must be remembered that it comes in all shapes and sizes and what may be useful for some people may be considered as unnecessary repetition for others. Key is to tailor and personalise support to individual need and not take a "one size fits all" approach.

(A4E – Action for Employment)

How the Government is taking this forward

Building on Professor Gregg's Progression to Work proposals, we will run eight pathfinders, requiring the Employment and Support Allowance claimants to undertake some work-related activity, to ensure that they engage with the personalised support we offer. Customers will agree, together with a personal adviser, what activity would be most appropriate for them. This could be anything that helps the individual to move closer to the labour market, including addressing barriers created by health conditions, developing new skills or finding out about the local labour market. In some cases, where customers have severe health conditions or skills needs or do not take part in any effective work-related activity, we may require them to do something specific to address their particular barrier to work. Customers would never be required to apply for or take up specific jobs.

Increased support from Access to Work

55. The Access to Work programme provides funding to help disabled people move into and stay in employment. Access to Work can pay towards the equipment someone might need at work; adapting premises to meet their needs, or a support worker. It can also pay towards the cost of getting to work if a disabled person cannot use public transport, or for a communicator at job interviews.
56. The doubling of the Access to Work budget was welcomed by respondents, typified by the response from the Scottish Government.

The doubling of the budget is very much to be welcomed. We also welcome the indication that the Department for Work and Pensions is seeking to be more flexible in the use of the fund. We would particularly want to ensure that Access to Work is made as responsive and flexible as possible for people with those mental health conditions which are defined as disabilities.
(*Scottish Government*)

57. Some of those responding to the consultation, expressed concerns about the impact of our reforms on those with fluctuating health conditions, including mental health conditions. We have said that, in doubling the Access to Work budget, we are keen to explore how we can make Access to Work more responsive to the needs of those with such conditions. Here are some examples of what people said to us about this.

Question 16: How can we make Access to Work more responsive to the needs of claimants with fluctuating conditions – including mental health conditions?

Have consistency in the approval process across the country. Allowing applications to be submitted before commencement of employment will help to remove barriers earlier.
(*Birmingham Economic Development Partnership*)

...acknowledge the proven health benefits of establishing a baseline and then pacing against it, by considering symptoms at their best, worst and average over a given time period...at this point, the person with M.E. should also lay out what kind of workplace environment they need to sustain their health. This could be the option to work from home, having a quiet space within the office to retreat to periodically, modified technology, or simply the knowledge that your colleagues and manager are on your side, not against you.
(*Action for ME*)

It is important that people accessing the service do not feel stigmatised or that they are making unreasonable requests, especially when at the time of assessment they may appear well and not in need of significant support.
(*Arthritis Care*)

Better promotion of Access to Work budgets among employers and made a statutory right for all disabled people in employment.
(*Beginnings*)

58. We also asked people to tell us what could be done to make Access to Work more flexible to help people meet the work-focused requirements set out in the Green Paper. The Employer's Forum on Disability said:

...better understanding among individuals, intermediaries and employers of the adjustments that Access to Work can fund is crucial. Where individuals are required to undertake training, interviews or other work-related activity, it is essential that adjustments and support are provided where needed. If they are not provided, and adequately funded, then clearly the individual will be unable to carry out their duties to the best of their ability.

(Employer's Forum on Disability (EFD))

59. Examples of what people said in response to the consultation question on this are given below.

Question 17: What additional flexibilities in the system or forms of support would claimants with multiple and complex problems need to enable them to meet the new work-focused requirements proposed in this Green Paper?

Access to Work could be provided in the form of 'credits', similar to an insurance approach or a 'call out' service (likened to computer maintenance), allowing people to draw on it when required e.g. by securing out-of-hours support, mentoring, counselling or stress management. This could be achieved via partial integration with individual budgets and would enable people with fluctuating conditions to benefit.

(Disability Alliance)

Access to Work should support people with learning difficulties in employment.

(People First)

We would like to see sufficient flexibility in the funding rules so that if an employer has several employees with similar access needs, it should be possible to pool Access to Work funding, for example, to fund a support worker to support a group of employees.

(Solstice Nurseries)

We believe that the case should be made for every disabled person to have a right to Access to Work based upon a full assessment of their in-work needs. This could occur as part of the Work Focused Health Related Assessment, or at an early stage in discussion with a personal advisor.

(RNID)

Our principle concerns about the scheme have tended to be that it can be over-bureaucratic; that it is not well enough publicised, and that it could be better funded...much of the bureaucracy could be avoided by making the scheme more portable and more focused on the individual.

(Leonard Cheshire Disability)

continued

Access to Work could fund external support through specialised supported employment teams to provide in work support to both claimant and employer, therefore assisting the claimant to remain in work, taking lead in encouraging open communication and possible solutions to individual barriers.
(*Tameside Metropolitan Borough*)

How the Government is taking this forward

We announced in October 2008 that we would be piloting flexible Access to Work for people with a fluctuating mental health condition. The pilots are now underway.

Engaging employers

60. Welfare reform cannot be taken forward successfully without the active involvement of employers. Apart from demonstrating good employment practices in recruitment, it is vital that employers take positive steps to facilitate job sustainability, particularly when their employees become temporarily unable to work due to ill-health. People responding acknowledged this.

The Scottish Government agrees that many people would benefit from remaining in work as a means of facilitating their recovery from illness or injury.
(*Scottish Government*)

The Government should be more proactive on employer responsibilities – whether through conditionality, support or incentives.
(*Mind*)

Some employers and employees do not always appreciate the benefits that employees will gain from initially returning to work on reduced hours of work or modified duties. They may need help to identify working arrangements that will enable these benefits to be gained.
(*Employer's Engineering Federation*)

61. Medical practitioners also have a key role to play which is why we are working with them on a reform of the 'sick note' as proposed by Dame Carol Black in her Review of the health of Britain's working-age population, *Working for a healthier tomorrow*, which was published on 17 March. We published our response, *Improving health and work: changing lives*, on 25 November and will now change the paper based 'sick note' to an electronic 'fit note' to help focus on what people can do rather than what they cannot.

We are very pleased that the Government is now planning to take forward its proposed reforms to the medical certificate system so that, in the future, this will focus on the work that individuals can undertake and encourage their quick return to work.

(Engineering Employer's Federation)

We need to work more closely with GP bodies to make them aware of what is available to encourage them to move away from issuing a sick note...GPs say they have little time to this but an experienced Access to Work Adviser working with the patient, allowing more time in partnership with the surgery, would give that time.

(Access to Work Adviser, Jobcentre Plus)

Overall we think this is a positive paper and sets the scene to raise the profile of the work done by those in vocational rehabilitation, including occupational physicians and interested GPs. In particular, we welcome the proposed approach to reward innovation and joint working at a local level in the 'fit for work' pilots.

(British Medical Association)

62. A prompt return to work when a person is well enough, can prevent them becoming another long-term benefit claimant. We asked people for their views on the key components of an action plan between employers and their employees to make a quicker return to work a more viable option.

Question 18: What are the key features of an action planning approach that would best support employees and employers to take the steps for the employee to make a swifter return to work?

...should be drawn up as soon as possible once the employee is well enough to engage in the planning process. It is usually helpful if the employer maintains supportive contact with the worker or his/her family (without being inappropriately interfering).

(Faculty of Occupational Medicine)

We would like to see the availability of 'Disability Leave' so that employees with long term illnesses or disabilities are able to attend appointments for essential services and assessments e.g. for wheelchair assessments or cancer treatments. Key features for action planning should include: agreed clear goals with time scales...a flexible, 'open door' policy to support people at times of crisis...regular reviews with agreed dates.

(College of Occupational Therapists)

There is a need to actively engage employers, both to highlight the benefits of supporting their employees with a long-term condition to remain in work and to remind them of their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act. It is equally essential that employees and employers are able to access information about the support that might be available, including examples of best practice.
(*Parkinson's Disease Society*)

Ending child poverty

63. Growing up in poverty limits children's life chances. We think that more needs to be done to enable all children to have the same opportunities to progress in life, which is why the Government have committed to enshrining the child poverty target in legislation. In response, the Child Poverty Action Group said:

The Prime Minister's commitment to enshrine the 2020 target into legislation is an excellent step forward, sending a strong signal and lead that child poverty is unacceptable and that all have a role in tackling it. The Child Poverty Action Group believes that correctly constructed such a legal move will help to strengthen and to orientate moves across government towards the 2020 goal.

Encouraging parents to take more responsibility

64. We believe that more needs to be done to encourage individuals and families to take responsibility for providing for their families to ensure their children are given the best start in life.
65. In Chapter 4 of the Green Paper, *Ending Child Poverty*, we set out measures to further promote parental responsibility. These included a full child maintenance disregard in all out-of-work benefits, to enable children to fully benefit from all the maintenance that is paid for them, and providing the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission with strengthened enforcement powers.
66. We also said that we will introduce legislation to require unmarried parents to jointly register the birth of their children to encourage more parents to recognise their parental responsibilities from the outset.
67. Although specific consultation questions were not posed on these, most of those who responded on full child maintenance disregard were very supportive of this measure, including some of those who contributed to the Netmums Forum discussion on it.

Full Child Maintenance disregard

'I think this is a fantastic proposal!'

'I think the whole maintenance issue needs to be looked at. Firstly, I think it tars all absent fathers with the same brush, that they are all a waste of space who walked out on their children, which is simply not true in many cases. Also, I think they need to evaluate the whole situation regarding earnings, take into account BOTH parents situation.'

(Individuals on Netmums Forum)

The Child Poverty Action Group fully supports the full disregard of child maintenance.

(Child Poverty Action Group)

We welcome the plans to enable parents on means-tested benefits to keep all of their child maintenance payments. This measure also provides some simplification following the earlier announcement to disregard child maintenance in housing and council tax benefit calculations.

(Citizens Advice)

The Law Centre thoroughly welcomes the Green Paper's proposals to fully disregard maintenance earnings and believes that this will have positive implications for the government's endeavours to eradicate child poverty by 2020.

(Law Centre NI)

How the Government is taking this forward

We can confirm that a full child maintenance disregard will be introduced in all income-related benefits from April 2010. We are also bringing forward legislation to enable the new Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission, without first seeking a court order, to disqualify a non resident parent from holding or obtaining travel documents (such as passports) where they wilfully refuse to maintain their children, and to extend the time-bar on prosecutions for failure to provide information from six to twelve months.

68. Parents on the Netmums forum also discussed Joint Birth Registration and their comments included:

Joint Birth Registration

'wholeheartedly agree with the registering of fathers. In fact fathers should be involved all the way through from birth.'

'I do think that both parents should be named on the birth certificate for as much as the child to know the fathers name if nothing else. However, this does open up a whole new debate...- gay partnerships how does this affect them?'

'The registering of the birth is fine, I think it is right that both parents are on the birth certificate and I think it's right that both parents get PR, until the point that one parent walks out of the child's life.'

It sounds as though it might be a good idea to re-think the link between the birth certificate and parental responsibility/other obligations. After all, we want to give every child the maximum opportunity to have the right parents listed, for their own sense of identity and wellbeing.

While I think the idea of resident parents being able to keep all of their maintenance payments the idea of forcing unmarried parents to register the birth of their child is not such a good idea – at least until there is a change in the system regarding parental responsibility.

How the Government is taking this forward

In June 2008 we announced our intention to promote child welfare and parental responsibility by requiring unmarried parents to jointly register the birth of their children. By jointly registering, unmarried fathers will acquire parental responsibility and have the opportunity to fulfil their role as parents.

A more active regime for partners of benefit recipients

69. In Chapter 4 of the Green Paper, we also explained our plans for helping the partners of benefit recipients into work. Introducing increased conditionality for the partners of benefit claimants met with a mixed response. The proposals apply to partners who are capable of work, and for those without children, and those with children aged seven or under. This would bring the benefit conditions broadly in line with those for lone parents.

We welcome support and encouragement for partners to enter paid employment however have reservations about the appropriateness of JSA conditionality being imposed upon partners. If this conditionality is to be introduced then steps will need to be taken to assure both that it is imposed in a culturally sensitive manner and also that such a new regime does not result in tension between partners, resulting in the breakdown of relationships and the risk of the exposure of more children to poverty.

(Social Security Advisory Committee)

It should also be remembered that child poverty rates are disproportionately high among families of Pakistani/Bangladeshi origin and it will be important to check that the proposals (and associated sanctions) do not have the unintended consequence of increasing child poverty within this vulnerable group.

(Ethnic Minority Advisory Group)

70. Here are some examples of what people said in response to the consultation question on this measure.

Question 20: What approaches might be suitable to assist partners of benefit claimant who can work into employment?

Perhaps paying a flat rate of benefit to each individual and insisting that they each satisfy the conditions. Presently the restrictions on hours of work and earnings disregard for JSA/Income Support are restrictive and discourage a partner to work.

(Jobcentre Plus employee)

'The Government could go further and offer support to those families who are not claiming out of work benefits but are "working poor". By offering support and job opportunities to these potential second earners it would assist in lifting more families out of poverty...potential second earners need to be reached and encouraged to find employment.'

(Women Like Us)

One member of a partnership where there are children should be encouraged to work as an aid to eradicate child poverty, as both have the responsibility. Similarly, those without children, should also be encouraged to work where possible. If possible both partners should be interviewed together and a joint decision taken. If both are out of work and both are capable of work, both should look for work once the youngest child has reached the age of seven.

(National Council of Women of Great Britain)

How the Government is taking this forward

The White Paper confirms that where at least one member of the couple is capable of work, income-related support will be available via Jobseeker's Allowance only. Couples where both partners are capable of work will be required to make a joint-claim for Jobseeker's Allowance and both will need to be available for and actively seeking work as a condition of receiving Jobseeker's Allowance. We aim to use the Progression to Work pilots described earlier in this Appendix to test new ways of supporting parents with younger children into work. Where only one member of the couple is capable of working, the claim will not be a joint claim. We will put in place exemptions to protect couples, for example where a partner can not work because of ill-health or caring responsibilities, or those with children aged under seven.

Delivering choice and control for disabled people

71. In Chapter 5 of the Green Paper, *Delivering choice and control for disabled people*, we made it clear that despite the fact that much has been achieved to deliver equality for disabled people, more needs to be done to ensure they have more choice and control over their lives.
72. Giving disabled people a say in how resources are spent on them is one way to increase the choice and control they have. We asked people for their views on the steps we should take to enable disabled people to access an Individual Budget if they want one.
73. The majority of those who responded on this were very supportive of giving disabled people the choice about whether they wish to manage this budget themselves.

DEAC unreservedly supports the principles behind Individualised Budgets DEAC views the use of individualised budgets as an opportunity to open up paid employment for people with fluctuating health conditions, including mental health conditions. For instance, an individualised budget could be used, in some limited instances, with the agreement of the employer, to pay for a temp when the person is off work due to their fluctuating condition.
(*Disability Employment Advisory Committee (DEAC)*)

We are supportive of the principle of additional control and choice of services for those with disabilities. This is being taken forward in Scotland through our policy area of "self-directed support" which refers to the process of giving individuals the ability to control their own budget for social care.
(*Scottish Government*)

74. Here are some of the things people said in response to the consultation question on Individual Budgets.

Question 21: What are the next steps in enabling disabled people reliably and easily to access an individual budget if they want one? Should they include legislation to give people a right to ask for a budget or will the other levers the Government has got prove sufficient? What are the safeguards that should be built in? How can this be done?

Individual Budgets can play a key role in helping disabled people enter employment. This can be achieved by allowing individuals to purchase training and/or employment support from a provider of their choice. Allowing people to use their Individual Budget to access volunteering opportunities, or employment advocacy services such as ours will also be beneficial.

(Breakthrough UK Limited)

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust welcomes the extension of the Direct Payments scheme and encourages the more flexible approach of Direct Payments, where money does not have to be spent only on tangible 'kit', but also on variable support for people with fluctuating health conditions...It is therefore essential that the process is simplified and that support is offered as this scheme is extended so that the benefit is claimed, rather than being ignored due to its complexity.

(Cystic Fibrosis Trust)

Should be made as simple and easy as possible...should be based on self-assessment and person-centred approaches.

(Individual)

Within the choice and control agenda, the key to success will be the provision of accessible and accurate information about providers and their abilities to meet the specific needs of individuals...this will have to be based on strong evidence, and, for deaf clients, data that prove the adequacy and success of the services available to them.

(RNID)

The majority of disabled people attending Equality 2025 events believe that there is a need for legislation. This belief is based on the history of inconsistent local government promotion (and therefore take-up) of Direct Payments.

(Equality 2025)

How the Government is taking this forward

Our intention is to deliver on this commitment by introducing the right to control with a number of trailblazing public authorities. Evaluation of this initial phase will be used to inform decisions about wider roll-out. We will work closely with disabled people and other stakeholders to ensure that our plans combine increased choice and control with ongoing improvement to public services.

Simplifying and streamlining the benefit system

75. In Chapter 6 of the Green Paper, *Simplifying and streamlining the benefit system*, we explained why we think the benefit system needs to be simplified. Streamlining the system will make it easier for people to negotiate their way through what is currently a complex system, and make it easier for staff to administer.
76. Although many of those who responded to the consultation were in favour of a system that is easier to negotiate and has greater clarity, some were concerned about the impact of change, or recommended flexibility within a simpler system.

...wholeheartedly support the notion of benefit simplification. BASE is persuaded by the case for a single benefit with additional payments with those who have a disability, whether in work or not, as long as people are no worse off in real terms.

(British Association of Supported Employment (BASE))

77. Here are some examples of what people said in response to one of the consultation questions on benefit simplification.

Question 22: Is a system based on a single overarching benefit the right long-term aspiration? How could a simpler system be structured so as to meet varying needs and responsibilities?

Working towards abolition of Income Support may be a good thing in the long run, but the right approach needs to be taken. Many long-term Income Support customers will only hear "Income Support is going" and become fearful their benefit will stop.

(Jobcentre Plus employee)

We accept that the present benefit system is too complex and that there is a need to reorganise and streamline to enable people who need to access it in times of worklessness, ill health or disability...we would have included recognition of the need to improve take-up of many benefits and how the proposals will seek to help ensure that individuals are enabled to access financial support when they are entitled to it.

(Children in Wales and End Child Poverty Network Cymru)

This is certainly a long-term goal that finds widespread support. Unfortunately, implementation is proving to be very difficult...simpler methods of updating the benefits system could be achieved via a review of the current earnings disregard for means-tested benefits.

(Lancashire County Council)

We believe that moves to simplify the benefit system and make it easier to understand for claimants are to be welcomed. There must however, be sufficient support for those for whom work is not a short term possibility and the system should incorporate top up payments for those with conditions which incur extra costs.

(Crisis)

How the Government is taking this forward

We believe a simpler benefit system can enable more personalisation to better meet the needs of individual customers. We will continue to explore models to reform the benefits system, including further work looking at a single income-replacement between for people of working age.

Carers on Income Support

78. Abolishing Income Support would be a significant step towards benefit simplification. Taking this step would mean moving lone parents with younger children and carers onto a modified JSA.
79. Carers, and groups representing them, registered considerable and strong concerns about this. While some welcomed the opportunity for carers to access employment or training support should they want it, others saw the move as an indication that they would be expected to combine their caring responsibilities with job search.

We also welcome the proposal to create a 'benefit system that cannot only adapt to the specific needs of carers, but also helps prepare them for their future'...we therefore agree that a modified system of Jobseeker's Allowance, that would not require them to undertake work-focused activity to keep their benefit, but would mean support is available when they are ready, would work for carers.

(Every Disabled Child Matters)

We reject the proposal to require carers currently claiming Income Support to claim Jobseeker's Allowance. Even though this would be a modified version of Jobseeker's Allowance without conditionality, the name is insulting to carers and it does not provide recognition of carers' contribution to society.

(Carers UK)

80. In their report, *Valuing and Supporting Carers*, published on the 29 August 2008, the Work and Pensions Select Committee said:

Carers need more specialist return to work support. In order to deliver that, Jobcentre Plus needed better trained staff and specialist return to work programmes. We welcome the Government's commitment to training for Jobcentre Plus staff and care partnership managers in every Jobcentre Plus district.

81. Here are some examples of what people said in response to the consultation question on moving carers onto Jobseeker's Allowance.

Question 23: Would moving carers currently on Income Support onto Jobseeker's Allowance be a suitable way of helping them to access the support available to help combine caring with paid work or preparing for paid work?

We agree that carers should be offered work-related support. However, we do not believe it is appropriate to expect carers to claim a benefit called Jobseeker's Allowance. The Carers Strategy states that a key principle to guide benefit should be recognising the contribution that carers make. Categorising carers as 'jobseekers' is contrary to that principle.

(Age Concern)

If carers are not required to look for work or be available to start work immediately, it is misleading and insulting for them to be receiving a benefit called Jobseeker's Allowance. It does not recognise that they are already doing a job which is valued by society.

(Carers UK)

For many caring is full-time work, including a great deal of overtime. The PM has expressed his admiration for this 'amazing' work. Putting carers on Jobseeker's Allowance would be an insult.

(Carer Watch)

Whilst simplification is needed, and the complexity of the current system is a barrier to carers accessing financial support, this must be balanced with the need to recognise carers' unique circumstances and contribution to society. We do not believe that carers can be properly supported in a single benefit for all working age people.

(Carers NI)

(continued)

Carers deserve recognition for their hard work – by moving them onto Jobseeker’s Allowance it infers that the work carers do isn’t ‘proper work’ – how can carers who care 24/7 combine caring with paid work, who will look after their caree – paid care-workers who cost far more per hour than the pittance carers get.

(Carer)

How the Government is taking this forward

Responding to concerns raised during the consultation we will not move carers from Income Support until we have a clear and detailed plan setting out how we will make changes to carers’ benefits. We will, of course, discuss these plans with stakeholders as our work on streamlining the benefits system progresses

Smoothing the transition to the Employment and Support Allowance

82. The Employment and Support Allowance was introduced in October 2008. People currently claiming Incapacity Benefit will gradually be moved over to the new benefit, which has different structures of rates and allowances. There was concern that during this process, customers will face a benefit loss in real terms.

Of concern is the proposal that incapacity benefits will in future be uprated annually through the ROSSI index and not Retail Prices Index (RPI). ROSSI excludes housing costs, rent and council tax on the grounds that these costs are usually met by the State. It will therefore mean lower levels of uprating and potential loss of income for all IB/ESA claimants. Whilst ROSSI is currently higher than RPI this is likely to be a temporary situation, and we therefore do not support this proposal.

(RNIB)

The proposals under *Smoothing the transition to the Employment and Support Allowance* means cuts to the real value of National Insurance benefits – we assume that bringing benefits into line means under-inflating various elements. The proposal will simply make disabled people and their families worse off and have a negative effect on child poverty.

(Child Poverty Action Group)

How the Government is taking this forward

We are proposing a modification to proposals in the Green Paper so that, although we still move to align Incapacity Benefit and the Employment and Support Allowance over time, no Incapacity Benefit claimant will see their benefit frozen in 2009.

Reforming the contribution conditions

83. In the Green Paper, we said that we want to strengthen the link between claiming contributory benefits and periods of recent work. At the moment it is possible, for example, to qualify for a lifetime of contributory Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance after as little as 12 weeks' work at the national minimum wage, or three weeks as a higher-rate taxpayer. We do not believe that this is fair and we said in the Green Paper that we intended to reform the rules.

How the Government is taking this forward

This White Paper confirms our intention to take the proposals in the Green Paper forward. From 2010, new Employment and Support Allowance and Jobseeker's Allowance claimants will only qualify for contributory Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance if they have paid contributions for a minimum of 26 weeks. Payment of these contributions will need to have taken place in the last two tax years, rather than in the last three, as is currently the case. These two new conditions will be the same as those for Jobseeker's Allowance.

Wider reform of the benefits system

84. As part of the move toward benefit simplification, we are also considering whether other benefits need to be revised and updated so they are better equipped to meet the needs of those claiming them.

Bereavement Benefit and Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

85. We asked people for their views on the best way to deliver benefits for those who suffer bereavement, and also those who are injured, or contract a disease as a result of their work.
86. We invited people's views on how these benefits could be reformed to better meet the needs of people in a modern welfare state.

Question 24: How might we reform Bereavement Benefit and Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit to provide better support to help people adjust to their new circumstances while maintaining the work focus of the modern welfare state?

Bereavement Benefit

Long term bereavement benefits, such as widowed parent's allowance, may be time limited to ensure that the families benefit from the work support services, or they could be given access to those services on a voluntary basis or – after a suitable period of perhaps two years – on a mandatory basis. However this is addressed, it should be recognised that reaction to bereavement takes varied forms and these need to be addressed in the personalised support offered to these families.

(Islington Primary Care Trust)

Examine it in detail and provide a one-off lump sum to a bereaved and financially dependent person, possibly with a smaller sum to one who is financially independent.

(National Council of Women of Great Britain)

Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

For those with non-life threatening but progressive illness, and those with low assessed disability who are potentially eligible for benefit by aggregation, the option should exist to claim a worsening of circumstances (as now); but thought should be given to using the lump sum payment creatively, through a new Retraining Allowance, to encourage and assist a change of vocation in circumstances where continuing occupational exposure causes health deterioration.

(Industrial Injuries Advisory Council)

We suggest that these benefits remain as they are but give individual claimants the option to participate in work related activity and programmes on a voluntary basis.

(Welsh Assembly Government)

The best way to reform Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit for asbestos victims to help them to adjust to their changed circumstances is to stop treating Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit as a 'benefit' and to treat it properly as compensation so that recipients do not lose their means tested benefits pound for pound...

(Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum – UK)

Question 25: Are lump sum payments a good way of meeting people's needs? Do they give people more choice and control? Could we make more use of them?

There are arguments in favour of delivering state compensation by way of lump sum rather than regular weekly payments...a full and final lump-sum payment has the added advantage of clarity of purpose, being fitted to a situation of state-funded no-fault compensation.

(Industrial Injuries Advisory Council)

Macmillan believes that widowed parents face a genuine loss in income with which to support their family that is not linked to the employment status of the surviving partner and that a one-off payment is unlikely to compensate for this loss.

(Macmillan Cancer Support)

There is a need for a system that appears simpler, clearer and less unjust to people; has fewer negative outcomes for people as a result of interactions with tax credits; and has more transparent and easier access for people coping with grief and shock.

(University of York)

How the Government is taking this forward

We will continue to look at options to replace Bereavement Benefits with lump sum payments to offer help when it is needed most. We will publish the proposals and an impact assessment for consultation in due course.

(Bereavement Benefit)

We believe that there remains a strong case for continuing to provide particular support for people whose disability arises from work and we think the current Industrial Injuries Disablement scheme is the best way to do this.

(Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit)

Reform of the Social Fund

87. In the Green Paper, we said we were interested in the scope for the Budgeting Loan Scheme to provide more effective help to allow more people to overcome financial exclusion and return to work. This was welcomed by respondents.

We welcome the commitment to create an enhanced budgeting loan scheme... we believe the Government should push forward with its aspirations in this area. A renewed and improved budgeting loans scheme, extending the availability and size of loans and linking recipients to a wider financial inclusion agenda would be of huge help to low income families.

(Save the Children)

We would like to see the DWP instigate an open debate about reform of the social fund, which enables the fund to become a more positive source of assistance for people on low incomes. The debate should include whether and how the social fund, particularly the loan scheme elements, could be delivered in a different way to people in need of more affordable borrowing, for example could funds be distributed, and repayments collected via financial institutions or third sector lenders.

(Citizens Advice)

How the Government is taking this forward

We have begun a programme of discussion on the future of the Social Fund with proposals for a new approach which centres on plans to work with the voluntary sector to make our service even better and promote greater financial inclusion for its customers which will provide better financial advice and support in difficult economic times.

Empowerment and devolution – a new way of delivering our services

88. In Chapter 7 of the Green Paper, *Empowerment and devolution – a new way of delivering our services*, we said that we want to go further in devolving more power to individual customers, local partnerships and providers.
89. While providers were broadly supportive of Devolution and Right to Bid proposals, there was a mixed response on the general principle of further contracting out of services. Some respondents were in favour of the greater choice this would give unemployed people; others felt that such services were best delivered by Jobcentre Plus, and were concerned that smaller providers would be priced out of the market of that larger providers would 'cherry pick' good ideas from them.

We welcome the proposals to devolve more power, and increase flexibility at the local and sub-regional level to meet specific needs. Too often local can mean regional, and for a city the size of Birmingham, even sub-regional can be too far removed in providing an appropriate response to issues in local neighbourhoods.
(Birmingham Economic Development Partnership)

We do not accept that private/voluntary sector involvement needs to be expanded...the Trades Union Congress believes that the public sector has strengths that are often not recognised.
(Trades Union Congress)

Remploy strongly supports the contracting out of service provision for unemployed job seekers and welcomes a move towards an outcome based payment system.
(Remploy)

Jobcentre Plus is the only organisation with the nationwide capacity to provide this service on a universal and equitable basis. Jobcentre Plus has thousands of dedicated, experienced and highly skilled advisers who are best placed to provide this service. We do not want this service to be replaced with an untried and untested private sector.
(Public and Commercial Services Union)

We welcome the Government's commitment to harness the innovation of the private and voluntary sectors – and the positioning of this commitment as a key component of strengthening personalised support.
(Tomorrow's People)

90. We want to encourage innovative ideas for delivering services and will put a 'Right to Bid' in place. We said that if providers can think of ways to improve services to help more people back to work, we wanted to hear about them. We asked people for their views on implementing this.

Question 26: What information would providers need to make the Right to Bid effective? How would the evaluation process need to work to give providers confidence that their ideas would be evaluated fairly and effectively? How do we get the balance right between rewarding those who come up with new ideas and the obligation to tender for projects?

...would like to see reforms to the current commissioning and procurement process including publication of funding available across all Government departments and agencies for specific themes and/or client groups e.g. employment or skill development; clear guidance on local area requirements to be published with tender documents to enable new providers to compete on an equal basis with existing provider whom may be under performing; service commissioning should be more joined up.

(Shaw Trust)

We strongly welcome the right to bid proposals in the Green Paper...third sector organisations who do not think of themselves as primarily focused on supporting people into employment could have much potential to bring to the department's work.

(Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO))

A key criteria for Right to Bid funding must be the ability to evaluate and disseminate findings...thus ensuring small, local projects have the opportunity to have a longer-term, wider impact, possibly of a national nature.

(Enhance)

We suggest the introduction of an 'Employability Innovation Fund' which would allow for investment and the testing off higher risk innovative projects and schemes. Such a fund should be locally administered, taking into consideration local employability strategies and agreements, be based on identified need and solely focused on encouraging innovation and trying new approaches.

(VONNE)

...there is a need for providers to be marked on how much they are working directly with employers e.g. through Local Employment Partnerships.

(Centre for Cities)

This could potentially provide opportunities for smaller organisations or those with a niche interest to get funding for a very specific project. However, more information would need to be available about the outcomes expected and the funding mechanism (e.g. up front funding or by results?)

(Leeds City Council)

91. In the Green Paper, we said that Jobcentre Plus is recognised as one of the best back-to-work agencies in the world. We also said we believe that services for unemployed and disadvantaged customers are enhanced through delivery by a range of providers.

We are very encouraged by the model of three tier devolution set out in the paper. It allows all sub-regional and local partners to contribute to commissioning and for the most developed partnerships to take the decisions in their areas. We also welcome the right to bid, which local partners could use to promote innovation and improvement to the employment and skills services in their areas.
(*Local Government Association*)

Specialist disability services may be affected if large-scale providers do not work alongside local specialist services.
(*National Delivery Group Scotland*)

Question 27: What would the processes around contributing to commissioning and performance management look like in a range of different partnership areas? How might they best be managed to achieve the desired outcomes?

...we would argue that there is the need for a contractual obligation to be included in future contracts to ensure that the Prime Contractor sub contracts work to local delivery organisations. We believe that the whole principle of Prime Contracting should be evaluated and questioned against both value for money and defined impacts.
(*Gateshead Council*)

Work with Local Strategies Partnerships that receive Working Neighbourhood Funding – and City Strategy Pathfinders (with major ethnic minority populations) – to consider how they can support and deliver improved outcomes for ethnic minorities.
(*London Borough of Southwark*)

We would expect that such commissioning strategies would be more outcome focused, better informed by the needs of diverse communities and result in clear employment pathways that incorporate health, social services, voluntary sector employment projects, education, and employment services in delivering improved local employment outcomes.
(*Islington Council and Islington PCT*)

...would want clauses in contracts that meant joint working became standard practice.
(*West London Working*)

A4E believes that simplicity lies at the heart of effective commissioning. However, this simplicity needs to extend beyond the conceptual level into how different models of partnership operate in practice. City Strategy Pathfinders are a prime example of where a simple and elegant concept – uniform employability objectives to meet the specific needs of a discrete geographical area – has been undermined by a complex executive framework.
(*A4E*)

92. We want to test out the feasibility of rewarding providers for the benefit savings made as a result of them helping more unemployed people into work, particularly those with the most employment barriers.

We advocate contracting with payments by results from benefits savings; we would also like to see more funds directed at the jobseeker for providers to remove barriers that have a financial remedy. Addressing complex, multiple and transitional barriers inherent of a chaotic lifestyle and in those furthest from the labour market is expensive. We must not compromise on the support given if we want to sustain progress. By allowing this flexibility we would expect to see outcomes increased. We therefore look forward to the results of the DEL/AME pilots.

(Angus Knight UK)

Any funding mechanism that relies on outcome related funding risks having those people with complex needs being 'parked', with those customers who are 'easiest' to assist being given most support.

(Disability Employment Advisory Council)

93. We asked a consultation question around this proposal and examples of people's responses are given below.

Question 28: How could a link be made to the radical proposals for the pilots set out in Chapter 3 which seek to reward providers for outcomes out of the benefit savings they achieve?

The simplest way to link programme provision to this system is clearly through viable funding derived using realistic performance measures...It will be important that the three DEL/AME pilot areas are used as intended to incentivise providers to better performance using benefit savings, and not merely to find ways to find the balance of funding to properly fund FND to the levels it should be in the first place.

(Association of Learning Providers)

...the financial return to providers should be capped and benefit savings above this level should be reinvested into the area. Evaluation of the pilots should be ongoing to allow a phased implementation during the 3-year pilot period. Additionally this will require local reporting of DWP contracts.

(Wirral Economic Development and Skills)

Where local partnerships have demonstrated maturity and an ability to focus public sector delivery on worklessness, they should be allowed to co-design the pathfinder proposals in their areas.

(Glasgow Works)

continued

If this system was underpinned with a commitment to meet the full costs of delivering a service then it could be an effective way to demonstrate both the financial and social benefits of effective service delivery. But if benefit savings were to be the sole source of funding for the delivery of this service it would inevitably create a hand-to-mouth funding regime that would not lead to long-term solutions.

(Future Builders)

How the Government is taking this forward

We will begin testing and exploring using the benefit savings achieved from supporting claimants back into work to reward providers in the private and voluntary sector. By offering the prospect of greater returns, these new, primarily outcome-based contracts, may encourage private and voluntary sector providers to invest more of their own capital and be more innovative in the way they deliver their support.

We will also:

- trial a single employment programme for people on Employment and Support Allowance and Jobseeker's Allowance;
- support innovation through Right to Bid;
- devolve to local level by combining or aligning funding.

94. Finally, we asked a question on the effectiveness of the evaluation and monitoring systems for City Strategies.

Question 29: How effective are current monitoring and evaluation arrangements for City Strategies?

The current monitoring and evaluation arrangements for City Strategies have a number of areas for improvement. Both the definition and measurement for deprived areas should be reconsidered and brought in-line with the national indicator set for Local Area Agreements. This would require a change to both the spatial focus, which is currently pre-determined by DWP and based on 'old' ward boundaries and also the benefits used to measure worklessness.

(Wirral Economic Development and Skills)

continued

Emphasis must be on ensuring the delivery of services which are complementary to current mainstream provision. The focus should be on enhancing local services, not duplicating them, by identifying and filling gaps in delivery.... success will depend on the level of buy-in achieved at all levels from the holders of other funding streams. This will require ensuring that the objectives and methodological approaches are aligned.

(Work Directions)

One weakness of the monitoring system is the fact that City Strategy Partnerships have to do a lot of networking and communication to keep DWP and other departments up-to-date even though time is spent on monitoring returns. It would be ideal if the returns were utilised as informing documents in a more structured way and utilised to share best practice and lessons learnt and to inform policy.

(West London Working)

Next Steps

95. We are very grateful for the time and effort people have invested in giving us feedback on our Green Paper proposals. We will introduce a Bill in the current Parliamentary session to take forward our welfare reform measures. We will continue working closely with key stakeholders and key partners in the further development of our policies to help people improve their skills and move into sustained employment.

Organisations responding to the Green Paper consultation

A4E – Action for Employment	Association of Learning Providers
ACT	Association of Scotland’s Colleges
Action for Blind People	Ayr College
Action for ME	Ayrshire and Arran Alcohol and Drug Action Group
ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services)	Barnardo’s
Addaction	Barnet Service User Group
Adfam	Basingstoke Constituency Labour Party
Advice NI	Beginnings
Affinity Sutton Group	Birmingham Economic Development Partnership
Age Concern	Black Disabled People Association
AHRC Centre for Law Gender and Sexuality	Blackburn District Trades Council
All Parliamentary Group on AIDS	Blackburn with Darwen City Strategy Consortium
All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers and people with learning disabilities	Bolton Active Disability Group for Everyone
Angus Knight UK	Bradford Alliance on Community Care (BACC)
Anti Poverty Network Cymru	Bradford’s Strategic Disability Partnership
Arthritis Care	BRAME
Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK	Breakthrough UK Ltd
AS-IT Community Interest Company	Bridgend Communities First
Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (ASBAH)	Bristol Homelessness Consortium
Association of British Insurers	British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)	British Association of Supported Employment (BASE)
Association of Disabled Professionals	

British Chamber of Commerce	Children in Wales and End Child Poverty Network Cymru
British Humanist Association	Chill4Us
British Medical Association (BMA)	Chronic Pain Policy Coalition
British Society of Rehabilitation Medicine	Church Action on Poverty
British Telecom (BT)	Church of Scotland
Broadway	Citizen Advice
Buckingham Primary Care Trust	Citizen Advice Northern Ireland
Business Action on Homelessness	Citizen Advice Scotland
Capability Scotland	Citizen's Income Trust
Capital City Partnership	Clic Sargent
Cardiff University - School of Psychology	Clifton House Carers Group, York
Carer Watch	College of Occupational Therapists
Carer's NI	Commission for Rural Communities
Carer's UK	Commission for the Compact
Carers Network Westminster	Community Pride Initiative
Carers Resource	Community Voice
Carers Wales	Compass
CBI	Concateno PLC
Centre for Cities	Co-operatives UK
Centre LGS	County Durham Learning Disability Service
Centrepoint	Create and Community Sector
Ceredgion 50+ forum	Criminal Justice Intervention Team
Chartered Institute of Housing	Crisis
Chartered Society of Physiotherapists	Crisis Centre Ministries
Child Poverty Action Group	Curam Software Ltd
Children in Scotland	

Cymorth Cymru	Edinburgh's Telford College
Cystic Fibrosis Trust	Education Otherwise
Daycare Trust	Education Otherwise Disability Group
Deaf Connections	Elena Jeffers Foundation
Denbighshire Advice Network	Elmwood College
Derbyshire County Council	Employability Forum
Derbyshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team	Employer's Forum on Disability
Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centres	Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary	Employment Related Services Association
Disability Action in Islington	Enable Local Area Coordination Team
Disability Action Northern Ireland	Enable Scotland
Disability Alliance	Engineering Employer's Federation (EEF)
Disability Awareness in Action	Enham
Disability Benefits Consortium	Equality 2000 Ltd
Disability Employment Advisory Committee (DEAC)	Equality 2025
Disability Wales	Equality and Human Rights Commission
DLA Help Group	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Drugscope	Equinox
EAPN England	Ethnic Minority Advisory Group
East Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership	European Association for the Treatment of Addiction
East Renfrewshire Council	Every Disabled Child Matters
ECAS	Faculty of Occupational Medicine
ECHG Assertive Outreach Service, Bristol	Falkirk District Access and Assessment Group
ECHG Night Centre	Families need Fathers
Edinburgh University Students Association	

Family Action	Harvest Housing
Family and Parenting Institute	Hastings CSA PCS Branch
Federation of Small Businesses	Help the Aged
Fife Gingerbread	High Peak CVS
Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities	Highland Employment Network
Future Builders	Homeless Link
Gateshead Council	Inclusion Scotland
GLADA – Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance	Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC)
Glasgow City Council	Institute of Directors – IoD
Glasgow Community Planning Partnership	Institute of Directors NI
Glasgow Homelessness Network	Institute of Public Policy Research
Glasgow Works	Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
GMB	Islington Clients of Drug and Alcohol Services (ICDAS)
Goals UK	Islington Council and Islington Primary Care Trust
Gofal Cymru	John Wheatley College
Greater Glasgow Network of Supported Employment (GNSE)	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Greater London Authority and Mayor of London	Kent County Council
Greater Nottingham Employment and Skills Board (GNESB)	Kent Supported Employment
Green Party	Kilmarnock College
Groundwork UK	Kirkless Benefits Advice Service
Group Risk Development	Lambeth Drug and Alcohol Partnership
Haemophilia Society	Lambeth Pensioners Action Group
Haringey Community Link Forum	Lancashire Association of Trade Union Councils
Haringey Council	Lancashire County Council
	Law Centre NI

Law Society of Scotland	Mencap
Leeds City Council	Mencap Cymru
Leeds City Region	Mental Health Aberdeen
Leeds Involvement Project	Mental Health Foundation
Legal Services Commission	Metropole Learning
Leonard Cheshire	Mind
Leonard Cheshire Disability's – Supported Employment Service and Highland Employment Network (SUSE)	Mind in Croydon
Ley Community	Motor Neurone Disease Assoc
Lifeline	MS Society
Links UK	NASUWT
Local Government Association	National Aids Trust
London Advice Services Alliance and Toynbee Hall	National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers
London Autism Rights	National Autistic Society
London Borough of Hackney	National Board of Catholic Women
London Borough of Lambeth	National Care Advisory Service
London Borough of Southwark	National Council for Women of Great Britain
London Councils	National Farmers Union
London Drug and Alcohol Network	National Housing Federation
London Visual Impairment Forum	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)
Low Income Tax Reform Group	National Union of Students
Macmillan Cancer Support	National Union of Students (Scotland)
Maidstone Carers Project	National Voices
Manchester City Council	Neurodiversity Rights Movement
ME and you Aberdeen	New Directions
Medway Council	Newcastle City Council

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Plaid Cymru
NIFHA (N. Ireland)	Pluss
North East Employment Framework	Poverty Alliance
North Lanarkshire Council	Princess Royal Trust for Carers
North Tyneside Voluntary Organisations Development Agency	Pro Diverse UK Ltd
North Yorks Forensic Psychiatric Service	Progress Recruitment
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission	Prowess
Northern Ireland Union of Supported Employment (NIUSE)	Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)
Northwest Regional Development Agency	Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs
Nottingham City Council Regeneration	Quarriers
Nottinghamshire County Council	RADAR
Nottinghamshire Welfare Rights Service	Reed in Partnership
Off the streets and into work	Refuge
OLMEC	Refugee Council
One Parent Families	Refugee Womens Association
One Parent Families Scotland	Release
Oxfam	Remploy
Paper Foyer	Renfrewshire Council
Papworth Trust	Resolve Double Impact
Parkinson's Disease Society	Rethink
Parkview Laundry	Riverside Group
People First	RMT
People First Scotland	RNIB
Peterborough Primary Care Trust	RNID
Phoenix Futures	Roman Catholic Internet Trust
	Royal British Legion Industries

Royal College of Nursing	Shelter
Royal College of Psychiatrists	Single Parent Action Network (SPAN)
RSI Action	Skill (National Bureau for Students with Disabilities)
S&D Training	Social Enterprise Coalition
Safer Bristol Partnership	Social Firms Scotland
Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health	Social Firms UK
Salford Welfare Rights	Social Security Advisory Committee
SAMH – Scottish Association for Mental Health	Solstice Nurseries
Save the Children	South and Vale Carers Centre
School of Law, University of Ulster	South Cambs Council
Scope	South Essex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Scottish Accessible Information Forum	South Tyneside Council
Scottish Association of Alcohol and Drug Action Teams	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform	SOVA
Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH)	Spinal Injuries Association
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	St Loye’s Foundation
Scottish Council on Deafness	St Mungo’s
Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF)	Stockport Advice
Scottish Drugs Forum	Stow College, Glasgow
Scottish Funding Council	Substance Misuse Management in General Practice
Scottish Government	Sunderland City Council
Scottish Homelessness and Employability Network (SHEN)	Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
Scottish Union of Supported Employment	Terence Higgins Trust
Shaw Trust	The Action Group (for people with learning disabilities)

The Age and Employment Network (TAEN)	Wakefield Skills Enterprise and Work Partnership
Tomorrow's People	
Trade Union Disability Alliance	Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Trafford Borough Council	Welfare Rights Advisers Cymru
Travel Matters Enterprises Ltd	Welsh Assembly Government
Triage Central Ltd	Welsh Association of ME & CFS Support
TUC	West London Working
Turning Point	West Sussex Drug and Alcohol Team
Tyne and Wear City Region CSP	West Yorkshire Police
Ufl Learndirect	Westminster Drug Project
UFO (Users Feedback Organisation) Bristol	Wigan Council
UK Carers	Wiltshire and Swindon Users Network (WSUN)
UK Drugs Policy Commission	Wirral Council
UK Hepatitis C Resource Centre	Wirral Economics Development and Skills
Unison	Wise Group
United Response	Women Like us
University of York	Women's Benefits Focus Group
Vital Regeneration	Women's Budget Group
Voluntary Action Barnsley	Work and Pensions Select Committee (WSPC)
Volunteer Centre Westminster	Work Directions
Volunteer Development Scotland	Working Families
Volunteering England	Working Links
VONNE (Voluntary Organisations Network North East)	Your Voice Advocacy Project
VOX	Zaccheus 2000
Wakefield Learning Disability Partnership Board	