



Consultation arrangements

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How can people respond to this consultation?

We want to make sure that we get views from as broad a range of people as possible about our proposals. As well as written responses to the questions asked in this document, and any other points you would like to make in writing, we will set up a number of other ways for people to tell us what they think.

Details of the consultation events we have planned, and copies of the consultation documents, will be posted in the consultations section of our website <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2007/>

This paper can be downloaded at www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/in-work-better-off/

Copies are also available in a range of formats, including easy read, Braille and audio, either from our website or on request from:

Name: Green Paper Consultation Team

Address: Department for Work and Pensions,
Level 2, The Adelphi, 1–11 John Adam Street,
London WC2N 6HT

Phone: 0207 712 2492

Textphone: 0207 712 2032

Fax: 0207 962 8380

Email: welfare.reform@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

A Regulatory Impact Assessment for the proposals in this document is available at www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/in-work-better-off/

The consultation period begins on 18 July 2007 and runs until 31 October 2007. Please ensure your response reaches us by that date. Please send your consultation responses to the address above, or by email to welfare.reform@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

When responding, please state whether you are doing so as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled. We will acknowledge your response.

We have sent this consultation document to a large number of people and organisations who have already been involved in this work or who have expressed an interest. Please do share this document with, or tell us about, anyone you think will want to be involved in this consultation.

The information you send us may need to be passed to colleagues within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and published in a summary of responses received. It may also be referred to in the published consultation report.

All information contained in your response, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By providing personal information for the purpose of the public consultation exercise, it is understood that you consent to its disclosure and publication. If this is not the case, you should limit any personal information that is provided, or remove it completely. If you want the information in your response to the consultation to be kept confidential, you should explain why as part of your response, although we cannot guarantee to do this. We cannot guarantee confidentiality of electronic responses even if your IT system claims it automatically.

If you want to find out more about the general principles of Freedom of Information and how it is applied within DWP, please contact:

Name: Charles Cushing

Address: Adjudication and Constitutional Issues,
Information Policy Division,
Freedom of Information Unit,
Department for Work and Pensions,
The Adelphi, 1-11 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT

Phone: 0207 962 8581

Email: charles.cushing@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or
carol.smith14@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

More information about the Freedom of Information Act can be found on the website of the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

The consultation criteria

The consultation is being conducted in line with the Code of Practice on Consultation, which can be accessed at the Cabinet Office website. The six consultation criteria are listed below:

- consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy;

- be clear about who may be affected, what questions are being asked, and the timescale for responses;
- ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible;
- give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy;
- monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated Consultation Co-ordinator; and
- ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

We value your feedback on how well we consult. If you have any comments on the process of this consultation (as opposed to the issues raised) please contact our Consultation Coordinator:

Name: Roger Pugh
Address: Department for Work and Pensions,
Consultation Coordinator, Room 2A,
Britannia House, 2 Ferensway, Hull HU2 8NF
Phone: 01482 609571
Email: roger.pugh@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

In particular, please tell us if you feel that the consultation does not satisfy these criteria. Please also make any suggestions as to how the process of consultation could be improved further.

If you have any requirements that we need to meet to enable you to comment, please let us know.

What will we do after the consultation?

We will produce a report that summarises the responses to the consultation and describes the areas identified as being the most important. This report will be available at www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/in-work-better-off/ We will invite people who took part in the consultation to comment on this report when it is published.

Consultation questions

Question 1: At the moment, lone parents are entitled to Income Support until their youngest child is 16. Is it right that this age should be reduced?

Question 2: What would the minimum age be?

Question 3: Should we do more to ensure that our support for lone parents is accessible and useful for all groups, in particular those with disabled children and those from certain disadvantaged groups and areas?

Question 4: More frequent Work Focused Interviews are currently offered to lone parents in the two years before their eligibility to Income Support is lost. As the age of the youngest child is reduced, should other forms of support be provided, and over what period prior to loss of eligibility?

Question 5: For lone parents who move onto Jobseeker's Allowance when they lose Income Support eligibility, what forms of support (in addition to those provided to Jobseeker's Allowance claimants who are not lone parents) should be available, and over what timescale?

Question 6: Jobseeker's Allowance recipients can, in certain circumstances, restrict their search for work to a minimum of 16 hours per week. Should additional flexibilities be available if the proposed changes are made?

Question 7: What form might a 'better off in work' assurance for lone parents take?

Question 8: Are any special provisions required for lone parents who move onto benefits other than Jobseeker's Allowance (for example, Employment and Support Allowance or Carer's Allowance)?

Question 9: In addition to the improvements in childcare provision and the right to request flexible working, is there further support that should be provided to help lone parents into work and support them whilst there?

Question 10: What more could we do to help working families – especially those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds – improve their earnings and lift themselves out of poverty?

Question 11: What more could we do to help ethnic minority women, particularly of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, overcome specific barriers they face?

Question 12: In exchange for more specialist support, are we right to ask more of those who have been unemployed and receiving benefit the longest?

Question 13: Should there be any exceptions to this approach of increased conditionality and increased support?

Question 14: Is a structured, progressive regime of support and conditionality at fixed intervals the right approach?

Question 15: Should some people be enabled or required to enter the Gateway stage more quickly than others, taking account of their employment history or needs? Which groups should be 'fast-tracked'?

Question 16: Should we require a period of work experience from those who do not succeed in getting work after benefiting from a more intensive level of help from specialist providers? How can we best ensure that this work experience is beneficial?

