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The Department for Work and Pensions' aim and objectives

1 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) exists to:

- contribute towards fair, safe and fulfilling lives, free from poverty, for children, people in work and retirement, and those with disabilities;
- reduce welfare dependency and increase economic competitiveness by helping people to work wherever they can and employers to secure the skills and employees they need; and
- provide greater choice and personalisation and higher quality of service for customers where it is in their interests and those of the taxpayers.

2 In doing this we aim to enable people to fulfil their potential over longer, more active lives. Our focus will remain firmly on our customers, providing them with the services they need; looking, wherever possible, to join up and simplify our services, both internally and externally with our partners.

3 The purpose of this Autumn Performance Report is to provide the Department's latest assessment of its progress towards its current Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and the efficiency challenge announced in the 2004 Budget.

4 Spending plans for the financial years 2005-06 to 2007-08 were agreed as part of the 2004 Spending Review settlement, as set out in the White Paper *Stability, security and opportunity for all: Investing for Britain's long-term future* (Cm 6237, July 2004)¹. These PSA targets came into effect from April 2005. The 2004 Spending Review also set out the efficiency challenge for the Department.

5 Going forward, as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR2007) the Department will have lead responsibility for two PSA targets:

- Maximise employment opportunity for all; and
- Tackle poverty and promote greater independence and well-being in later life.

These are cross-government outcomes which will be met both by DWP and through the contributions of our partners in Whitehall.

6 In addition to this, under the new CSR2007 performance framework, the Department has identified seven strategic objectives, which cover the totality of the Department's business and express in more detail the key outcomes which the Department is looking to deliver over the Spending Review 07 period. These are to:

- reduce the number of children living in poverty;
- maximise employment opportunity for all and reduce the numbers on out-of-work benefits;
- improve health and safety outcomes;
- promote independence and well-being in later life, continuing to tackle pensioner poverty and implementing pension reform;
- promote equality of opportunity for all (NB this objective is being reviewed in light of machinery of government changes);

¹ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_sr04/spend_sr04_index.cfm

- pay our customers the right benefits at the right time; and
- make DWP an exemplar of effective service delivery to individuals and employers.

7 This report is intended to complement the Department's Resource Accounts for 2006-07² which were published in September 2007. It also supplements the Departmental Report (Cm 7105, May 2007)³ which provides a comprehensive account of the Department's activities and spending plans.

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² http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2007/res_acc/report_2006_07.pdf

³ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2007/dr07/>