

Social Security Advisory Committee

THIRTEENTH REPORT April 1999 – March 2000

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- 1 This Report is a slimmer document than many of its predecessors. To a degree this reflects a move to a cycle of annual reports; the period covered by previous reports averaged eighteen months. However, it is also symptomatic of the fact that much of the change introduced over the last year has been the subject of primary legislation, where the Committee has no statutory role. This has meant that there have been fewer issues on which we have felt the need to conduct a formal consultation exercise. Equally, we have not felt the need during this period to produce a formal advisory paper on a specific topic.
 - 2 The Committee has, however, continued to be active. The last year has seen a growing involvement for this Committee with Government Departments other than the Department of Social Security (DSS). This has in part resulted from the transfer of certain activities from the DSS to the Inland Revenue, and we have been gratified by the fact that we have been able to establish an informal advisory role in respect of Inland Revenue regulations that are closely related to social security issues. However, another feature has been the growth of joint working between the DSS and other Government Departments, notably the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Home Office, in the development of inter-departmental proposals. We welcome this trend, and are grateful for the willingness of officials from a broad spread of Departments to accompany DSS colleagues to our meetings.
 - 3 As the Report indicates, we have started to establish links with the devolved administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland¹. This move from a focus on formal consultations affecting a single Department to take on a more broadly-based advisory role may represent a continuing trend. Finally, we are preparing to embark on a significant additional task of scrutinising and monitoring the Department's information products. These changes have put a premium on the ability of Members of this Committee to respond to a wide variety of proposals; on the support of our Departmental advisers, Mr Don Brereton of the DSS and Mrs Eileen Tinnelly of the Department of Social Development, Northern Ireland; and, most of all, on the dedicated work of our secretariat. To all of these I extend my gratitude and thanks.



Thomas Boyd-Carpenter

¹ At the time of writing the devolved powers in Northern Ireland are suspended.

Chapter 1

The role of the Committee

- 1.1 The Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) was set up in 1980 as a successor body to the National Insurance Advisory Committee and the Supplementary Benefits Commissions for Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In 1982 the Committee's responsibilities were extended to cover advice on the Housing Benefit scheme, replacing the Advisory Committee on Rent Rebates and Rent Allowances. Its powers are currently set out in the Social Security Administration Act 1992. The Committee has a separate, but identical, remit under Northern Ireland legislation.
- 1.2 Our role is to give advice and assistance to the Secretary of State in connection with the discharge of his functions under the Social Security Acts. A separate function requires the Secretary of State to refer proposals to make regulations (with some exceptions) to the Committee before they are laid before Parliament. The Committee may ask for them to be formally referred in which case, in the light of consultation with affected interests, it will report to the Secretary of State on his proposals and make recommendations. The Secretary of State is obliged to take account of the Committee's recommendations and, when the regulations are finally laid before the House, the Committee's Report and a statement explaining the response to the recommendations must also be laid. In other cases the Committee is able to approve regulations without formal reference.

Devolution

- 1.3 As we stated in our Twelfth Report, the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales has had a limited impact on our role and responsibilities, mainly because responsibility for social security in Great Britain remains with the UK Parliament. However, we are aware that as the two bodies develop their policies for devolved matters, it is likely to have implications for social security provisions. We have visited the Benefits Agency Assembly Relations Unit in Cardiff where we exchanged details of roles and remits. We have made a similar visit to meet staff at the Scottish Parliamentary Relations Unit and the DSS policy focal point for the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive.

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- 1.4 The position in Northern Ireland was different, in that responsibility for social security, child support and pensions was transferred to the Northern Ireland Assembly in December 1999. However, at the time of writing, the powers devolved to Northern Ireland are suspended.
 - 1.5 Nevertheless, during the year we have maintained our close working relationships with the Northern Ireland Office and Agencies and we were developing similar links with the Department responsible for social security in the newly devolved administration (the Department for Social Development).
 - 1.6 The Belfast Agreement recognised that social security was one area where parity with Great Britain would normally be maintained; and this was reflected in the Northern Ireland Act itself, which contained a statutory requirement for the Secretary of State to consult with the Minister for Social Development with the aim of achieving single systems of social security, child support and pensions across the UK.
 - 1.7 This coherence was reflected in our continuing UK-wide role. We continued to scrutinise and look at the impact of proposed secondary legislation for the whole of the UK. Although the expectation was that the Assembly would follow GB provisions, there was nonetheless the possibility of divergence. Whilst powers were devolved, no such divergence occurred, however we would have looked at any proposals that would have led to different provisions in Northern Ireland. The Act also allowed the Northern Ireland Department to seek our advice on any relevant matters. We therefore forged links with Ministers and officials in Northern Ireland.
 - 1.8 In October 1999 we made our first visit to Northern Ireland as a Committee since 1997. We spent two days in the Belfast area, meeting policy officials, staff working in local offices, Citizens Advice Bureaux staff and a range of people working in social welfare and in employment and training initiatives. We found the visit most helpful and informative and we shall continue to take a particular interest in the development of a number of the programmes we saw in action.
 - 1.9 In January 2000, the Chairman went to Northern Ireland to meet the Minister of Social Development, the Chairman of the Assembly Committee and the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Social Development to introduce the work of the Committee and to discuss future working arrangements. The discussions were constructive and encouraging.

Membership

- 1.10 The Committee has thirteen Members in addition to the Chairman. Under the Social Security Act 1980, one Member must be selected in consultation with representatives of employers, one in consultation with representatives of employees and one in consultation with the Head of the Northern Ireland Department. In addition, the Committee must have at least one Member with experience of work among, and the needs of, chronically sick and disabled people. If possible, this Member should themselves be chronically sick or disabled. It is customary for one Member to be appointed following consultation with the Secretary of State for Wales and one following consultation with the Secretary of State for Scotland. Because social security has not been devolved to the Scottish Parliament or the Welsh Assembly, this practice has continued. All Members are involved across the whole range of the Committee's business. They are not expected to, and in practice do not, represent sectional interests.

The year's work

- 1.11 This Thirteenth Stewardship Report provides a summary of the work of the SSAC from April 1999 to March 2000. During this period, reform of social security has remained high on the Government's agenda. We have welcomed the opportunity to play a part in the debate arising from the Welfare Reform programme. We have offered our views to the Government on a range of issues and proposals for changes to the social security system. We highlight the most significant below.

Supported housing

- 1.12 One set of proposals – those setting out a new policy and funding framework for support services, in the consultation paper *Supporting People* – were of particular interest to us. We broadly supported the Government's approach. However, we had reservations about the timetable for legislation and a number of concerns about the implications of the proposed new arrangements, particularly for local authorities. The draft regulations produced following the consultation were formally referred to us and a summary of our Report and recommendations together with the Government's response are included in **Chapter 2** of this Report.

Pensions

- 1.13 During the period of this Report we also expressed our views on the proposals in the Pensions Green Paper *Partnership in Pensions* (Cm 4179). Given our strong wish for the maintenance of a contributory element within the benefits structure (see Chapter 1 of our Twelfth Report published last April), we welcomed the proposals that would secure the future of a state pension based on contributions to a National Insurance scheme. We were also pleased to see the emphasis on addressing the needs of those with low or irregular incomes and those unable to work because of disability or caring responsibilities.
- 1.14 However, we considered that the proposals would be complex and unattractive to providers. We also had doubts about the proposals in respect of people with irregular working patterns, the Minimum Pensions Guarantee, the potentially conflicting incentives offered by ISAs and stakeholder pensions, the funding of State Second Pensions and the inducements for employers to set up schemes.

Asylum seekers

- 1.15 As we indicated in our Twelfth Report, we have continued to take a close interest in the proposals for new methods of support for those seeking asylum in the UK. As most of the provisions would arise directly from primary legislation, we would not normally have been part of the regulation making process. However, we had particular concerns about the arrangements for transferring social security scheme recipients to the Home Office scheme, and vice versa. We were also concerned about what provisions would be made for items outside the proposed Home Office scheme, such as funeral grants.
- 1.16 To discuss our concerns, we jointly met officials from the DSS and the Home Office. This enabled us to put forward our more informed views on the proposals to the relevant Permanent Secretaries. We also responded to the Home Office's consultation paper on the National Asylum Support Service (Consultation Document on the Main Regulations under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) – published November 1999). Officials have undertaken to continue to keep us informed as these policies and related secondary legislation are developed. We are grateful to them for doing so.

The Decision Making and Appeals processes

- 1.17 Several policy initiatives which had previously been the subject of consultation and debate have been implemented during the period of this report. The changes to the Decision Making and Appeals processes (a description of which and our comments on were included in our Eleventh Report) have been introduced in all benefits using a rolling programme. To ensure an element of independence in the monitoring activity, a Benefits Agency Standards Committee has been set up. One of the SSAC Members has been appointed independently as a member of that Committee. This will help us to maintain an overall view of the system as it is established and developed, and to determine whether or not our initial reservations about the system were well founded.

The New Deal

- 1.18 The Government's New Deal programme has been expanded, reinforcing the Government's approach of "work for those who can and security for those who cannot". Whilst agreeing in principle with that policy, we were concerned by the proposals to impose a mandatory 26 week sanction on certain young people who fail to comply with the requirements of a New Deal Option. Therefore, we decided that the draft Regulations should be formally referred to us. A summary of our recommendations and the Government's response are in **Chapter 2** of this Report.
- 1.19 In line with our intentions recorded in our previous Report, we have asked DfEE and the DSS to provide us with a report on the results of the monitoring and evaluation exercises undertaken on all the New Deal and Welfare to Work Pilots and have found this very helpful. We shall continue to include sites piloting Welfare to Work schemes in our programme of visits. We shall also continue to participate in the debate on future developments.

Cross-departmental working

- 1.20 The past year has also seen further evidence of the development of "Joined-up Government", and we have already experienced some of the good effects of this principle being put into practice; for example, the joint presentations given to us by the DSS and the Home Office, and by the Departments of Social Security and for Education and Employment. We have also seen the practical examples of working across organisational and programme boundaries. For example, we have visited sites where the Benefits Agency and the Employment Service are working together and in partnership with local authorities on the ONE (formerly the Single Work-focused Gateway) Pilot exercises.

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- 1.21 Thus far, we have been encouraged by these developments. However, we believe that great care must be taken to ensure that the work already undertaken to build robust communication and consultation processes is continued and further enhanced. We also believe that, if ONE services are to be rolled out nationally, much will need to be done to address the issues raised by the widely varying conditions of service of the different groups of staff brought together by these new ways of working.
- 1.22 More broadly, it is important to ensure that the prime responsibilities of each Department, and the culture and practice needed to discharge them are not already affected by the implications of inter-departmental working. One example where we felt such a concern might have arisen related to the proposals put to us for the introduction of Sure Start Maternity Grants. Regulations sought to make receipt of the Grant dependent upon receipt of certain health advice. Although the proposals were potentially beneficial to recipients, in that they would receive an increased income, we were concerned that health professionals, in discharging the DSS function of establishing entitlement to benefits, might be doing so in a way that damaged their prime responsibility for reducing health inequalities. Caution is required to ensure that inter-departmental policies are compatible before making receipt of a social security benefit dependent upon satisfying a non-money related condition. Care is also needed to ensure that the introduction of additional requirements does not make the administration of social security benefits unnecessarily complex and correspondingly expensive.

National Insurance and Tax Credits

- 1.23 Another part of the Government's reform programme implemented during the past year has been the transfer of responsibility for National Insurance Contributions to Inland Revenue, and the replacement of Family Credit by Working Families' Tax Credit and of Disability Working Allowance by the Disabled Persons Tax Credit – both of these new "benefits" also being the responsibility of Inland Revenue.
- 1.24 Prior to their transfer, National Insurance Contributions matters had been within the Committee's remit; so had proposals for changes to Family Credit and Disability Working Allowance regulations. Following the transfer of responsibilities to Inland Revenue, we have made an agreement with Inland Revenue enabling us to put in place informal consultation arrangements for all three areas, whereby the Committee examines draft proposals and decides which would be appropriate for discussion and how the issues should be presented and views put to Inland Revenue officials. Whilst these are still early days these informal procedures have, in our opinion, worked well and we are grateful to Inland Revenue officials for the care they have taken to keep the Committee informed of all relevant developments.
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Regulations considered

- 1.25 As was the case for last year, fewer proposals for amendments to regulations were put to the Committee for consideration than during comparable periods in previous years, as explained by the Chairman in his introduction. Consequently, we conducted fewer public consultation exercises and wrote fewer published reports on such proposals. One noteworthy development arising from cross-departmental working (see paragraphs 1.20-1.22 above) has been the submission of proposals for which two Secretaries of State were responsible. Where this happened, we wrote one report highlighting comments which were directed to each Secretary of State and sent a copy to each one.
- 1.26 A full list of the regulations on which we undertook formal consultation exercises and a summary of the main points of the reports follow in **Chapter 2**. Readers seeking a fuller explanation are referred to the Command Papers, all published by the Stationery Office.
- 1.27 Many of the proposals we have considered have become law either with or without amendment as the result of our deliberations. These are listed in **Annex C**, using the titles and Statutory Instrument numbers of the regulations for Great Britain. There are normally mirroring regulations for Northern Ireland. In some cases we requested that the proposals be formally referred to the Committee. Where we requested such formal reference, we consulted interested parties then sent our Report to the Secretary of State. These reports are made available to Parliament and published as a Command Paper when the Regulations are laid before Parliament. In some cases, where we did not request formal referral, we nonetheless raised concerns with officials and on occasions with the Secretary of State. As a result of these representations, changes were made to some of these proposals before they became law.

Publications

- 1.28 At Annex D of our Twelfth Report, we published a list bringing up to date the Committee's publications. As only Command Papers relating to our consultation exercises on proposed changes to regulations have been produced over the last year, and as these are listed in **Chapter 2** of this Report, we have not produced an equivalent Annex in this Report.

Other policy areas of interest

1.29. Although we have not published any research or occasional papers, as a part of our remit to give advice on social security issues as we see fit, we have continued to monitor a number of areas of policy in which we have a particular interest. This year, amongst other topics, we have looked at Housing Benefit; the Social Fund; items irregularly updated, such as the Christmas Bonus; Guardians Allowance, and financial support for carers. Additionally, we have put forward ideas for a more secure allocation of National Insurance Numbers – a response to which has not been received in time for publication - and have urged the Government to look for opportunities for the consolidation and alignment of secondary legislation. In such cases, the Chairman normally writes directly to the Secretary of State setting out the Committee's views.

Visits

1.30 Although we have no statutory role in respect of the operation and administration of policies, we have continued to visit Social Security Offices and Jobcentres in order to gain first hand information on how policy is operated at a local level. Our visits have included sites piloting the New Deal for Disabled People and ONE. The discussions with staff are invaluable to us in understanding the strengths and weaknesses in the social security system and give an insight into the difficulties faced by both those people operating and those seeking help from the social security system. Being made aware of local and national practices enables the Committee to judge better the impact made by changes to legislation on administrators and customers alike.

1.31 In our Twelfth Report, we highlighted the constraints computer systems had placed upon the abilities of staff to deliver benefits and said that we would continue to monitor developments. During our programme of visits to the Social Security Offices and Jobcentres, over the last year, we have continued to receive mixed reports on Information Technology (IT). Staff, whilst agreeing that some of the problems with systems have been largely solved, were still needing to process claims using inadequate software which often created the need for costly and time consuming clerical intervention. This situation continues to concern us.

1.32 Furthermore, during our discussions with officials presenting Ministers' proposals for change at our monthly meetings, we have been advised that certain proposals for change either had to be delayed or amended in order to accommodate IT constraints. We were concerned to find that IT could be operating as a driver to policy in this way and we have questioned whether full account is always taken of the implications for delivery systems before Ministers make decisions to implement a new or changed policy.

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- 1.33 Apart from visiting Social Security Offices and their related Jobcentres, we have maintained our programme of meetings with and visits to individuals and outside bodies. Those we have met or visited are listed at **Annex B**. During our discussions we have covered a wide range of subjects and have gained a valuable insight into the perspectives of others on the social security system. Having a broader view of the effects of the system has provided us with a firmer basis upon which to consider proposals for change or make our own recommendations for change.
- 1.34 We have also continued to meet the House of Commons Social Security Select Committee and have maintained a close working liaison with the Secretariat and Members of the Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board. We consider that keeping in close touch with the work of these bodies is essential to our efficiency and efficacy.

The Internet

- 1.35 Our internet website was launched in May 1999. It provides detailed information about the Committee's remit, membership and most recent publications. It also has details of any current consultation exercises being undertaken and an E-mail facility, enabling the submission of comments to be made electronically. This facility was available to the general public for the last two consultation exercises. Monitoring of the visits to the site indicates that it is well used.

The future

Continuing tasks

- 1.36 As was the case last year, we expect to receive further detail of the Government's programme for reforms to social security and we look forward to being able to participate in the debates. The discussion arising from the Housing Green Paper and any proposals to change the Housing Benefit provisions will be of particular interest to us.
- 1.37 We shall continue our programme of visits, monitoring the delivery of policy intentions and observing the progress of change at ground level. We shall also keep in close touch with the officials who are charged with managing the implementation of new measures. We have no research objectives of our own at present, but we shall initiate research activity if we should identify any specific gaps in the Department's programme.

1.38 In 1992, we produced an occasional paper (*The Social Fund A New Structure*, HMSO 1992) which suggested that structural changes were required to the Social Fund scheme. Following this paper we have continued to monitor the progress of the Social Fund, both during our visits to Benefits Agency local offices and when proposals for changes to the mandatory elements of the scheme have been brought to our regular monthly meetings. The cumulative effects of the changes made to the Funeral and Maternity Grant provisions have, in our opinion, created an over complex system that places burdens on both claimants and administrators. These changes and those made to the Budgeting Loan system during 1999 have led us to conclude that we should further examine the provisions. This is likely to be a major piece of work for us next year.

A new role

1.39 In his statement on inherited SERPS to the House of Commons on 15 March 2000, the Secretary of State for Social Security announced that he had invited the Committee to take on a new role, advising on the accuracy of information the Department provides to the public. This task would represent a significant extension in the role of the Committee, adding to its advisory and statutory responsibilities a responsibility for monitoring and scrutiny of the Department's information products. The Committee's initial reaction has been to welcome this new task. However, much work will need to be done to establish precisely how the Committee can best contribute, while at the same time ensuring that this additional task does not adversely affect the discharge of its other functions. A full report of how the arrangements will operate will be included in next year's Report.

Chapter 2

Regulations referred to the Committee

2.1 Regulations formally referred and reported on:

- The Social Security (Contributions) Amendment Regulations 1999 (Cm 4281, March 1999)
- The Housing Benefit (General) Amendment (No.3) Regulations 1999 (Cm 4459, October 1999)
- The Jobseeker's Allowance (Amendment) Regulations 2000 (Cm 4549, February 2000)

2.2 Summary of reports and recommendations:

a) National Insurance Contributions

- i) In November 1998, proposals were considered by the Committee which would have amended regulations so that payments to employees by non-cash vouchers (ie. exchangeable for goods or services but not cash) would be brought into liability for Class 1 National Insurance Contributions, with effect from April 1999. Our Report on the proposals was published in March 1999, too late for inclusion in the 12th Stewardship Report.
- ii) The purpose of the proposals had been to align National Insurance rules with those of Tax and to achieve fairness of treatment between those paid by cash and those whose pay included vouchers. There would also have been advantages because entitlement to contributory benefits would be created.
- iii) The Committee did not accept that the proposals would meet the stated aims and recommended that implementation should be delayed until a review had been undertaken. The review should examine the proposals in social and economic terms and the methods by which they could most economically and effectively be implemented.
- iv) The Government laid the Regulations as had been originally planned and, in its response, said that it had not been convinced that there would be any benefit in accepting the main recommendation. In its view, delaying the proposals would have perpetuated the unfairness it had been committed to tackling.

b) Housing Benefit for Supported Housing

- i) In our 12th Report we summarised our recommendations on proposals, in respect of supported housing, put to the Committee in 1996. We also explained that those proposals had not been implemented. Instead, the Government had undertaken an inter-departmental review to seek a long-term arrangement for funding services in supported housing. In February 1999, we responded to the Department's consultation document *Supporting People: A new policy and funding framework for support services*, which had been issued as a consequence of the inter-departmental review.
- ii) In June 1999, the Committee considered proposals which would, from April 2000, introduce a new transitional Housing Benefit scheme for supported accommodation. This new scheme had been developed as part of the Government's "Supporting People" proposals in the consultation paper. The new transitional scheme would have replaced (a) the existing provisions, introduced in August 1997, which had enabled Housing Benefit to meet all reasonable charges for general counselling and support in "existing supported accommodation" and (b) the rule which had allowed, in certain circumstances, otherwise ineligible charges for personal general counselling and support to be met. The new transitional scheme would have also generated information needed to implement long-term arrangements for the funding of support services.
- iii) The Committee supported the aims of the transitional arrangements and welcomed the attempt to provide a flexible and inclusive funding regime. However, we had concerns for the overall strength of the proposed transitional scheme and its legal and operational detail and thus recommended that the Department should take certain steps to ensure its success.
- iv) The Government partially accepted the proposal to reconsider the definition of "sheltered accommodation" and removed the requirement of use of a common room from it. The Government also accepted the recommendations that private sector providers should be given information about the scheme without delay, and that it should consult on the draft guidance and the proposed information gathering arrangements.

c) Jobseeker's Allowance Sanctions and Hardship Payments

- i) In August 1999, the Committee considered proposals which would have introduced new Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions and hardship rules for young people aged 18-24 required to participate in the New Deal for young people. Specifically, the Regulations would have increased the period, during which a Jobseeker's Allowance would not be payable, to 26 weeks, in those cases where there had been a third or subsequent failure, within a period of 12 months, to comply with a New Deal Option requirement. The purpose of the changes was to prevent young unemployed people from circumventing the existing sanctions rules and, thereby, receiving income.
- ii) Whilst accepting that there would be some young people who would deliberately flout the rules and for whom a 26 week period without benefit would be appropriate, and whilst supporting the integrity of all front-line staff, the Committee was concerned that the proposals might unintentionally penalise a higher than expected number of other groups who, for a mixture of social, educational or health reasons, were unable to comply with the requirements of New Deal Options. Therefore, the Committee's main recommendation was that the length of the sanction should be discretionary. We made seven other recommendations which, in our view, would introduce further safeguards to prevent sanctions being inappropriately imposed and would extend the availability and receipt of Hardship Payments.
- iii) The Government noted our intention in respect of the main recommendation but did not accept it because the Jobseekers Act did not contain the primary power and because the proposals included a measure that would have a similar effect to a sanction of discretionary length: ie. those who complete their option without incurring a further sanction would receive benefit for the remainder of the sanction. The Government also accepted one of our secondary recommendations and amended the provisions so that those who have been looked after by a local authority within the last three years would be included within the vulnerable groups eligible for hardship payments.

d) Students

- i) In our Twelfth Report we stated that in March 1998, following Court of Appeal cases, a set of regulations had been referred to the Committee which were intended to confirm the Government policy that social security benefit should not be payable to full-time students (apart from certain categories) until they finally completed, abandoned or were dismissed from their course.
- ii) The Committee's Report was sent to the Secretary of State in May 1998. At the time of writing, the Report has not been published and the regulations have not been laid.

ANNEX A

Membership of the Social Security Advisory Committee

Sir Thomas Boyd-Carpenter, KBE, joined the Scots Guards as a National Serviceman in 1956 and was commissioned in 1957. He has served in the United Kingdom and in Aden, Oman, Malaya, Borneo and Germany, and was Chief of Staff, HQ British Army of the Rhine from 1988-89. His final post was Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Programmes and Personnel) in the Ministry of Defence. He is Chairman of the Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster Health Authority, Chairman of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Board on Family Law and works as a senior consultant with the management communications company People in Business.

Mr Neil Barlow is Integration Manager for Aventis Crop Science UK Ltd. He is a fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. He is an associate of the Institute of Linguists, a member of the Eastern Regional Council of the Confederation of British Industry and a member of an Employment Tribunal.

Mrs Sylvia Denman CBE is Chair of Camden and Islington Health Authority and a part-time tribunal Chair. She has a background as a barrister with experience of anti-discrimination law and practice. She has been deputy director of education with the Inner London Education Authority and a Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of the West Indies and at Oxford Polytechnic. She is currently a member of the Housing Corporation and a Governor of Oxford Brookes University. Previous appointments include membership of the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Race Relations Board (now the Commission for Racial Equality), the Criminal Justice Consultative Council and the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Aid.

Mr Andrew Dilnot is Director of the Institute of Fiscal Studies. He is an economist whose research has concentrated on the effect of Government on the household sector, and has written extensively on social security policy. He has taught at the Universities of London and Oxford and is a regular broadcaster and contributor to the printed media in discussions of social security and other current policy debates.

Mrs Elisabeth Elias, JP, qualified as a barrister. She sits as a Magistrate and as a Chairman of the Rent Assessment Panel for Wales. She is a member of the Council of The Girls' Day School Trust. She has been Chairman of a Local Research Ethics Committee and a non-executive member of the Board of the Welsh Health Common Services Authority from 1995 to 1999.

Mr Richard Exell, OBE is the TUC's Policy Officer responsible for social security. He took part in the European Commission's discussions leading to the Recommendations on Minimum Standards in Social Protection and the Guarantee of Benefits and Resources, and was a member of the trade union team in the discussions leading to the conclusion of the European agreement on parental leave. He has acted as rapporteur's expert for the Economic and Social Committee on two reports, including that on Social Exclusion. He is a member of the Disability Rights Commission.

Dr Christine Kenrick is Chairman of Birmingham Women's Hospital NHS Trust. Her background is in market research, nationally and internationally. She founded the Birmingham Community Foundation in 1995 and was formerly Chairman of Birmingham Settlement, the largest of the UK Settlements. A Trustee of local and national voluntary sector organisations, she is also a Member of Council of Aston University.

Dr Pui-Ling Li is a Consultant in Public Health Medicine at the NHS Executive, Department of Health. She has an in-depth knowledge of population health, primary care and health service research. She was a general practitioner in Hackney until 1995, and has worked on primary care issues at national level as a member of the Primary Care Support Force for London, and as Chairman of the Primary Care Resource Group for the NHS Executive's Ethnic Health Unit. She has extensive experience of the voluntary sector. She set up the Chinese National Healthy Living Centre in China Town, London, in 1987, and has been Chairman of the Board since, and she is a director of the Bromley by Bow Healthy Living Centre. She is currently the UK Chairman of the Core Priority Group for the UK/USA Programme of Collaboration in Minority Ethnic Health.

Professor Eithne McLaughlin is Professor of Social Policy at the Queen's University of Belfast. She is Chair of the UK Social Policy Association, the 1999 President of the Sociology & Social Policy section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science and a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. Her previous public service includes: Chair of the Belfast Group of Citizens Advice Bureaux, Vice-Chair of the Northern Ireland Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, Chair of Derry Women's Aid, member of The Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights in Northern Ireland and the Commission on Social Justice (UK). She is currently a non-executive Director of Northern Ireland's largest Health and Social Services Board (EHSSB), where, from 1994 to 1998, she had lead responsibility for complaints from the public about HPSS provision. Professor McLaughlin has researched and published extensively on unemployment, employment and labour market policies, community and informal care, and social security policy.

Mr Laurie Naumann retired in March 1999 from the Scottish Council for Single Homeless, which he had been involved in setting up and had been director since 1978. Previously he had worked in probation and after care in Leeds and a city centre social work development project in Edinburgh concerned with alcohol problems and homelessness. From 1992 to 1995 he was seconded to The Scottish Offices Social Work Services Inspectorate to work on voluntary sector issues. Between 1981 and 1992 he was secretary of the Care in the Community Scottish Working Group. He is currently undertaking a mixture of voluntary and self-employed work in the housing and social service field in Scotland, Russia and Hungary. At present he is a member of the Scottish Social Inclusion Network, chairs the Scottish Active Communities Working Group, is a trustee of the Highland Housing and Community Care Trust and of the Refugee Survival Trust, is a board member of Garvald Training Centre, for people with learning disabilities, and of Kingdom and Old Town Housing Associations.

Professor Anthony Ogus holds a Chair of Law at the University of Manchester, having previously held appointments at the Universities of Leicester, Oxford and Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He has worked with social scientists in appraising different aspects of law and has written extensively on welfare law, including a textbook on social security. He is a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee of the Journal of Social Security Law. He has also served on committees of the Economic and Social Research Council.

Professor Olive Stevenson, CBE. She was the Chair of Age Concern England from 1980 to 1983 and Chair of the Advisory Committee on Rent Rebates and Rent Allowances from 1977 to 1983 and ESRC representative on the EC Committee on Science and Technology for elderly people until 1996. She is currently Chair of Leicestershire, Cambridge and Peterborough Area Child Protection Committees. She has undertaken considerable research and published mainly in the area of the personal social services, with special reference to the social care of frail elderly people and child welfare. Her most recent publication (1998) is on neglected children, in the Blackwells series which she edits, 'Working Together for Children, Young People and Families'.

Dr Adrian V Stokes, OBE, is Joint Director at the NHS Information Authority and is Honorary Visiting Professor of Information Management at Nene University College, Northampton. He is Chairman and Vice-President of the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club, a Governor of Motability and Hon. Vice-President of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation. He is also involved with a number of other organisations concerned with disability and is a member of a Disability Appeal Tribunal and a Trustee of the Independent Living Funds. He has experience of work among, and the needs of, chronically sick and disabled people and has himself been disabled since birth as a result of spina bifida.

Mr Robin Wendt, CBE, DL, is a former Secretary of the Association of County Councils and was a member of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Enquiry into Income and Wealth. He was Chief Executive of Cheshire County Council from 1979-89. Until 1975 he was an Assistant Secretary of DHSS and has wide experience of social security policy and the operation of local authority services. He is a Trustee of the Independent Living Funds, and a member of the Benefits Agency Standards Committee. He was a member of the Royal Commission on Long-Term Care of the Elderly.

Remuneration

Meetings of the Committee normally take place monthly. Members are paid a fee for attendance. The Chairman receives £270 a day; Members £132 a day. All Members also receive expenses incurred in connection with meetings and visits to local Benefits Agency offices and other organisations.

Code of Practice

The Committee has an agreed Code of Practice and a Register of Interests in line with the Cabinet Office requirements for all advisory bodies.

ANNEX B

Visits by Members of the Committee to the Benefits Agency and other parts of the Social Security system

Benefits Agency District Offices

Bath

Bloomsbury

Birkenhead

Bristol (East)

Cardiff, Assembly Relations Unit

Colchester

Edinburgh, Scottish Parliamentary Relations Unit and
DSS Policy Liaison

Galashiels

Hawick

Hertford

Highgate

Merthyr Tydfil

Newtown

Swansea

Social Security Agency Offices (Northern Ireland)

Belfast, Falls Road

Jobcentres

Hawick

Kelso

Training and Employment Agency Office (Northern Ireland)

Newtownabbey

ONE Pilots

Coventry ONE Visitor Centre

Bedworth ONE Centre

Personal Adviser Pilot

Bedfordshire (Luton)

Individuals and Organisations met by the Chairman and other Members of the Committee

Dr Mansel Aylward, Chief Medical Adviser

Ursula Brennan, Group Director, DSS

Hugh Bayley MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary

Fred Cobain, Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Social Development

Jim Coulter, Chief Executive, National Housing Federation

DSS Summer School 1999

Nigel Dodds MLA, Minister for Social Development

Mike Durkan, Leeds City Council

Angela Eagle MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary

Paul Gray, Group Director, DSS

Sandie Lock, Calderdale Citizens Advice Bureau

Reverend Harold Good, former Northern Ireland representative on SSAC

Paul Gorecki, Director of the Northern Ireland Economic Council

Clive Gowdy, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health and Social Services (Northern Ireland)

John Hunter, Permanent Secretary, Department for Social Development (Northern Ireland)

Avila Kilmurray, Director, Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust

Rachel Lomax, Permanent Secretary, DSS

Kalaini Lyle, Chief Executive of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Scotland

Seamus McAleavey, Director, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Associations

Jackie McDowell, Assistant Director, Gingerbread

Barney McGahan, Director of Operations, Social Security Agency (Northern Ireland)

William McGinnis, Chairman, Training & Employment Agency Board (Northern Ireland)

Liam McNeill, Executive Director, North City Training Ltd

Stephen Matier, Director with the Belfast Group of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Gwen Mills, Director, Disability Action

Nick Montagu, Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue

Marilynne Morgan, The Solicitor

George O'Doherty, Director of Employment Programmes, Support and Development Division, Training & Employment Agency (Northern Ireland)

John O'Neill, Director of Social Security Policy and Legislation, Department of Health and Social Services (Northern Ireland)

Maureen O'Neil, Director of Age Concern, Scotland

Eleanor Phillips, West Yorkshire Probation Service

The Social Security Select Committee

Deirdre Stewart, Assistant Director, Confederation of British Industry

Chris Thompson, Chief Executive, Social Security Agency (Northern Ireland)

Ian Walters, Chief Executive, Training & Employment Agency (Northern Ireland)

Rosaleen Wells, Antrim Road, Citizens Advice Bureau

Annex C

Regulations implementing proposals considered by the Committee and coming into force in Great Britain since April 1999

Statutory Instruments – 1999

- 907 The Income Support (General) (Standard Interest Rate Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 1999
- 920 The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1999
- 976 The Social Security (New Deal Pilot) Amendment Regulations 1999
- 1088 The Social Security (Incapacity, Earnings and Work Trials) Pilot Schemes Regulations 1999
- 1153 The Income Support (General) (Standard Interest Rate Amendment) (No.4) Regulations 1999
- 1302 The Social Security (Adjudication) (Amendment) Regulations 1999
- 1326 The Social Security (Hospital In-Patients, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance) (Amendment) Regulations 1999
- 1362 The Social Security (Overlapping Benefits) Amendment (No.2) Regulations 1999
- 1411 The Income Support (General) (Standard Interest Rate Amendment) (No.5) Regulations 1999
- 1509 The Social Security Amendment (Non-cash Vouchers) Regulations 1999
- 1539 The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (General) Amendment (No.2) Regulations 1999
- 1677 The Social Security Amendment (Educational Maintenance Allowance) Regulations 1999
- 1880 The Social Fund Winter Fuel Payment Amendment Regulations 1999
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- 1921 The Income Support (General) and Jobseeker's Allowance Amendment Regulations 1999
- 1935 The Social Security Amendment (Students) Regulations 1999
- 2165 The Social Security Amendment (Sports Awards) Regulations 1999
- 2225 The Child Benefit (Northern Ireland Reciprocal Arrangements) Amendment Regulations 1999
- 2226 The Social Security (Incapacity Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance) Amendment Regulations 1999
- 2227 The Social Security (Northern Ireland Reciprocal Arrangements) Amendment Regulations 1999
- 2358 The Social Security (Claims and Payments) Amendment Regulations 1999
- 2401 The Housing Benefit (General) Amendment (No.2) Regulations 1999
- 2554 Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations 1999
- 2555 The Social Security Amendment (Personal Allowances for Children and Young Persons) Regulations 1999
- 2556 The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No.2) Regulations 1999
- 2640 The Social Security Amendment (Notional Income and Capital) Regulations 1999
- 2677 The Social Security and Child Support (Decisions and Appeals), Vaccine Damage Payments and Jobseeker's Allowance (Amendment) Regulations 1999
- 2734 The Housing Benefit (General) Amendment (No.3) Regulations 1999
- 2781 The Social Fund Cold Weather Payments (General) Amendment Regulations 1999
- 3083 The Jobseeker's Allowance Amendment (New Deal) Regulations 1999
- 3087 The Jobseeker's Allowance (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 1999
- 3156 The Social Security (New Deal Pilot) Regulations 1999
- 3266 The Social Fund Maternity and Funeral Expenses (General) Amendment Regulations 1999
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3324 The Income Support (General) and Jobseeker's Allowance
Amendment (No.2) Regulations 1999

3329 The Income Support (General) Amendment (No.2) Regulations 1999

Statutory Instruments 2000

4 The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (General) Amendment
Regulations 2000

55 The Social Security Amendment (Education Maintenance Allowance)
Regulations 2000

119 The Social Security and Child Support (Decisions and Appeals)
Amendment Regulations 2000

239 The Jobseeker's Allowance (Amendment) Regulations 2000

638 The Housing Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 2000

678 The Social Security (Approved Work) Regulations 2000

681 The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2000

729 The Social Fund Winter Fuel Payment Regulations 2000

832 The Income Support (General) (Standard Interest Rate Amendment)
Regulations 2000