

SSAC Quarterly Business Update May 2008

Welcome to the Social Security Advisory Committee's quarterly business update which provides a summary of the Committee's activities.

The SSAC Stakeholder Seminar November 2007

We would like to thank all those who attended and extend our special thanks to our guest speakers, Dr Roy Sainsbury and Kate Green, and discussion panellists Alison Garnham and Les Allamby.

Roy Sainsbury outlined the case for a move towards a single working age benefit from the current situation of 30 – 40 benefits administered by different organisations.

Kate Green considered "how to end child poverty by asserting rights". She argued that whilst discussion of welfare reform is fashionable, it seems to be based upon the assumption that the welfare state is a problem. Kate also pointed out that achieving the child poverty target by 2010 was not on track.

Please see our website for a fuller summary of these presentations, workshop discussions and outcomes.

Publications

Since the last update note we have published two Occasional Papers:

1. Patterns of employment, benefit eligibility and rights and responsibilities agenda

This paper examines the effects of the interaction of 'seasonal' work and the benefits system. The report highlights problems for Jobcentre Plus customers who have taken 'seasonal' work but then refused benefits when their employment ended.

2. Third Part Deductions: Time for a Policy Review

This paper explores the current situation of third party deductions and considers whether the overall rationale for these deductions is consistent with policy intentions.

Full copies of both of these papers can be found on the SSAC web site.

Staff Changes

Anna Bee, our research and policy specialist is currently on adoption leave. We would like to wish Anna the very best of luck and offer our thanks for all her hard work.

We would also like to introduce Mark Langdon who will be taking over Anna's post during this period of leave.

Visits

Members of the Committee have carried out the following visits since November 07:

- Local Employment Partnership - Birmingham
- LEAN project - Work Focussed Interviews - London
- In and Out of work pilot - Liverpool - 3 way pilot between JC+, HMRC and the LA - the pilot aims to improve the processing of inter-actions for benefit claimants
- Clydebank Benefit Delivery Centre - benefit processing

- Voice Risk analysis pilot -
Coventry - joint pilot LA and
DWP - the aim of the pilot is to
determine if Voice Risk
Analysis (VRA) is an effective
tool for indicating whether there
is a risk of fraud and whether
that risk is high or low

Forward look

The forward look for SSAC business July – November 2008 has now been published and is available on the SSAC web site.

The SSAC Stakeholder Event November 2008

The process of organising the next SSAC Stakeholder event (13 November 2008 at Sadlers Wells Theatre, London) is now underway. We will shortly be sending out invitations. Further details will also be posted on our website.

The next issue of the SSAC update will be published in September 2008.

(www.ssac.org.uk)

Formal Referral

The consultation period for regulations for reducing the backdating period for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit has been extended until 26 May 2008.

At the May meeting, the Committee took the decision to undertake a formal consultation exercise in relation to the proposed regulations governing changes to the entitlement conditions for Lone Parents claiming Income Support. Please see our website for further details.