

**Westminster Employment Forum and Westminster Social Policy Forum Keynote Seminar:
Welfare reform - 'getting Britain working'**

Timing: Afternoon, Monday, 12th September 2011

Venue: Sixty One Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET



**WESTMINSTER
EMPLOYMENT
FORUM**

Agenda subject to change

- 13.15 - 13.45 Registration and coffee
- 13.45 - 13.50 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, Shadow Minister for Employment
- 13.50 - 14.15 **Welfare reform - the next steps for policy**
Paul McComb, Deputy Director, Universal Credit Programme, Department for Work and Pensions
Questions and comments from the floor
- 14.15 - 14.25 **The Universal Credit - will it make work pay?**
James Browne, Senior Research Economist, Institute for Fiscal Studies
- 14.25 - 15.10 **Making work pay and ending the 'benefits trap'**
Will the Universal Credit successfully ensure people are always better off in work than on benefits; will there be 'winners' and 'losers'? Will increasing the value of working via the Universal Credit and increased income tax / NI allowance succeed in incentivising people to work? How does the Universal Credit compare to alternative approaches to incentivising work such as a 'living wage'? To what extent can unemployment be reduced via incentives to work, particularly in a period of economic difficulty? Should Council Tax Benefit be included in the Universal Credit and what is the likely impact of the proposed localised Council Tax Benefit arrangements? What evidence is there to suggest the Universal Credit will reduce fraudulent claims? Will the removal of benefits for those turning down job or training opportunities and a £500-a-week cap on total household benefits be effective in increasing the incentive to work?
Chris Goulden, Policy and Research Manager, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Matthew Sinclair, Director, TaxPayers' Alliance
Harry Bates, Assistant Head of Benefits & Revenues Service (Benefits), Tendring District Council
Questions and comments from the floor with **James Browne**, Senior Research Economist, Institute for Fiscal Studies
- 15.10 - 15.30 **The view from Parliament**
Thoughts from the Select Committee regarding their ongoing welfare reform inquiries, 'White Paper on Universal Credit', 'Migration from Incapacity Benefits to Employment Support Allowance' and 'The Work Programme: providers and contracting arrangements'.
Oliver Heald MP, Member, Work and Pensions Select Committee
Questions and comments from the floor
- 15.30 - 15.35 **Chairman's closing remarks**
Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, Shadow Minister for Employment
- 15.35 - 15.55 Coffee
- 15.55 - 16.00 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Stephen Lloyd MP, Member, Work and Pensions Select Committee
- 16.00 - 16.40 **Supporting people back to work from long-term sick leave and incapacity benefits**
Are concerns about the suitability of Work Capability Assessments (WCAs) for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants with mental health problems justified? What can be done to reduce the number of appeals being taken against the findings of individual WCAs? Should ESA claimants who have been declared fit for work receive additional support for re-integrating into the labour market? What role should employers play in providing health and social help to support workers on long-term sick leave back into the workplace? How can businesses reduce workplace stress and improve absence prevention?
Dr Marc Bush, Acting Director, Policy & Campaigns, Scope
Jan Hutchinson, Director of Programmes, Centre for Mental Health
Ben Willmott, Senior Public Policy Adviser, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
Questions and comments from the floor
- 16.40 - 17.25 **'Getting Britain working' - improving skills, providing work experience and delivering results**
Will the proposed new requirements for jobseekers to complete up to four weeks' work experience, as a condition for receiving their Universal Credit, improve the employability of jobseekers? Does the Government's proposed 'payment by results' welfare-to-work programme manage to strike the right balance between value for public money and incentivising effective support for jobseekers? What would be the likely impact of privatising the Job Centre network? Is current financial support, such as the Adult Learning Grant, sufficient to support unemployed and low-paid workers to enter education? What more could be done to incentivise entry to adult education?
Paul Warner, Director, Employment and Skills, Association of Employment and Learning Providers
Baroness Stedman-Scott, Chief Executive, Tomorrow's People
Patrick Hughes, Director, London and the Home Counties, Jobcentre Plus
Clare McNeil, Research Fellow, Institute for Public Policy Research
Questions and comments from the floor
- 17.25 - 17.30 **Chairman's and Westminster Employment Forum thanks and closing remarks**
Stephen Lloyd MP, Member, Work and Pensions Select Committee
Sean Cudmore, Senior Producer, Westminster Employment Forum and Westminster Social Policy Forum