

jobseekers parents benefit carers		
	SOCIAL SECURITY	
	ADVISORY COMMITTEE	

TWENTY FOURTH REPORT 2011

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Social Security Advisory Committee

TWENTY FOURTH REPORT

August 2010 – July 2011

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Interim Chair's Foreword

As Interim Chair of the Committee I am pleased to report on the Committee's work in the period August 2010 to July 2011. I took up my post on 1 November 2011 and look forward to working with the Committee over the coming months

As usual, the majority of the Committee's time has been dedicated to the scrutiny of proposals for regulations. However, in May 2011 the Committee also took on a major commission from Ministers to carry out an independent review of passported benefits and how they might be handled within the proposals for welfare reform. We plan to report to Ministers at the end of January 2012. We welcome this opportunity to contribute to thinking on the future arrangements for this wide range of support measures that have traditionally been linked to the benefits system.

The backdrop to the Committee's work over the year has been the Government's evolving plans for a fundamental overhaul of the benefits and tax credits systems. Primary legislation to provide the foundation for these arrangements is currently under consideration in Parliament. The proposed Universal Credit is built around the principle that work will always pay, and over the next few years it is set to provide a radical reform of the system that the Committee has advised upon since its inception. We have therefore been monitoring the development of Universal Credit and taken an active interest in its design.

At the same time, we have continued to perform our scrutinies of the Department's proposals for regulations. The number of proposals has reduced sharply against previous years as the Department has focused on its plans for reform. This part of our work load is unlikely to increase substantially until well into 2012 and we look forward to developing the Committee's general advisory role meanwhile. However, as this report sets out in some detail, some of these regulations packages have been substantial and complex and we have taken a higher than usual number on formal referral for report to the Secretary of State.

On the Committee's behalf I would like to thank Sir Richard Tilt who completed over six years of distinguished service at the end of March 2011 and Alison Garnham who completed her term as a member of the Committee in January 2011. Deep Sagar was appointed as Chair in April 2011 and resigned in October 2011.

My colleagues and I would also like to thank the Committee Secretary, Gill Saunders, and her team for their support and hard work over the year.

Paul Gray

Chapter 1

Our Work – summary

1.1 Our work over the latter part of 2010 was carried out against the background of the Government's review of Public Bodies and the Spending Review. We were pleased to receive confirmation in October 2010 that the Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) would be retained, alongside recognition of our independent, expert role. However, the outcome of the 2010 Spending Review will be challenging for us. Like others, we shall have to marshal and apply our resources very carefully and focus on continuing to fulfil our remit and deliver our core business.

1.2 The most significant development in the first part of our reporting year was the publication of the Government's consultative paper *21st Century Welfare*¹ which laid out the Government's ambitious plans for the reform of the benefits and Tax Credits systems and introduced plans for Universal Credit which would incorporate out-of-work benefits, in-work support, and help with the costs of housing for families for people of working age. It also contains proposals for the replacement of Disability Living Allowance with the Personal Independence Payment. We responded to this consultation, broadly supporting the principles underpinning the proposals for Universal Credit, but questioning how it would achieve its key objectives of ensuring that work always pays and removing complexity from the system.

1.3 The Government's Work Programme went live at the end of our reporting year. The programme is a huge undertaking, involving large contracts and substantial investment and commitment from primary and sub-contractors alike. We have welcomed the new flexible and personalised approach to supporting people into work and look forward to seeing for ourselves how contractors are tackling barriers to employment and helping their clients to move into work. We have noted in past reports on proposed regulations the importance of the Department's monitoring and evaluation of the Work Programme and building a better understanding of the reality of 'welfare to work'. At a time of continuing economic uncertainty and rising unemployment we recognise that the Work Programme is being rolled out in less than ideal conditions and we are particularly interested in how it will perform in comparison with its predecessors.

1.4 Over the year we have scrutinised a number of changes to the Housing Benefit system. The costs of Housing Benefit are clearly a major concern for the Government but we have questioned whether some of the proposals for cutting back expenditure are likely to be effective, bearing in mind their potential for creating costly adverse consequences. Underlying the concerns we have expressed in our reports² is a more general concern that there is a lack of evidence both in relation to the availability of different types of rented accommodation and to tenant behaviour. As we note below it is very difficult to assess the likely impacts and wider potential effects of proposed changes when robust information to support policy development is not available.

1.5 We have developed our interest in disability benefits through our involvement with the work of Professor Malcolm Harrington and his review of the Employment and Support

¹ Cm 7913

² Chapter 3, pages 10-15

Allowance (ESA); and our continuing interest in the migration of Incapacity Benefit claimants to ESA. In order to see first hand how the trial of the migration to ESA was progressing, a number of Committee Members visited Aberdeen Jobcentre in March 2011 (see page ten below)

1.6 We have responded to the first year's call for evidence of the Harrington review with our views on the operation of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). Members of the Committee have also met with Professor Harrington to discuss aspects of the review; and have attended a seminar to see the operation of the computer system used by Atos Healthcare Professionals when carrying out the WCA. We hope this valuable informal and formal contact with Professor Harrington and his team will continue throughout the lifetime of his review.

Our scrutiny of proposed regulations

1.7 We noted in our previous annual report that in the months following the May 2010 General Election we had received only a very few sets of proposed regulations for scrutiny. Although numbers increased gradually over the year, the total (31) is a little lower than in previous years. However, the number of formal referrals (five) has remained relatively high (one in six of the total of proposals scrutinised).

1.8 Meanwhile, the processes and procedures we employ to carry out our scrutinies have had to be adapted to meet a number of challenges. In particular, and on a number of occasions, we have faced pressure to complete our work to very tight deadlines. This is potentially problematic for a Committee with limited resources and of whose members work part-time. It is also of concern to us that on several occasions we have received proposed regulations for scrutiny that Ministers are planning to lay before Parliament within a week or so, or even days, of the meeting at which the main part of our scrutiny is to be carried out.

1.9 Although we have tried and tested procedures in place to enable us to handle the scrutiny of straightforward and non contentious proposals without discussion at a meeting, their use is not appropriate when proposals involve substantial policy or operational changes and extensive modifications to legislation. As examples of cases where it was appropriate for the Committee to consider a proposal outside the forum of a meeting, the Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No 4) Regulations 2010 amended a number of other sets of Regulations, but was restricted to prescribing increases in earnings limits in connection with benefits for incapacity. Similarly, the Social Security (Claims and Payments) Amendment Regulations 2011 focused exclusively upon the reduction from 0.45p to 0.43p in the fee qualifying lenders pay for the purposes of defraying the Secretary of State's administrative costs in making payments of mortgage interest direct to qualifying lenders. In both instances Committee members were able to communicate their views to one another, and express an agreement that the proposals could proceed without formal referral through email. In all we examined 15 different sets of proposals in this way. Whilst we are confident that the role of scrutinising certain draft proposals can be effectively achieved outside the scheduled monthly meetings, we believe that we have reached the limits of identifying the types of proposals where this is possible.

1.10 While we recognise that it will sometimes be necessary for the Department to legislate within short timescales, we have been discussing with the Department how we might work with officials to ensure that, as far as is possible, our work load is planned and balanced over the year so as to ensure that we have sufficient time to fulfil our statutory

responsibilities properly. We know that the Department will be undergoing a major restructuring from the autumn of 2011 onwards and we believe that it will be very important to ensure that the new organisational structure is geared up to work with us to maintain the close and effective working relationships with officials that underpin our scrutiny role.

1.11 As well as our commentaries on wider policy issues we also pay close attention to the drafting and potential impacts of proposed changes to regulations. Both in the course of formal referral exercises and in our examination of proposals that we do not take on formal referral, we identify difficult points of drafting and construction that we draw to officials' attention. We give two examples of this below.

1.12 When preparing our report on the Social Fund Maternity Grant Amendment Regulations 2011³ we pointed to potential problems with the construction of one of the new provisions. This referred to a mother being under 20 years of age and having no other child apart from the child in respect of whom a Sure Start Maternity Grant was being made. We found this to be ambiguous. We pointed out that the reference to "no other child" could be interpreted in an absolute sense when it was probably the policy intention that it should refer to no other child within the household. The Department accepted the validity of the comment and redrafted the provision in question.

1.13 In April 2011 an amendment to income support, jobseeker's allowance, housing benefit and council tax benefit legislation was made to formalise an existing administrative arrangement so that, upon the death of a child in respect of whom an enhanced disability premium was paid, the premium would continue to be paid for eight weeks. Entitlement to the premium for this "run-on" period was dependent upon child benefit being payable in respect of the child. However the Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011 No. 674) referred to the claimant being in receipt of child benefit. One of our members subsequently noticed that the new provision did not cover a situation where the claimant's partner was in receipt of the child benefit and the seeming oversight was drawn to the Department's attention. The Department acknowledged the oversight and inserted an amendment in a later package of miscellaneous amendments.

SSAC and the equality duties

1.14 Our scrutiny of proposed regulations is informed by the Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) that are presented to us alongside the Department's account of the nature and purpose of the proposals. As we have noted in previous years, the material we receive has been of variable quality, with the most striking deficiencies being in the data that are available to support the analysis of likely impacts. We recognise that officials have made considerable efforts to source and use all the data that are collected and accessible but it remains the case that the assessment of impacts is often hampered by a simple lack of information.

1.15 Our work on passported benefits has demonstrated that the lack of information is a problem that affects many government Departments and many of the national and local agencies with whom we work. We will continue to encourage officials to enable data to be gathered that will support the proper consideration of equality issues at all stages of policy design.

³ see Chapter 3, pages 11-17

Complexity in the benefit system

1.16 We have consistently supported the development of Universal Credit and Ministers' aspirations for a simpler, easily comprehensible and more transparent and engaging system that makes work pay for everyone who is able take employment. We have also recognised that the development and introduction of Universal Credit will neither eliminate complexity at a stroke nor clarify and simplify the system for all of those whose complicated and/or volatile household circumstances do not make for a straightforward interface with the system.

1.17 As we have noted above, the current system remains fearsomely complex, particularly at the level of the underlying legislation. Transition to the new scheme alone will not remove many of the misperceptions around benefits and tax credits, and the behaviours that they inform (for example, in relation to taking decisions about whether they will be better off in paid work). The challenge for the Department will be both to design a system that is simple for the customer to access and use and, in the run up to its introduction, design a communications strategy that will build a foundation of customer understanding and engagement.

1.18 We noted in our last report⁴ that complexity extends well beyond the mechanics of calculating entitlement and that it is often the associated procedures and processes, particularly those relating to the conditions of entitlement, that present the greatest barriers to claimants' understanding and engagement.

Our work with HMRC

1.19 This year we have scrutinised and commented on four sets of HMRC regulations. In January 2011 we had the opportunity to hear in some detail from HMRC about plans for the 'real time' information gathering IT system that is being developed to support the introduction of Universal Credit. In July the Treasury Minister, David Gauke MP, attended one of our meetings to discuss a range of similar issues. Over the coming year we hope to continue to develop our relationship with HMRC, with closer contact both at official level and between officials at HMRC and Committee Members.

Our independent work programme

1.20 We have not published any Occasional Papers in the period covered by this report. There are three main reasons for our decision to focus on other parts of our business this year. First, the start of our reporting year coincided with a change of Government and we decided that we would hold back the development of our independent work programme until the Coalition Government's plans became clearer. Second, around the same time we experienced an increase in our workload of proposed regulations for scrutiny and a reduction in our Secretariat support staff. We therefore decided to direct resources to our core business and to responding to the various consultation papers that the Department published over the course of the year⁵. Third, we took on a major commission in May to

⁴ SSAC: Twenty Third Report. Published December 2011 on <http://www.ssac.independent.gov.uk/>

⁵ The Committee responded to "Tackling Child Poverty and Improving Life Chances: Consulting on a New Approach"; "2010 Drug strategy: Consultation Paper"; "Dynamic Benefits", "21st Century welfare"; "Universal Credit: Welfare that Works"; and "The Work Capability Assessment: a call for evidence" (October 2010).....

review passported benefits, and this became the primary activity within our independent work programme.

The Review of Passported Benefits

1.21 We were asked by the DWP Minister for Welfare Reform, Lord Freud, to undertake an independent review of passported benefits (PBs)⁶ and provide advice on possible approaches to the provision of PBs under Universal Credit (UC). When Universal Credit is introduced it will provide a new single system of means-tested support for working-age people in and out of work; the current criteria for defining eligibility to various PBs will therefore no longer exist. We have been asked to produce an advisory report, taking into account the UK Government's view that changes should not involve a net increase in expenditure or complexity. The Terms of Reference and a list of key benefits being considered under the review are in Annex C. Interim findings were presented to the Minister for Welfare Reform in September and we will deliver our final report early in 2012.

1.22 During the first stage of the review we focused on gathering information and evidence about PBs from a wide range of individuals, organisations and other bodies with views on PBs under Universal Credit:

- We launched a public consultation exercise in June which received over 60 responses, some very detailed, including from individuals and organisations representing disabled people, offenders and their families, schools and children, housing providers, medical bodies, Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB), local councils, debt advice, fuel poverty, carers, and the devolved administrations;
- We ran a consultation exercise targeted specifically at academics aimed to identify relevant research evidence in this area;
- We also carried out a small piece of qualitative research. This included focus groups with CAB Advisers and a small number of in-depth interviews/focus groups with individuals who are in receipt of or who have claimed PBs.

1.23 The consultation focused on a number of key areas of interest, including awareness and importance of PBs, their potential impact on decisions about work, and key issues for consideration under Universal Credit (including design issues, the potential for enhancing work incentives, simplification, cashing-up and withdrawal). Evidence gathered during the review is being analysed in order to inform the design principles and advice in the final report. The review has identified a number of key policy questions and issues to date and these will be opened up to further investigation in the second half of the review.

1.24 We have also developed a network of contacts across the range of Government Departments with responsibility for PBs and within the devolved administrations. These contacts have provided us with a wealth of information, which has allowed us to analyse the current range of PBs in detail. This has enabled us to identify the target audiences, eligibility criteria and the needs and policy objectives currently addressed. We will also consider the potential impacts of the introduction of Universal Credit.

1.25 The project was initially commissioned to cover Great Britain but we have subsequently been asked to include a Northern Ireland (NI) strand. The Department for Social Development in NI is currently collecting evidence from a wide range of NI

⁶ By Passported Benefits (PBs) we mean those benefits to which working-age claimants of certain DWP/HMRC means-tested benefits are automatically entitled. For example, free school meals, free prescriptions, free dental treatment, etc.

Departments and stakeholders and we will consider this evidence during stage two of the project.

1.26 In the second half of the project we will continue to gather and analyse relevant evidence and work closely with other Government Departments and the devolved administrations to ensure that all perspectives are represented and considered. We will develop guiding principles for the design of PBs under Universal Credit. SSAC's report will be published, in due course, alongside DWP's response.

The Department's public information strategy

1.27 We have continued to carry out ad hoc scrutinies of the Department's public information products but, as we reported last year, we have ceased to do so in the context of any wider engagement with the Department's public information strategy. Rather, we focus on offering advice on information products where our advice has been sought by officials.

1.28 We have examined seven sets of communication products. As a result, we made a number of suggestions for changes, including a request for language to be simplified and for acronyms and other jargon either to be spelt out or explained so that claimants can fully understand what they are being told. Officials have received our suggestions positively and continue to seek our advice when preparing information products.

Chapter 2

Visits and presentations to the Committee

2.1 Our programme of visits, and participation in external conferences and events, has been more limited than in previous years as we seek to reduce our running costs. However, we were able to spend some time in front-line settings and, as ever, we are grateful to the members of the Department's staff and others who made these visits possible and enabled us to learn more about how benefits and services are administered and delivered. We are committed to managing our resources to support visits such as these that form a vital part of our work.

2.2 Members of the Committee visited the Aberdeen Jobcentre in March 2011. Aberdeen was one of two Jobcentre Plus areas piloting the process of migrating claimants from Incapacity Benefit to the Employment and Support Allowance, a benefit in which the Committee has a long-standing interest. During the course of a well-organised and informative day, Members heard from Jobcentre Plus staff and providers about how the migration process was working in practice. A highlight of the visit was personal testimony from four claimants who had gone through the process. This visit helped inform our continuing work with Professor Harrington's review of the Employment and Support Allowance.

2.3 A full list of the Committee's attendance at visits and events is given in Annex A1.

2.4 In addition to scrutinising proposed regulations we use our monthly meeting to receive presentations from officials and other stakeholders. These presentations cover a wide range of policy and operational topics and issues, and they offer us an opportunity to

keep up to speed with developments that have a bearing on our work. A full list of presentations is at Annex A2.

2.5 The Committee met with the new DWP Ministerial team at the beginning of 2011 and with the Work and Pensions Select Committee at the House of Commons later in the year. The meeting of the full Committee with the Ministerial team was an important landmark for SSAC, and provided a welcome opportunity for an exchange of views on a number of topics of mutual interest. We hope that similar round table discussions will be possible in the years to come. For a number of years, SSAC has held regular meetings with the Select Committee and this year we were able to consider the implications of the Government's programme for welfare reform and SSAC's role in scrutinising the regulations that will flow from it. We look forward to similar opportunities to discuss matters of relevance to both the Select Committee and SSAC .

Chapter 3

Regulations formally referred to the Committee

3.1 Over the reporting year (1 August 2010 to 31 July 2011) we have taken five sets of proposals for regulations on formal referral, and our reports were published by the Secretary of State by depositing the documents in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament. The documents are available to the public on the Stationary Office's website and via links from our own website.

3.2 Our reports on all regulations taken on formal referral and laid this year are summarised below, along with the Secretary of State's responses to them. The reports are presented in order of the date on which the regulations to which they refer were laid.

The Housing Benefit (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/2835)

3.3 We considered these Regulations in conjunction with The Rent Officers (Housing Benefit Functions Order) 2010 (SI 2010/2836) with which these Regulations are closely allied, even though the Order falls outside our statutory remit. These proposals arose from the Government's desire to tackle the budget deficit and, in particular, to address what was labelled as the spiralling costs of housing benefit. Specifically it was proposed that the five bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate be abolished so that the maximum level should be that of a four bedroom property, that absolute caps be set according to the number of bedrooms and that rates be reduced from the median to the 30th percentile of rents in each Broad Rental Market Area.

3.4 We expressed the view that these measures were "neither a coherent expression of the Government's objectives for improving incentives and making work pay, nor a certain formula for achieving savings to the public purse as a whole". We also drew attention to an underlying problem of under supply of affordable housing, particularly in economically vibrant parts of the country. In the short term it seems likely that many housing benefit recipients will face the unprecedented dilemma of having to uproot and relocate with all the unquantifiable human costs that that would entail or, from limited resources, struggle to find the shortfall between their housing benefit and their contracted rent. In the long term we could foresee low-income households being constrained to gravitate to economically disadvantaged areas of the country and being concentrated in pockets of deprivation. Since such areas are almost invariably characterised by high rates of long-term

unemployment, we stated our belief that the measure runs counter to the Coalition Government's commitment to improve work incentives.

3.5 With a couple of exceptions, we recommended that the proposed changes should not proceed. Nonetheless we added that if they did proceed then they should be modified in the following ways, so as to mitigate their most negative impacts:

- the introduction of the caps be deferred until October 2011;
- the restriction of the Local Housing Allowance to the four-bedroom rate should not proceed until a full race equality impact assessment had been carried out;
- three months transitional protection should be made available to assist families in larger properties in securing alternative accommodation;
- an urgent revision of the structure of national caps should be considered so as to take account of the different circumstances in London and other high cost areas;
- consideration be given to exempting particularly vulnerable tenants from the caps;
- the one-bedroom shared accommodation rate should continue to be based on median rents;
- Broad Rental Market Areas should be re-drawn so as to ensure that 30% of private rented sector properties are available to housing benefit claimants in each local authority area;
- the increased funding for Discretionary Housing Payments should be brought forward to the start of the changes and its allocation be reviewed so as to reflect the projected impact of the changes upon individual local authorities;
- the Department should work with the Department for Communities and Local Government to explore measures to encourage landlords to provide accommodation for housing benefit claimants;
- the definition of 'intentionally homeless' be revised to ensure that households who fall into arrears because of housing benefit changes are not excluded from the scope of the homelessness provisions; and
- the Department should introduce a dedicated comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme to track and report the impacts of the changes.

3.6 The Government accepted some of these recommendations. A commitment to monitoring and evaluation was made, an undertaking to work with the Department for Communities and Local Government to encourage landlords to engage in the Local Housing Allowance sector was given and an examination of the allocation of Discretionary Housing Payments promised. Additionally the Government affirmed that it would give existing claimants up to nine months transitional protection from the date their award is reviewed by the local authority to help them adjust to any reduction in entitlement. On other matters the Government emphasised its commitment to proceeding with the proposals, affirming its view that "reform of Housing Benefit is essential, both to repair an

increasingly ineffective and expensive system of support, and to contribute to the wider commitment the Government has made to control the cost of welfare benefits.

The Social Fund Maternity Grant Amendment Regulations 2011 (SI 2011/100)

3.7 We asked the Government to refer to us its proposals on curtailing the budget for the Social Fund Maternity Grant. The headline aspect of the change was that the grant was only to be made available in respect of the first child. Whilst we accepted that some of the initial costs incurred with a first child are usually greater than those involved if a second child is born two or three years later, the policy itself as expressed in the legislation put before us appeared particularly inflexible. Although we recognised that this approach would be appropriate for stable two parent households with two children, in our view it did not address the reality of the needs faced in many of the complex and fluid family situations that exist in Britain today. We wished to emphasise that our criticisms should not be seen as a simple reaction to the Government's desire to cut the maternity grant budget. Indeed we drew attention to other ways in which a similarly reduced budget could be re-allocated. Rather we felt that other options had been insufficiently set out or examined. Our own preference, stated in our recommendations, was that the existing structure in relation to the grant be retained but that the payment should be reduced to £250 in respect of each child. This would have achieved the level of savings sought and, in our view, provided a less disruptive and more sympathetic policy option.

3.8 In our report we also said that if the proposals were to proceed as the Government intended:

- their introduction should be delayed until eligibility for the Social Fund budgeting loan scheme had been extended to loans for maternity items;
- the Department should consider extending the time limit for claims to 12 months.

3.9 The Government declined to accept these recommendations.

The Employment and Support Allowance (Limited Capability for Work and Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity) Amendment Regulations 2011 (SI 2011/228)

3.10 From March 2009 to March 2010 the Department conducted an internal review into the working of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), the test which is designed to produce evidence or additional evidence required by decision-makers in order to ascertain whether or not an individual satisfies the conditions of entitlement to an Employment and Support Allowance. The intention of the review was to see how the WCA was operating in practice and whether it should be improved. The Regulations owed their origins to that review.

3.11 Whilst we were considering our response to the proposed legislation, Professor Malcolm Harrington CBE was engaged in conducting his own independent review of the WCA. It seemed to us sensible that the Department should delay putting existing incapacity benefit claimants through the new test until the outcome of that review had been completed, and this was our main recommendation to the Secretary of State.

3.12 We received an unusually high number of responses when we publicised the Government's proposals and invited comments on them. In many ways it was an opportunity for individuals to express their personal dissatisfaction at both the substance of

the assessment and also the manner in which it was conducted. At the same time we received a number of responses which indicated a widespread view that the amendments proposed would make it harder in practice for claimants to demonstrate that they are incapable of work, or that they have limited capacity for work or work-related activity.

3.13 We were pleased that the Government was prepared to accept two of our specific recommendations. The first was an assurance that in cases where limited capability for work-related activity had been demonstrated by the claimant, it would be accepted that limited capability for work had been established. The second was the stated intention to expand the support group in relation to chemotherapy, and to ensure that patients undergoing residential rehabilitation would be treated as having limited capability for work. These, we believe, are positive steps and we welcome and acknowledge the Department's willingness to heed the result of the consultation and to make changes in these Regulations. We also think it appropriate to put on record our support for the Government's commitment to an ongoing programme of reform.

3.14 The other recommendation we made, about delaying the re-assessment of existing incapacity benefit claimants for the employment and support allowance until Professor Harrington had announced his recommendations, was not taken up by the Secretary of State.

The Jobseeker's Allowance (Mandatory Work Activity Scheme) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011/688)

3.15 These Regulations are designed to enhance the employment prospects of individuals selected for participation. To that extent the aims of the scheme are laudable. However we decided to take them on formal referral because it was not immediately apparent to us that the scheme itself would be an effective means to an admittedly worthy end. We felt that the supporting material accompanying the draft Regulations did not clearly set out the policy objective of the scheme and that it was difficult to see from the information presented precisely how the scheme would work or how its effectiveness could be assessed. It was also unclear to us whether the scheme was intended to provide tailored work experience or to punish jobseekers for a perceived lack of effort in their attempts to find work.

3.16 It is the intention that individuals entitled to a Jobseeker's Allowance be directed to comply with a work placement of up to 30 hours activity a week and lasting for up to four weeks, so that they can develop skills and attributes which would be attractive to potential employers and which would enable them to move more confidently into employment. Individuals participating in the scheme would continue to be required to satisfy the labour market tests of being available for, and actively seeking, work. They must also continue to attend regular fortnightly interviews at a Jobcentre Plus office.

3.17 Our key recommendation was that the Regulations should not be made, but we suggested a number of other subsidiary changes that should be implemented if the key one was rejected. Those recommendations were lengthy and centred around three areas of concern: the selection of participants, the placements and the sanctions. On the selection of participants, we considered, in particular, that the Department should pay careful attention to the individual circumstances of the claimant before assigning them a placement, that account should be taken of childcare requirements and travel arrangements and that the guidance should be published. Our concern with the placements was that they should be of a good quality and that participants should be

treated properly and appropriately. As far as sanctions were concerned, we felt that the prospect of participants losing benefit for 13 weeks and without any hope of it being reinstated in the event of re-engagement was wholly disproportionate to the “offence”. Our preference was for a two week sanction in the first instance.

3.18 We were interested to see that the House of Lords Select Committee on the Merits of Statutory Instruments, in their 27th Report of Session 2010-11, drew the special attention of the House to this instrument. Essentially the concerns were the same as ours. In particular the Committee was unhappy that despite a good deal of paperwork, there was lack of hard information provided to support the case for the measures. The Committee stated that “given that the sanction on the individual claimant for failing in any element of the Mandatory Work Activity Scheme to which they are referred is the loss of 3 months’ benefit, the content and operation of the Scheme should be much more clearly set out”. The Committee went on to state that: “the degree of flexibility and discretion built into the arrangements cause the Committee to question how it can be delivered with any degree of consistency.”

3.19 In the Government’s response to the SSAC report the Secretary of State addressed the question about the purpose of the Scheme and emphasised that “the Mandatory Work Activity Scheme is not a sanction or a punishment, but has been developed in recognition that some customers require additional support.” The Government declined to accept the general recommendation not to proceed. Other more detailed points raised in the report were answered: on the selection of participants it was explained that Personal Advisers would be equipped as professionals to deal with the range of claimants they see; on the quality of the placements we were advised that the Department is working to develop the commercial requirements for participating organisations; and on the issue of sanctions it was affirmed that there is a need for “clearer and stronger sanctions that are easily understood by customers and act as a more effective deterrent to non-compliance.”

The Housing Benefit (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011/1736)

3.20 Following the Housing Benefit (Amendment) Regulations 2010, these Regulations were a further reform to curb housing benefit expenditure and owed their origin to the Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010. The Department stressed that the change was more than a savings measure, asserting that it was also about ensuring fairness and removing potential work incentives. The change in question was a simple one – the shared accommodation rate which applies to people under the age of 25 living in the private rented sector was to be extended to those under the age of 35.

3.21 The responses we received as a result of a consultation exercise confirmed our view that there is a serious doubt that the supply and availability of shared accommodation is sufficient to justify this change. Many of the organisations who responded had gone to some lengths to provide data, for which we were grateful. We also drew attention to what we felt to be inadequacies in the evidence presented by the Department to support this particular change in legislation. Another broad area of concern was for those aged below 35 for whom shared accommodation may prove to be unsuitable – disabled people, people with problems of mental health, non-resident parents, and people who have criminal records etc.

3.22 In our report we recommended that the proposals should not go ahead in their current form. We went on to say that should the Government be minded to introduce this measure the Department ought to do two things prior to its introduction: first, work with

local authorities and other stakeholders on filling gaps in the supply and availability of shared accommodation; second, work with stakeholders to understand the impact of the change on specific groups of vulnerable people so that further exemptions can be prescribed or provision made for them within the discretionary housing payment scheme.

3.23 Finally, we said that if the new evidence gathered justified the introduction of the change then we would recommend the following:

- a one year pathfinder scheme in rural and urban locations;
- Housing Benefit to continue to be paid at the existing level for 26 weeks when a person leaves paid employment; and
- the extension to age 35 should be introduced gradually, with a first move to age 30 trialled and evaluated over one year.

3.24 The Government declined to adopt the Committee's general recommendations but accepted that an exemption should be applied in respect of two specific groups. The first is for ex-offenders subject to management under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. They are considered the most likely to pose a risk of serious harm to others if required to live in shared accommodation. The second group consists of those who have spent at least three months in a hostel specialising in rehabilitating and resettling the homeless. As far as evaluation research was concerned the Government said that the independent review and monitoring commissioned by the Department would examine the early impacts of the change from January 2012 and look at the availability of, and access to, shared accommodation across different regions and in rural areas.

Other reports on proposed regulations

3.25 We also produced a report on the Jobseeker's Allowance (Employment, Skills and Enterprise Scheme) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011/917). However, the circumstances in which we did so were highly unusual. Originally called the Work Programme Scheme Regulations these proposals were presented to us in December 2010. At that point we agreed that they should not be referred to us. It subsequently became clear that these Regulations were a suitable vehicle for a number of other measures which the Secretary of State intended to introduce but which were initially assumed to require separate legislation. Had we appreciated at the outset how far-reaching these Regulations would turn out to be we would probably have decided that formal referral was appropriate. We fully accepted the Department's explanation as to what had happened, although we took the view that it could probably have been avoided if there had been more joined-up working within the Department and if the time-table for implementation had been less demanding. In the circumstances we decided that a report should be prepared setting out our views on both the original and the expanded measures, and this was published in March 2011 along with a statement by the Secretary of State (Cm 8058).

3.26 These Regulations made provision for three further initiatives from the Department apart from the Work Programme itself. The three consisted of Skills Conditionality (i.e. meeting an identified skills need through training at a further education College or Next Step careers service), Service Academies for pre-employment training and work experience leading to a guaranteed interview, and a New Enterprise Allowance to help the

self-employed establish themselves as a sustainable business. The Committee had a number of detailed comments to make on these proposals but by far the most important one was the question mark it raised over the need to apply sanctions in respect of these three measures where claimants would volunteer for the help on offer. The Government rejected the central recommendation that the sanctions-based conditionality regime should be removed from these three additional initiatives. Instead the Government repeated its commitment to a sanctions-based approach in administering benefits to jobseekers. The Secretary of State said: “the sanctions regime is an important element of the Government’s Welfare strategy. The Government is committed to ensuring that individuals who are able to look for work or prepare for work, should be required to do so as a condition of receiving benefit, and those who fail to meet their responsibilities, without good cause, should face a sanction in the form of loss of or reduction in benefit. Sanctions play a vital role within the system; they underpin the conditionality regime by providing an effective deterrent against non-compliance.”

Annex A1

List of the Committee members' visits (to the end of July 2010)

Visits

Aberdeen Jobcentre Plus (IB reassessment trial area) March 2011

Events

CPAG conference	September 2010
Welfare to Work event	November 2010
Work in Mind conference	November 2010
Disability Alliance conference	November 2010
DWP Scottish Annual Forum	November 2010
Administrative Justice and Tribunals conference	November 2010
Diversity and Equality in the Public Sector	December 2010
Demos Roundtable on Multi-dimensional poverty	December 2010
Eradicating Child Poverty by 2020 conference	January 2011
Welfare Reform conference	January 2011
Public Services summit	February 2011
Equality and Diversity UK Inside Government conference	February 2011
Employment and Skills conference	March 2011
Citizens Advice Bureau	March 2011
IPPR symposium	March 2011
Welfare Reform conference	March 2011
Understanding Impact Assessments	April 2011
A New Agenda for Public Appointments	April 2011
Welfare to Work conference	July 2011

The Deputy Chair attends meetings of the DWP Senior Stakeholder Forum on behalf of SSAC.

Annex A2

List of presentations to the Committee

August 2010

- Neil Coyle, Director of Policy for Disability Alliance (DA) gave a presentation on the project DA are running with Remploy to provide 'better off in work' calculations to Remploy candidates.
- DWP Director General for Strategy, Information and Pensions gave an update on pensions reform.

September 2010

- Roger Harding (Head of Policy, Shelter) and Alex Fenton (Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research) summarised Shelter's key concerns about the proposed HB changes and presented early findings from a study designed to assess the potential impact of the proposals.
- Abigail Davies and Sam Lister from the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) summarised the CIH's key concerns about the proposed HB changes.

October 2010

- Director of Social Security Policy and Legislation in the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland, gave an overview of current issues and developments in Northern Ireland.
- Amy Tarr, Head of Policy at the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion gave a presentation on welfare reform
- Officials from DWP gave a presentation as a precursor to the Work Programme Regulations due to come to the November meeting.
- DWP gave an update on the independent review of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA).
- DWP officials presented an overview of the proposed reform of the welfare system.

November 2010

- DWP officials gave a presentation on the Welfare Reform Bill and Universal Credit.
- DWP officials spoke about the Government's proposals for reforming DLA.
- DWP officials presented proposed an overview of changes to National Insurance credits.

January 2011

- DWP officials spoke about the Government's proposals to bring forward the date by which state pension age for men and women will rise to age 66.
- Officials from DWP and BIS gave a presentation on Skills Conditionality

February 2011

- Officials gave a presentation about Automated Service Delivery
- Kate Groucutt from the Daycare Trust gave a presentation to the Committee about childcare issues.

March 2011

- Officials gave a presentation on Universal Credit

- Professor Steve Wilcox from the University of York gave a presentation on Support for Mortgage interest.
- Officials introduced the Department's plans to give personal advisers greater flexibility in the management of their work
- Officials gave a presentation on Universal Credit: design and delivery

April 2011

- DWP officials gave a brief overview of the Social Justice agenda
- Officials gave the Committee an update on Universal Credit
- Officials addressed the Committee on the issue of the treatment of seasonal workers when claiming JSA.

May 2011

- Officials presented the Government's plans for state pension reform

July 2011

- Officials presented DWP's plans for support for extra long terms claimants of JSA.

Annex B

The SSAC Stakeholder Seminar 2010

The fifth annual SSAC Stakeholder Seminar was held at Caxton House in London on 1st December. The Seminar coincided with the publication of the 23rd SSAC annual report which covers the Committee's activities between August 2009 and July 2010.

Sir Richard Tilt (the then SSAC Chair) opened the morning session with an update on the Committee's work and a summary of key issues for 2011. We were then very pleased to welcome the Secretary of State, Iain Duncan Smith, to give the opening address. The Secretary of State highlighted the vision for welfare reform and took questions from stakeholders. A panel discussion with Members of the committee followed up a number of issues raised in the opening address, including childcare, in-work poverty, sanctions and localisation.

The afternoon session opened with a presentation by Professor Emeritus Adrian Sinfield (University of Edinburgh) on realising welfare reform. Stakeholders then broke into small groups to discuss the potential challenges to Universal Credit and consider how they might be addressed. The discussions centred on the key challenges for Jobcentre Plus, customers and the advice sector. Stakeholders also discussed the potential wider impacts of reform. The event ended with a presentation and discussion on the operational and delivery challenges posed by Universal Credit, by Neil Couling, the Department's Director of Benefit Strategy.

Annex C

The Review of Passported Benefits 2011

Terms of Reference

Social Security Advisory Committee Advisory Report on Passported Benefits

Purpose

The purpose of the advisory report is to analyse the range of passported benefits (“benefits”) which currently exist in order to:

- classify the target audience(s) for those benefits;
- identify the needs which those benefits address, and the wider policy objectives served by them now and in the future;
- identify and analyse the mechanisms that are currently employed to determine entitlement; and
- consider the potential impact of changes in eligibility rules.

Objectives

The objective is to use this analysis in order to provide advice as to how such benefits should be considered in the future on the introduction of Universal Credit.

In particular, the review will seek to:

- collect and review the evidence on benefits (and note information gaps), including:
 - which benefits are particularly valued by recipients and the reasons for that valuation;
 - the extent to which such benefits appear to influence employment decisions; and
 - possible customer behaviour if entitlement to benefits is withdrawn.
- assess the level of complexity surrounding these benefits and consider whether such complexity is a barrier to understanding and take-up;
- examine current variations in provision, noting where possible the implications for all agents that administer benefits throughout GB and the responsibilities of Devolved Administrations (Scotland and Wales);
- taking account of the needs addressed and the wider policy objectives behind the provision of benefits, consider how a coherent approach might be developed to the provision of (different categories of) benefits for those entitled to Universal Credit, including withdrawing support gradually in line with the taper rate in order to maintain work incentives;
- consider whether there are other simpler alternative options that might mitigate any disincentives to work;
- identify ways in which such benefits might be developed in future, ensuring the replacement system is coherent, simple and removes disincentives to work.

Recommendations

The recommendations should take account of the UK Government's view that any changes should not involve a net increase in public expenditure, including administrative costs, and/or increase complexity, and should consider ways to reduce costs.

The recommendations should take account of the fact that expenditure on passported benefits in Scotland is solely a matter for Scottish Ministers.

Where possible, the report will include broad cost implications for other government departments and Devolved Administrations (Scotland and Wales).

The report will be produced by the Social Security Advisory Committee. An initial scoping/feasibility study will be undertaken and the terms of reference refined as necessary.

The Committee will provide a non-binding interim report in September. It will take further evidence and produce and publish a final report recommending options no later than January 2012.

List of main passported benefits and responsibilities in England

Benefits in kind	Cash Benefits	Discounts on charges or fees
<i>Responsibility of Government Departments</i>		
Benefits from the Pupil Premium (Department for Education)	Cold Weather Payments (Department for Work and Pensions)	
Exemption from Court Fees (Ministry of Justice)	Funeral Payments (Department for Work and Pensions)	
Free School Meals (Department for Education)	Help with healthcare travel costs (Department of Health)	
Health goods/services, e.g. free prescriptions/eyecare/dental care (Department of Health)	Help with Prison Visiting Costs (Ministry of Justice)	
Healthy Start Vouchers (Department of Health)	Maternity Grant (Department for Work and Pensions)	
Legal Aid (Ministry of Justice)		
Warm Front (Department of Energy and Climate Change)		
<i>Responsibility of local authorities</i>		
Help with the costs of school visits	School clothing grant (cash/cheque)	Bus and Tram Discount Scheme – London (Transport for London)
Leisure services, e.g. free swimming		Leisure discounts
School clothing grant (vouchers)		
School Transport		
<i>Responsibility of other bodies</i>		
Leisure services	Educational grants	BT Basic (BT)
		Leisure discounts
		Warm Home Discount/ Voluntary Social Tariffs from utility companies e.g. WaterSure

Annex D

Regulations considered by the Committee and coming into force in Great Britain since 1 August 2010

This is a list of those regulations put to the SSAC which the Committee decided did not require formal reference. The list refers only to regulations covering Great Britain; however, in most cases, the SSAC agreed to regulations similar in effect in relation to Northern Ireland:

Statutory Instrument Number:

2010

- 2126 The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No 4) Regulations 2010
- 2429 The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No. 5) Regulations 2010
- 2430 The Employment and Support Allowance (Transitional Provisions, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit) (Existing Awards) (No. 2) Regulations 2010
- 2442 The Social Fund Cold Weather Payments (General) Amendment Regulations 2010
- 2449 The Social Fund Cold Weather Payments (General) Amendment Regulations 2010
- 2591 The Social Fund Cold Weather Payments (General) Amendment (No 2) Regulations 2010
- 2760 The Social Fund Maternity Grant Amendment Regulations 2010
- 2818 The Rate of Bereavement Benefits Regulations 2010

2011

- 634 The Social Security (Deferral of Retirement Pensions) Regulations 2011
- 674 The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2011
- 678 The Additional Statutory Paternity Pay (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- 679 The Social Security Claims and Payments (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- 709 The National Insurance Contributions Credits (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2011

- 786 The Social Security (Deferral of Retirement Pensions) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- 789 The Jobseeker's Allowance (Work Experience) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- 917 The Jobseeker's Allowance (Employment, Skills and Enterprise Scheme) Regulations 2011
- 1349 The Employment and Support Allowance (Work-related Activity) Regulations 2011.
- 1554 The Social Security (Exemption from Claiming Retirement Pension) Regulations 2011

Annex E

Regulations considered by the Committee other than under the terms of its statutory remit and coming into force since August 2010

The following is a list of legislation which, although outside the Committee's statutory remit (in most cases because it was made within six months of the coming into force of the relevant Act), was offered for information to the Committee:

Statutory Instrument Number:

2010

- 2446 The Social Security (Contribution Conditions for Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance) Regulations 2010
- 2650 The Up-rating of Basic Pension etc (Designated Tax Year) Order 2010
- 2836 The Rent Officers (Housing Benefit Functions Order) 2010

2011

- 1830 Disclosure of State Pension Credit Information (Warm Home Discount) Regulations 2011

Annex F

Regulations considered by the Committee under the terms of its MoU with HMRC.

Statutory Instrument Number:

2010

2459 The Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance (Administration)(Amendment) Regulations 2010

2494 The Tax Credits (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No 2) Regulations 2010

2914 The Tax Credits (Miscellaneous Amendments) (No 3) Regulations 2010

2011

721 The Tax Credit (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2011

Annex G

Membership of the Committee (as at 31 July 2011)

Deep Sagar became chair of the Social Security Advisory Committee in April 2011. Deep's interest in social security developed during his time as Director of the Glasgow Employer Coalition when he had direct experience of helping benefit recipients into jobs and training. His main background lies in the private sector; he worked in senior management for multinational companies like Coca-Cola and Bestfoods. In recent years he has worked in fields such as social housing, offender rehabilitation, and with people with learning disabilities and mental health problems. Among his other roles are chair of Flood Risk Management Wales and chair of the Leasehold Advisory Service.

Kwame Akuffo (First Appointed - 01 January 2004) is Chair of Ealing Equality Council and also Chair of the free law clinic, Community Advice Programme (CAP). He is co-founder of the Equality and Human Rights Centre West London and has been a law teacher since 1982. He is currently a Senior Lecturer at Ealing Law School, University of West London. His research interests and publications are in International Human Rights, Trusts and International and Comparative Law. He is engaged in issues of equality, diversity and cohesion in Ealing where he has also worked for many years in community relations and community legal service delivery. He is a JP and a member of the Family Proceedings Court. He served as a member of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Wormwood Scrubs until 2004.

Les Allamby (First Appointed - 01 March 2005) is Director of Law Centre (NI). He is a solicitor and sociology and social administration graduate. He is a social security adviser involved in advocacy before the Social Security Commissioner, and with taking cases to the ECJ and ECHR on social security issues. He was a member of the Legal Services Commission in Northern Ireland from 2003–2011 and from 2006, was a member of the Legal Services Review Group in Northern Ireland. From 1999–2004 he was the Chairperson of the Standards Committee for Northern Ireland, reporting on the quality of decision making for social security and child support. He has written widely on legal and social policy issues. He has also served as an election monitor and supervisor in Bosnia, Pakistan and Georgia.

John M Andrews OBE (First Appointed - 01 April 2009) is Chair and founder of the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group (LITRG), a charitable initiative by the Chartered Institute of Taxation to give a voice to the unrepresented in the tax/tax credits systems. LITRG also founded Tax Help for Older People (TOP) which has 700 volunteers giving pro bono tax help to low income pensioners through telephone help and face to face delivery. He has a particular interest in the ways that the DWP and HMRC might work together to provide a better, more joined-up service to their most vulnerable customers. He has been involved as a full-time volunteer in the charity sector for the past dozen years and was awarded an OBE in 2003 for his charitable services. In an earlier life he was the national Head of Tax at Coopers & Lybrand (now PwC) and was an author of a number of tax books.

Simon Bartley (*First Appointed - 01 March 2005*) is Chief Executive of UK Skills. He was educated at Durham University where in 1979 he graduated with a BSc in Engineering Science and Management and in 1985 with an MSc in Management Science. Simon is a Chartered and a European Engineer, a Member of both the Institution of Civil Engineers and of CIBSE and is a Fellow of the Institution of Engineering Technology and of the City & Guilds of London Institute. He is Chair of Summit Skills, the Sector Skills Council for the Building Services Engineering Sector which covers the electro technical, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, refrigeration and plumbing industries, a Member of The City & Guilds Council and a Director of the Centre for Enterprise. Simon's other business representations include him being a past Chair of the CBI's Small and Medium Enterprise Council. He currently Chairs both the 14-19 Diploma Steering Group for Construction and the Built Environment and the BSI SME Policy and the BSI Standards and Policy Committees. Simon is Chair of Providence Row Charity, a Charity for the homeless in the East End of London.

Brigid Campbell OBE (*first appointed 1 February 2004*) Brigid read Classics at Hull and Oxford, joining the Department of Health and Social Security (hospital services) in 1971 and moving to the Medical Research Council in 1974. She took teacher training at Southampton University in 1975, then after a period of part-time shop work trained as a CAB adviser, working first as a volunteer, later as Bureau tutor and deputy manager. In 1983 she took up law, studying at the College of Law in Guildford before working in private practice specialising in trusts and probate law. In 1989 she joined the teaching staff of the College of Law, becoming the College's first Head of Welfare Law in 1993, retiring in 2000. In 1995 she was appointed as a part-time Tribunal Chair, dealing with a wide range of social security appeals, a post she held until 2009. Since 2001 she has again been working as CAB volunteer, specialising in social policy issues and quality of advice, as well as internal welfare benefits consultancy. She has retained an interest in trusts and charity law, and served over many years on the committees of several local arts charities.

Angus Erskine (*First Appointed - 01 February 2002*) Angus Erskine is a freelance consultant and researcher. He has had a career as a lecturer at the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and finally Stirling where he was Head of Sociology and Social Policy. In between these posts he worked in the not for profit sector in employment creation and as a freelance social researcher working for local authorities. He has edited five books and written many articles, both in academic journals and other press. He has been Chair of Editorial Board of the Journal of Social Policy, founding Chair of Social Policy and Society, Review Editor of the Journal of Social Policy and Secretary of the Social Policy Association. He has also been a board member of many voluntary organisations both at a local and national level. He has completed research for the Commission for Racial Equality into policing and ethnic minorities in Scotland and also for the then DTI into race discrimination cases at Employment Tribunals. In addition he has completed research with many local community groups and young people in rural areas. His particular interests are in those most marginalised and his bees.

Carolyn George (*First Appointed - 01 April 2009*) is a freelance writer and trainer and has worked in the welfare rights field for over 30 years. She has worked in the Citizens' Rights Office at Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), with Citizen's Advice

and with other advice organisations, giving advice both to members of the public and to other advisors. She is still an occasional sessional advice worker for CPAG on its Specialist Support telephone advice line for advisors. She has been a part-time lecturer in Law at the University of Northumbria (1994-2003), including supervising students in its Student Law Office. She is an experienced advocate and was part of CPAG's legal team. She was a lay member of the Social Security Appeal Tribunal Panel (1984-1999). Carolyn has extensive experience in providing training and information. She is an author of CPAG's *Housing Benefit and Council Tax Legislation* and the *Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook* and has contributed to a large number of other publications.

Professor Elaine Kempson CBE (First Appointed - 01 August 2003) is Emeritus Professor of personal Finance and Social Policy Research at the University of Bristol. Elaine studied biological sciences and then trained as an information officer. Her early career was spent working as an information scientist before moving into social policy research in 1986. She ran the research and management information unit at Somerset County Council Social Services Department from 1986 to 1988. Between 1988 and 1998, she was responsible for research into family finances at the Policy Studies Institute (then a free-standing research institute). And in 1998, she set up the Personal Finance Research Centre at the University of Bristol and was Director of the Centre until 2010. She is currently working as a consultant to the World Bank and to the Department for International Development. She has undertaken more than 150 research projects covering all aspects of personal finances, and is particularly noted for her work on over-indebtedness, household budgeting, financial inclusion and financial capability. In the past she has been a consultant and adviser to the European Commission and to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and a non-executive director of the Banking Code Standards Board and of the Institute of Financial Services. She was a member of both the HM Treasury Policy Action Team 14 on access to financial services and its successor body the Financial Inclusion Taskforce. She was also a member of the (then) Department for Trade and Industry's Taskforce on over-indebtedness and its successor body the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform's advisory group on over-indebtedness. She was appointed as the first independent review of the Banking Code and re-appointed to carry out the second review two year's later. She was also appointed to carry out the first independent assessment of the Financial Ombudsman Service. She is currently a member of the Consumer Advisory Group of the Central Bank of Ireland, a member of the Wessex Water sustainability panel and a non-executive director of the Financial Ombudsman Service. In 2007 Elaine was awarded a CBE for services to the Financial Services Industry.

Maureen A Reith (First Appointed - 01 January 2009) is a social worker with over nineteen years experience. She has provided a social work service over the years to all client groups including childcare, criminal justice and learning disabilities. Since 1995, she has specialised in community care, providing a service to individuals, carers and families affected by disability. One of many roles included working with the Independent Living Fund (ILF) as a Social Work Assessor. Ms Reith is registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and was appointed as a Mental Health Officer in 2003. In 2005, Ms Reith was appointed and continues to serve as a General Member of the Mental Health Tribunal Service for Scotland. Ms Reith's

interest in SSAC stemmed from her experience in social work, which provided her with a unique insight into the impacts and effects of social welfare provisions on the public.

Pat Smail (*First Appointed - 01 October 2005*) is a research consultant and partner in Focus Consultancy, undertaking social research and evaluations across the public and charitable sectors. She was a non-executive director of Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust for ten years; she acted as Trust Convenor for Complaints and held special responsibility for children and young people's services. She is a registered social worker and has worked in both Wales and England, primarily in children and family services. She is past Chair of MIND Monmouthshire and retains an interest in mental health policy. Her current research interests include severe child poverty, children and young people's participation in decision-making and community regeneration. She takes a particular interest in equality and diversity issues.

Nicola Smith (*First Appointed - 01 January 2010*) was appointed Head of the Economic and Social Affairs Department (ESAD) in March 2011. The Department undertakes research and develops policy in a wide range of areas including: macro-economic policy, the labour market, public spending, industrial policy, the environment, tax, corporate governance, social security and the welfare state, working time, minimum wage, vulnerable work, housing, transport and pensions. ESAD works closely with many partners on these areas including trade unions, government departments and agencies, employers, NGOs, think tanks, parliamentarians and journalists. Before joining the TUC as Head of ESAD, Nicola was a Senior Policy Officer in the Department responsible for coordinating the work of the Commission on Vulnerable Employment and then specialising in labour market and social welfare policy. Prior to that she worked as a principal researcher at the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion and in policy and research roles for Barnardos and the Children and Young People Unit at the then DfES.

Professor Janet Walker OBE (*First Appointed - 01 January 2004 and Deputy Chair of the Committee*) is Emeritus Professor Family Policy in the Institute of Health and Society at Newcastle University. Janet studied social sciences and then trained and practised as a probation officer, family therapist and family mediator. Between 1985 and 2005 she led a multidisciplinary research team at Newcastle University in over 50 studies in the fields of marriage and divorce, parenting, policing, criminal justice and services for children. She has published widely on these topics. She has been an expert consultant to the Council of Europe and a non-executive Director and Vice-Chair of Newcastle City NHS Trust where she was responsible for dealing with complaints from the public and overseeing services for the elderly. She has been a member of the parole board at HMP Durham and has held various trusteeships. In 2005 she retired as Director of the Newcastle Centre for Family Studies but continued until 2010 as a strategic research adviser in the Institute of Health and Society. Currently, she is a trustee of Relate and a Board member of the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, and a member of steering groups in the Ministry of Justice and the Department for Education. She is Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and of the Academy of Learned Societies for the Social Sciences.

Professor Robert Walker (*First Appointed - 01 February 2002*) is Professor of Social Policy at Oxford University and Fellow of Green Templeton College. He was formerly Professor of Social Policy at the University of Nottingham and before that Professor of Social Policy Research, Loughborough University where he was Director of the Centre for Research in Social Policy. He is a Research Affiliate of the National Poverty Centre, University of Michigan and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He is Chair of the Academic Advisory Committee and Member of the Governing Board of the ESRC UK Household Longitudinal Study. He undertakes research relevant to the development of welfare policies in Britain and other societies, and engages in dialogue with policy makers wanting to use or support research to bring about positive change. Particular research interests include poverty, social exclusion, family dynamics and budgeting strategies, children's aspirations and employment instability and progression. Policy concerns embrace social security and social assistance, welfare to work and labour market policies, policy evaluation and policy transfer - that is the process of learning from experiences in other jurisdictions. He has published 19 books.

ANNEX H

Financial Statement

The Committee's expenditure in the financial year ending 31 March 2010 was £417,068. Running costs totalled £130,465 and staffing costs £286,603.