

Tackling Social Exclusion

Boyd Wood, Labour Market Partnerships
Division, DWP Strategy

16 November 2011

Social Justice

Secretary of State's Social Justice agenda:

- Understanding and tackling the root causes of entrenched disadvantage, enabling the most vulnerable people in society to get a foot on the ladder and ensuring that they have the opportunity to realise their potential.

This means - tackling the main risk areas that can lead to poverty: unemployment, family breakdown, educational failure, addiction and debt.

To fulfil Social Justice ambitions, Government recognises it needs to deliver on 3 levels:

1. Promote employment as the best route out of poverty;
2. Enhance the specialised support that local organisations can give to the most vulnerable members of their communities; and
3. Enable individuals to fulfil their potential, by supporting people in making positive choices and emphasising the importance of personal responsibility.

Gang Strategy:

First Major Social Justice Statement by Government:

Joint DWP / Home Office Gang Strategy, ***Ending Gang and Youth Violence: A cross-Government Report*** published 1st November. Key commitments:

- £10m in Home Office funding in 2012/13 to support up to 30 local areas to improve the way mainstream services work with young people most at risk of violence;
- Establishment of a new Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team; and
- Government to invest at least £1.2m of additional resource over the next 3 years in improving services for young people under 18 suffering sexual violence.

DWP's specific role:

- Employment vital in preventing young people becoming involved in gang violence;
- DWP focus second round of Innovation Fund on vulnerable young people, including gang members;
- DWP to provide more intensive and effective job search support and greater access to Jobcentre Plus services for 16 / 17 year olds seeking employment;
- Jobcentre Plus advisers and partners to improve young people's access to broader support, and to contribute to community life through volunteering; and
- ESF to help families with multiple problems overcome barriers & move closer to labour market.

Welfare Reform Bill

- The most fundamental reform to the social security system for 60 years.
- Deliver a system that is simpler, fairer and ensures that work always pays.

Universal Credit:

- Provides a new single system of means-tested support for working-age people in and out of work
- Simpler system, more efficient and people will no longer need to be 'benefits experts' to find out what benefits they can get. Lead to an increased take-up of benefit and reductions in poverty.
- For those in work, financial support will be withdrawn at a single transparent rate as earnings increase to ensure that work always pays and is seen to pay.

Welfare Reform Bill

Work Programme:

- Expected to provide personalised support to 2.4m claimants over the next 7 years. By end of 2012-13 it is expected to be supporting 1.2 million people.
- Biggest single payment by results employment programme Great Britain has ever seen;
- Replaced much of the complex range of employment support previously on offer e.g. New Deals, Employment Zones and Pathways to Work.
- Work Programme providers are free to design support based on individual and local need. Paid primarily for supporting claimants into employment and helping them stay there for longer than ever before, with higher payments for supporting the hardest to help.

Welfare Reform Bill

Work Programme:

➤ A Universal Programme:

In the past DWP commissioned separate programmes for different groups of customers. In the Work Programme DWP is removing these artificial barriers and creating a single programme for all these groups that will allow providers to focus on individuals and the barriers they face not the benefit they are on.

➤ A Long Term Programme:

Customers will join the Work Programme for up to two years so the provider has longer to build a relationship with them and work to overcome employment barriers.

DWP - our work with employers

- We work with over 300,000 business every year to support their recruitment plans -our job is to facilitate the best match.
- About two thirds of our registered jobseekers find work in 6 months. A third need extra help to improve their chances in the labour market, that's where we focus our efforts.
- We are embracing de-centralisation and actively devolving decisions on delivery to local managers. Part of this means much stronger local collaboration to join up with work programme providers, local business and colleges to make skills provision relevant to the workplace.
- Working this way also provides employers with recruits who are ready for work. In return, employers are asked to make a commitment to invest in the skill of their workplace, open up job opportunities to a wider pool of potential talent and offer apprenticeship places and work trials.

Future opportunities

- Launch of Local Enterprise Partnerships and Enterprise Zones presents more opportunities to tackle worklessness, improve skills gaps and grow enterprise. We are putting much effort into preparing people for work through intensive support in the work programme to improve employability. The introduction of universal credit in 2013 will provide more incentives for jobseekers motivation simply because the fear of being worse-off in-work disappears.

DWP - supporting economic growth in cities

Our current position to aid economic growth in cities includes the following:

- Universal Credit - to ensure work always pays;
- Local, flexible delivery, including co-location and some flexible funding delegated to local managers;
- Recognition that we need to co-design services with partners to better (and more efficiently) meet the needs of people using our services;
- The Work Programme and Jobcentre Plus mainstream services will prepare people for employment, working to meet the needs of employers; and
- Sharing data to support an aligned service across partner organisations.

In summary:

- We remain committed to delivering a national benefit system but supplementing this with local flexibility. By providing a clear national framework we are creating the freedom for local areas to work in partnership to identify gaps, reduce or remove duplication and fragmentation.
- Shared skills and employment strategies should be delivered with local partners to help to tackle issues of “worklessness” and protect the vulnerable.

DWP - tackling Social Justice

Boyd Wood
Labour Market Partnerships Division
DWP Strategy
Boyd.Wood@dwp.gsi.gov.uk