In work, better off

A paper about the next steps to work - asking what you think
Other formats

If you would like more copies of this Green Paper or would like the main paper in other formats, including Braille and on audio cassette please:

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A few words by the Minister, Peter Hain

This Government has given people better chances to work and learn.

We now want to make sure that there is work for all and that no child is poor.

There are 4.5 million people on benefits who do not have a job.

This paper is about how we plan to make sure more people can get a job and support people who cannot work. We want to help families as well as people on their own.

We want to help people to get skills and find jobs.
This paper is also about what we expect people to do including employers and people who do not have a job. Everyone has to do their bit.

We need to make some big changes and work together so that every child in Britain can have the best chances in life. We need to work on this now. It is a good time to make a difference.

We would like to hear what you think about our ideas.

Peter Hain
What is this paper about?

We want to support more people to get a job. This will mean fewer people on benefits and fewer people growing up poor.

We have put our ideas about how to make this happen in this paper.

We would like you to tell us what you think of our ideas.

We have asked some questions to help you tell us what you think.

The questions are in boxes like this.
You can use the answers booklet to tell us what you think. Information about other ways to tell us what you think are also in the answers booklet.

Please make sure that you tell us what you think by 31st October 2007.

Please pass this paper on to anyone you think might want to have a say.
What have we done?

Since 1997 the Government has given people better chances to work and learn.

We know that work is important to people as it helps them to be healthy and happy.

Jobs are an important way to make sure that people get fair chances and that there is enough money.

We need to make sure that there are enough people working for the future.
We have done these things to support people to get jobs and move off benefits:

- we set up Jobcentre Plus. They talk to people going on to benefits about getting back to work

- we set up different ways to support people to find work, for example the New Deal for Disabled People

- we have given people reasons for working, like money off tax and a minimum wage.
Where are we now?

- 2.6 million more people are now working, including more women, lone parents and disabled people.

- Things have got better for people who were in the worst work situations, like people from ethnic minority groups and disabled people.

- Fewer people are on incapacity benefit, which is given to people who are seen as unable to work because of an illness or disability.

- Fewer children live in poor homes.
But there are still problems:

- 3.6 million people are out of work and do not have to be looking for work to get benefits

- people from ethnic minority groups, disabled people, lone parents and people who have not done training or exams are much less likely to be working

- a lot of people do not have jobs in some city areas

- there are still too many poor British children

- too many 16 and 17 year olds are not at college, training or working.
What do we need to do to give everyone a chance to work?

We are aiming to make sure that at least 8 out of 10 people of working age are in work.

We know that a lot more needs to be done to make this happen.

We need to:

- move more people who are on benefits into work. For example we need to get 1 million people off incapacity benefits
- help more people from ethnic minority groups into work, by supporting them and making sure that they are treated fairly
- get more people in big cities into work
• make sure people have the skills and training that they and employers need

• work with employers so they can give jobs to people who are often left out or who find it hard to get a job.

More people are now coming from other countries to work here. There are now more jobs for everyone. We need to make sure that people have the skills they need to get jobs.
Working with employers to offer more jobs

We want to help more people into work.

We want to work in ways that:

- give people benefits and help when they do not have a job and ask them to do all they can to find work

- give people the support they need when they need it

- help people to stay in work and move up once they have a job

- work with public, private and voluntary organisations
- give local areas more power to support people to get jobs.

Working with employers is also a really important way of helping people into work because they make jobs and take people on.

We are working with companies like Tesco, London Underground and Marks and Spencer. They have started to help people who have been on benefits for a long time to get jobs.

Other types of companies, like security and hotels are starting to work with us. Jobcentre Plus managers will carry on talking to other companies about working together.

We are working on a new ‘Jobs Pledge’. This is where we ask big employers to offer more chances to people on benefits who are often left out, to help them into work. We will make sure that these people have the right skills that employers need.
Jobcentre Plus will work with the Learning and Skills Council to make sure people have the skills and training they need to start work. They will also work with employers to see what support they need and help people to try out jobs.

They will also check that people are getting on well in their job once they start work.

We will all need to work together to find the right people for the right jobs. Agreeing to work together in this way is called a ‘Local Employment Partnership’.

From 2008, a new organisation will be set up to look at work and skills services. It will be called the ‘UK Commission for Employment and Skills’. It will look at what needs to be done to make work and skills services better.

This work will help to make sure that everyone who can work is able to do so. Working will help people to live better lives.
The next steps to work

Our ‘Jobs Pledge’ will help make sure that more people can get jobs who are often left out.

We will expect people to do more to find a job and give them more support to do so.

We will also make the help we give people more modern and useful.

Some of our ideas are:

- to run Pathways to Work across the country, to help more people off incapacity benefits and into work

- to expect lone parents with older children to move back into work with help
• a better New Deal, which gives people the support they need when they need it

• skills and work services working together

• to use what people know about by working with different organisations, private, public and voluntary around the country.

Support for disabled people

Most people who get incapacity benefits hope to return to work.

Pathways to Work helps people to do this by:

• giving them early support and information
• showing people how work can make them better off

• supporting them to manage their illness or disability.

Pathways to Work will cover the whole country by April 2008.

There is also going to be a new benefit called the Employment and Support Allowance, instead of incapacity benefits. It will be easier to use.

Support for lone parents

Getting more lone parents into work will mean that fewer children are poor.
We are making childcare better. Government has a 10 year plan and is working on extended schools, which will stay open longer each day. We want to ensure there is enough childcare for parents who want to work.

We are also working to make sure that parents are better off when they work. If we give lone parents the right support, we think that it is right to ask them to look for work when their child is old enough.

From October 2008, we plan to ask most lone parents on benefit whose youngest child is 12 or over to look for work. In October 2010 we think the age should drop to 7 years old.

These lone parents will no longer be able to get Income Support just because they are lone parents. They might be able to get Jobseeker’s Allowance while they look for work or go onto other benefits.
In return for this, lone parents will:

- get advice

- get help with childcare and training

- go to more support interviews in the months before they stop getting Income Support

- be given money for training and looking for jobs.

We want to make sure that our plans work for lone parents of disabled children as well.
We are not doing these things to save money. They will help parents and children get out of poverty.

We are also trying out giving people extra money for being in work to see if this makes a difference.

**Question 1**

At the moment, lone parents can get Income Support until their youngest child is 16. Is that right or should it stop at a younger age?

**Question 2**

What age should the youngest child be when lone parents stop getting Income Support?

**Question 3**

Should we do more to make our support for lone parents accessible and useful for all groups, such as parents of disabled children?
Question 4

At the moment, lone parents are offered more interviews to help them find work in the 2 years before they stop getting Income Support. If Income Support is going to stop earlier, should we offer other sorts of support? How long should we offer this for?

Question 5

What sort of extra support should we give lone parents who move from Income Support to Jobseeker’s Allowance? How long should we give them this support?

Question 6

Some people on Jobseeker’s Allowance can say how many hours per week of work they are looking for (as long as it is over 16 hours). Should we allow lone parents to limit their job search in other ways if we make these changes?

Question 7

How can we show parents that they will be better off working?

Question 8

Should there be any extra support for lone parents who move onto other types of benefits like Employment and Support Allowance?
Question 9

We have made childcare better and given people the right to ask to do their work hours in a way that fits their life.

What extra support should we give lone parents to help them into work and support them in their jobs?

Support for families

We need to think more about parents and families when we support people to find work.

We are giving more help to all parents in some places.

We pay some parents who were on benefit £40 a week if they go back to work.
We will make the partners of people on Jobseeker’s Allowance who have children come to an interview every 6 months to talk about jobs and support.

We also need to support people who are not on benefits but who are poor. For example, a lot of Pakistani and Bangladeshi families are poor.

At the moment partners of people who work do not get advice and support. We know that a lot of these people who are poor want to work and we have started work on this in some cities.

**Question 10**

What more could we do to help poor working families to earn more?

**Question 11**

What more could we do to help ethnic minority women, including Pakistani and Bangladeshi women to get work?
Support for carers

Carers are very important and often have to care for somebody full-time. The Government is asking people about the support that carers need.

We do not think it is right to ask carers to do more to find a paid job, but we do want to help carers who want to go back to work.

Carers can go to talk to an adviser about work at any time. We are training advisers so they can support carers in the right way.

Support for people who are looking for a job

At the moment people have to be looking for a job in order to get some benefits. When they have been on benefits for a while they have to move onto a New Deal.

There are several different New Deals with different conditions depending on a person’s age.
The New Deals have helped some younger and older people into work who have been on benefits for a long time.

We want to ask people to do more to find work and, when they need it, offer more support in finding and staying in work.

Based on the way the New Deals work now, we want to look at the help people need when they need it and we want to ask some people to do more to find a job.

Our new way of working would include:

- after being on benefits for 3 months people would be supported to look for jobs based on travel to work, wages and working hours rather than just based on the sort of job they want

- after 6 months on benefits people will work with a Jobcentre Plus adviser to write a back to work action plan. People will be expected to follow the action plan or they might lose some of their benefits. This would be called the Gateway
• the adviser could also help people to check which skills they need and to get training

• after a year on benefits another service would give the person support to return to work. This extra help would take more account of the person’s own needs for finding a job

• if people were not able to find work after this, they would be given some work experience, which they would have to do. It would help to make sure that they had the skills they needed to find work

• people would have to make the best use of the support or lose some of their benefits.

We need to get the balance right between the support we give people and what we expect from them. We would like to hear what you think.
Question 12
Are we right to ask people who have been on benefits the longest to do more to find work in return for extra support?

Question 13
Are there any groups or situations where we should not ask people to do more or where we should not offer more support?

Question 14
Is it right for us to offer support in different stages and in a set order?

Question 15
Should some people be helped or made to move to the Gateway stage more quickly than others? Should we look at people’s needs and the work they have done in the past? Which groups of people should be helped quickly?

Question 16
Should we make people do some work experience if they have not got a job after getting extra help from another service? How can we make sure that the work experience will be useful?
Support for people from ethnic minorities

More people from ethnic groups are getting jobs than before but some groups find it hard to get jobs. A lot of these people do not ask for or get benefits.

A child from an ethnic minority is twice as likely to grow up poor.

We need to make sure that the support we give to people to get a job works for everyone. We need to use the work we have already done to support people from ethnic minorities in the areas they live.

We know that people from ethnic minority groups are sometimes treated unfairly by employers and find it hard to get a job because of this.

We will listen to what business leaders say about making sure people are treated fairly at work.
We will also work with the new Commission for Equalities and Human Rights.

**Support for 16-17 year olds**

A lot has been done to give young people better chances to learn the skills they need to work.

In some areas, agreements have been set up to get more young people into training, college or work.

Connexions and Jobcentre Plus need to work together locally.

We think that in the future young people should have to stay in training or at college until the age of 18.
Support for the people with the lowest skills

People who do not have many skills or who have not done much training can find it really hard to get a job.

A report about skills said that joining up benefit services and skills and training would help people to get jobs. We want to work in this way.

We want to support people without skills to get the right training.

Jobcentre Plus advisers will talk to people about skills and will help people who need training. They will also talk to employers about training.

If the adviser thinks a person needs help they will be able to send them to a new service called the Adult Careers Service. They will look at skills and training in more detail.
The adviser and the person will then agree on what training should be done.

We are working with Wales and Scotland to see how skills and benefits could work together in Great Britain.
Working together

If we are going to change the support we offer, we need to find new ways of working.

We think that Jobcentre Plus works well as a starting point for people. It should carry on giving people support to get back to work and paying out benefits. Its work is really important when a person starts to get benefits.

Jobcentre Plus will also be able to:

- help people find out about benefits
- pay benefits on time
- give advice
• help people to find out more about housing, childcare and health care

• check people are not cheating and take benefits away if they are

• work with employers as they are customers too.

We want Jobcentre Plus to help more people into learning and training so that more people have the skills they need to get a job.

We know Jobcentre Plus works but that it cannot give people all the help they need. Some people find it hard to get a job for lots of reasons and may need help from other organisations.
Making these changes happen means working with employers and private and voluntary organisations that support people to find work.

Private and voluntary organisations

These organisations already play an important part in running New Deals and other support to help people get back to work.

We are looking at how they can do more. They often have good ways of helping people who have been out of work for a long time.

Most of the people they would help would have been out of work for more than a year. They would be able to help other people earlier if needed, including lone parents and people on Employment and Support Allowance.

We need to make sure that money is spent in the best way on these services so that they really help people back into work.
We think that services that are good at getting people off benefits and into work should be given more money to make their service better.

We still need to make sure that organisations carry on supporting people who find it really difficult to get a job.

**Government working together**

It is really important for different parts of Government to work together too. The Department of Health has been working with the Department for Work and Pensions to support people with long-term illnesses or disabilities into work.

Councils will need to work with Jobcentre Plus and other organisations.
Working together at a local level

Councils and employers can work together to make things better for their communities.

The Government is working to get some of the poorest people in cities into work. This work is called the ‘City Strategy’. The Government will help people in these areas to share what works well.

We also need to look at how to link up local skills to local jobs.
Final words

Building on what we have done so far, we think that the most important things that need to be done are:

- working more with employers

- a better New Deal, which gives people the support they need when they need it

- skills, work and benefit services working together

- using what private and voluntary organisations are good at so Jobcentre Plus can get on with what it is best at

- asking lone parents to do more to get into work in return for better support.

We would like your help to get this right.
What next?

Please tell us what you think in the answers booklet.

We will write a report about what people tell us and the areas that people think are most important.

You will be able to see this report at:

www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/in-work-better-off/

We will ask people to give their views on the report.

We might need to share the information you send us with other people and some will be printed in our report about this work too.

Some of the changes in this paper will only happen if there is enough money. This will also affect how quickly these changes happen.
The way we have asked for you views

We have followed the Cabinet Office rules about asking for people’s views.

If you have any comments about the way we have asked for your views please contact Roger Pugh.

Write to:

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Please tell us about how we can get better at asking for people’s views.

Please let us know if you need any help to tell us what you think.

Credits

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