

SUSE E-bulletin 20 October 08

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Welcome to the October edition of the SUSE E-bulletin. In a packed issue there should be something for everyone!

The SUSE Annual Conference is rapidly approaching and there us an update to the exciting programme in this issue. Delegate places remain available, so book now, before it's too late. A booking form is attached to this Ebulletin.

Members will be aware that the Employment & Support Allowance which replaced Incapacity Benefit came into effect on October 27th. Further information is contained in this Ebulletin.

'No-one Written Off' - Attached to the Ebulletin is the SUSE reponse to the DWP Consultation Document. Thanks to Alan Weaver for both organising the consultation day and collating the response.



**STOP
PRESS**

**SUSE General Meeting
Hamilton
9th December
9.30am-1pm**

Networking for Networks

Venue details and more information to follow in next E-Bulletin. For more info contact:
catherine.hurrell@enable.org.uk

Making the Pieces Fit - The Supported Employment Jigsaw in Scotland

Organisations may wish to encourage service users to attend this year's SUSE Conference in Fife on 27/28 November. Places are available at the member's rate of £150 for the two days.

The Conference Programme is detailed on Page 6 of this E-bulletin.

This year's SUSE conference offers you an irresistible opportunity to market your organisation by taking space on our information table(s). For just £50, you can display your leaflets and brochures, making the information available to delegates throughout the conference.

You must book space in advance to take up this opportunity. To book space, please complete the proforma attached to this E-bulletin and send it to Fife Employability Network by email to info@fenlink.org.uk or by fax on 01592 583634.

If you have any questions, please phone Sandra Wilson on 01592 583378 or email info@fenlink.org.uk.



SUSE Conference Workshop Outlines

This year's SUSE Conference features a wide variety of workshop choices, detailed below. A proforma is attached to this E-bulletin for delegates to make their choices. You will be given a delegate pack at registration which will include details of your workshop groups.

1. RNIB Employer Compact (RNIB Scotland)

Over 70% of people with severe sight loss are currently unemployed, a situation which has remained largely unchanged for the last 10 years. 92% of employers say it would be impossible or extremely difficult to employ someone with a severe sight loss. Why? RNIB Scotland has formed an employer compact to reduce unemployment amongst this group by 6% by 2009. The workshop will outline the compact, look at ways to dispel the employer myth and show the 'reasonable adjustments' which can help people with severe sight loss in the workplace.

2. BOOKDONORS (Scottish Borders)

Bookdonors is a successful and rapidly expanding community interest company based in the Scottish Borders, currently achieving an annualised turnover of £430,000 from internet used book sales on behalf of over 50 'not for profit' organisations. Established less than 3 years ago, Bookdonors now employs 15 staff of whom a third have a disability or medical condition which has resulted in long-term unemployment; and also offers volunteering and training opportunities. The enterprise operates on a total team philosophy where every individual supports and trains their team mates without the direct involvement of care or support workers. The workshop will outline the experiences to date and the opportunities presented to third sector organisations in training, work experience and flexible, inclusive employment. A large element of the workshop will be Q&A with particular reference to overcoming barriers and 'marketing' the opportunities to social enterprises and other third sector organisations in delegates' areas of interest both geographical and sectoral.

3. DEVELOPING MORE COHESIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS (Enable Scotland)

Enable Scotland is a dynamic organisation run by its members, campaigning for a better life for people with learning disabilities, supporting them and their families to participate, work and live in their local communities by running a growing range of flexible services. For over 20 years, Enable's employment service has successful experience of supporting people into work which has resulted in many employer partnerships at local levels. As an increasingly expanding organisation, more recently Enable has been working towards developing much more cohesive relationships with employers. This workshop will explore methods of developing relationships with employers and will highlight the Royal Mail Model from the employer and employee perspective. It will be a mixture of presentation and audience participation with both the employer and employee taking part.

4. FIFE ONLINE REFERRAL TRACKING (fort) SYSTEM (Fife Rights Forum)

Fife Rights Forum comprises agencies in Fife concerned with people's rights. The forum has developed Fife Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system which makes it easier for advisers in Fife offices to identify a suitable agency to help a client and make the referral on the spot. This service is of benefit to clients and agencies - clients can move on quickly and agencies can ensure that referrals to them are appropriate. This workshop will demonstrate the FORT system, review its progress to date and discuss with participants how they might be able to introduce a similar system in their local area.

5. EMBRACING DIVERSITY - PRACTITIONER'S TOOLKIT (Equal Access to Employment, Glasgow)

Glasgow Employer Coalition, Healthy Working Lives and Health at Work have recently launched a new diversity toolkit to support employer engagement practitioners in promoting diversity. This web-enabled toolkit has been designed to help Healthy Working Lives (HWL) advisers and employability practitioners engage and support employers from small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) to provide jobs and progression in work for priority clients. It provides a range of information and insights to help you work more effectively with SMEs, place your clients successfully with SMEs and overcome some of the fears of SMEs about recruiting different kinds of people in different ways. The toolkit covers 4 key aspects of working effectively with SME employers - background, changing attitudes, changing practice, changing policy. This workshop will demonstrate the toolkit, show the difference it has already made and discuss its potential for participants.

6. WORK4U (Fife EmployAbility Team)

Work4U is an employment programme delivered by Fife EmployAbility Team which is part of Fife Council Social Work Service. The programme is for 4th Year Secondary Students with additional learning support needs. The programme addresses some of the key issues facing students who are disengaged and disadvantaged within education and who are identified as young people who require 'More Choices, More Chances.' The workshop will provide an introduction to Fife EmployAbility Team, an overview of the Work4U programme, good practice in partnership working and funding issues.

7. MONITORING DISTANCE TRAVELLED - AN OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS FROM THE PILOT (Capability Scotland)

Distance Travelled is a tool used within the Workstep programme to measure soft outcomes and measure the distance a person travels whilst on the programme. This workshop will provide a provider perspective of experiences of adopting a distance travelled approach within Workstep. The workshop will highlight the main findings from the pilot and the changes that have been made to the distance travelled approach since its introduction in March 2007. The final part of the workshop will allow for questions to both Capability Scotland and James Lowrey, Research Associate of the Centre for Public Policy in Northumbria University who co-ordinated the Distance Travelled Pilot.

8. Helping People Grow Through Volunteering (The Ecology Centre, Kinghorn)

The Ecology Centre provides volunteering opportunities to help people disadvantaged in the labour market gain skills, confidence and experience. The centre recently topped the viewers' poll in the Big Lottery's Primetime Programme on BBC2, securing lottery funding to develop its new Enviro-mentors project over the next 5 years. The project will support 150 older volunteers who will benefit from improved physical and mental well-being through passing on their skills to the younger people they will mentor, while the younger volunteers will learn new skills and improve their opportunities for the future. The workshop will introduce The Ecology Centre and its work, outline the Enviro-mentors project and examine the benefits of volunteering in the employability journey.

The Pieces in the Jigsaw

This workshop is in 2 parts over the 2 days. Delegates will choose a strand and will go to Parts 1 and 2 for their chosen strand. Part 1 will look at the issues and challenges and Part 2 how we address these issues and challenges.

1. The Strategic Perspective - The overall purpose of this workshop is to discuss national perspectives and developments and how these impact at grass-roots levels.
2. The Practitioner Perspective - Having the Tools for the Employability Job. These are the tools with which we have to work. Are they fit for purpose? Do we have the right tools to build the jigsaw? Do the pieces fit? What are the issues? How do these issues affect our clients? Are these issues relevant to all diversity strands?
3. The Client Perspective - What are your experiences of support services and supported employment? How has it worked for you? What are the issues?
4. The Employer Perspective - How do we meet the diversity challenge in our business? What are the business benefits? What are the challenges?



SCOTTISH UNION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

10th Annual Conference

Making the Pieces Fit - The Supported Employment Jigsaw in Scotland

Thursday 27 and Friday 28 November 2008 Rothes Halls, Glenrothes, Fife

PROGRAMME

Thursday 27 November

- 9.00 am Registration, tea/coffee
- 9.30 am Welcome - Cllr Elizabeth Riches, Fife Council
- 9.45 am Keynote Address - Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary, Education and Lifelong Learning
- 10.05 am Keynote Address - Michael Chapman, Economist, Michael Chapman Associates
- 10.30 am Workshop - The Supported Employment Jigsaw Part 1 - What are the issues?
- 11.35 am Break
- 12.00 pm Keynote Address - Rev Erik Cramb
- 12.30pm Lunch
- 1.45 pm Welcome to afternoon session
- 2.00 pm Good Practice Workshops
- 2.50 pm Good Practice Workshops
- 3.40 pm Break
- 4.00 pm Keynote Address - Ros Micklem, Director for Scotland, Equality and Human Rights Commission
- 4.30 pm Close

Conference Dinner - Scottish Business Diversity Awards
Balbirnie House, Markinch

- 6 pm (for 6.30) Civic Reception hosted by Fife Council
- 7.00pm Dinner followed by the Scottish Business Diversity Awards Ceremony
- 9.30pm Entertainment—Singer—Emma Cassidy

Friday 28 November

- 9.30am Today's challenge - Key points from 'The Supported Employment Jigsaw' workshop - Margaret Linton and Alan Weaver
- 9.45am The Supported Employment Workshop Part 2
How do we address the issues?
- 10.35am Good Practice Workshops
- 11.15am Break
- 11.35am Equality and Diversity Training Feedback – Ian Watson and Margaret Anne Clark, Law at Work
- 12.05pm New SUSE Website - Vickie McElhaneay, Screen Media
- 12.20pm EUSE: The Way Forward - Mike Evans, EUSE President
- 12.35pm Question Panel - Alan Weaver, Mike Evans, Ian Watson
- 1.00pm Call to Action - Closing Address - Alan Weaver
- 1.15pm Lunch

Employment and Support Allowance

From 27 October 2008 Employment and Support Allowance replaces Incapacity Benefit and Income Support paid on incapacity grounds for new customers. The guide to Employment and Support Allowance aims to support the work of advisers, customer representative groups and healthcare professionals.

Working for a better life

The principle of Employment and Support Allowance is that everyone should have the opportunity to work and that people with an illness or disability should get the support they need to engage in appropriate work, if they are able.

In Great Britain, over 2.6 million people depend on incapacity benefits, and yet nine out of ten new customers say that they want to return to work.

There is a body of evidence that people are better off in work – not only financially, but in terms of their health and well-being, their self-esteem and the future prospects for themselves and their family.

Key information

We have prepared answers to some basic questions you may have and we have provided more technical information in a series of factsheets available from:

www.dwp.gov.uk/esa

- [Key facts](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [Factsheets](#)

For healthcare professionals

Employment and Support Allowance will not mean big changes to the way you deal with patients or the paperwork you need to complete but some of the forms are changing.

- [Healthcare professionals – more information](#)

To claim Employment and Support Allowance or for more information, visit the Jobcentre Plus website.

- [Employment and Support Allowance information for customers](#)

To start a claim, please call 0800 055 66 88

Customers with speech or hearing difficulties can call the textphone on **0800 023 48 88**

Calls to 0800 numbers are free from BT landlines but you may have to pay if you use another phone company, a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

Consultation Day—No-one Written Off

The **Scottish Union of Supported Employment** in collaboration with the Scottish Government Workforce Plus and Base recently held a Consultation Day on the Green Paper – ‘No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility’. The event was held at The Hub, Edinburgh on 25th September. Answers from the Consultation are attached to this Ebulletin.

An Executive Summary of ‘No-one Written Off’ is attached to this E-bulletin in pdf format. Alan Weaver, Chair of SUSE, has compiled a reply on behalf of SUSE for submission to DWP which is attached to this E-bulletin.

Workstep Customer Survey

DWP has recently commissioned the Centre for Public Policy (CPP) at Northumbria University to carry out a survey of Workstep customers. The main aims of the survey are:

- to improve the information DWP currently hold centrally about Workstep customers
- To support an evaluation of the impact of the proposed new disability employment programme by providing baseline information on existing customers against which any future changes can be identified and explored.

The survey will collect information on the characteristics of Workstep customers including their skills, qualifications and history. A number of interviews will also be carried out directly with customers to ask about their experiences of work and future hopes and aspiration in relation to work. Building on previous Workstep research, CPP and DWP recognise that the involvement of Workstep providers is crucial to the research process and are therefore seeking BASE members assistance in carrying out this work. CPP and SWP are hoping to involve around 25 Workstep providers and hope your organisation will consider working with them.

Providers who agree to be involved will be asked to start to recruit customers from October this year, and information sheets and consent forms will be provided to facilitate this process. Customers recruited to the survey will be interviewed between April and June 2009.

For more information or to express an interest in being involved, please contact: james.lowrey@northumbria.ac.uk or ann.purvis@northumbria.co.uk
Or ring CPP reception on 0191 2437425 and ask for James or Ann.

More Jobs How?

Values Into Action Scotland are hosting a conference on employment - More Jobs How? on 30th October.

The prices have been kept low for people who are job hunting, so hopefully there will be a good attendance from people with learning difficulties. There are several workshops on the day which will hopefully be an enjoyable way of sharing stories about work and seeking work as well as the more serious 'how to' stuff.

There will also be an electronic hands on voting system (sponsored by Workforce plus) and several speakers kicking off the debates so that everyone can join in on the day and give their views on what still needs to be done to get people working.

If you are interested in attending this event please contact Values into Action Scotland direct.
info@viascotland.org.uk or
ring: - 07980 750857
A BOOKING FORM IS ATTACHED TO THIS E-BULLETIN

More Jobs HOW? Conference

Thursday 30th October 2008: Glasgow

Scottish Youth Theatre, Old Sheriff Court 10am- 4pm

Benefits of attending

- Have your say on government policy on benefits and employment
- Join **VIAS**'s work to get more people with learning difficulties working.
- Hear from and work with key local and national leaders on paid employment
- Make a video, write creatively, share your stories, learn what's working

This one day conference will examine issues and hear your views on:-

- why people with learning difficulties continue to be so poorly represented in the labour market
- the value of fulltime work and the future for welfare benefits
- people with learning difficulties in work - sharing stories on finding work and what work means
- good practice from Scotland and elsewhere in the UK
- ideas from **VIAS**'s spring conference - solutions and ideas for the way forward.

Why attend this conference?

At **VIAS**'s spring conference people asked for 'how to' information and for information- sharing on good practice, **VIAS** was challenged on real work too – it's all in the **More Jobs HOW?** programme. Plus **VIAS** and the Scottish Government want to hear your views on why more people aren't getting paid work and what can be done to re-energise the process. Join us and find out how you can give your views and share your stories.

Workshop leaders include: Maureen Cook, Jen Dollan, Julie Ridley, Foxy Films, Lipsync, Pave Graphics

Prices: £60 for bookings received before 1st October 2008 (£80 thereafter).
£10 unwaged

Ministerial Changes Announced

Full ministerial changes are attached to this E-Bulletin

Departures At Parliamentary Secretary level

- Parmjit Dhanda MP
- Tom Harris MP
- Anne McGuire MP
- Meg Munn MP
- James Plaskitt MP
- Derek Twigg MP

DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS

- Minister of State - The Rt Hon Tony McNulty MP (and Minister for London)
- Minister of State - The Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP (and Minister for Yorkshire and the Humber)
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State - Jonathan Shaw MP (and Minister for the South East)
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State - Kitty Ussher MP
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State - Lord MacKenzie of Luton

Will changes impact on DWP policies?

Ministerial changes announced - Anne McGuire and Ivan Lewis leave posts

Gordon Brown's reshuffle means a flurry of changes, particularly at Junior Minister level. There's a big shake up at the Department for Work and Pensions. Stephen Timms has moved from DWP to the Treasury and Mike O'Brien to the new Department for Energy and Climate Change. In come Tony McNulty and Rosie Winterton as Ministers of State. Junior posts are filled by Jonathan Shaw and Kitty Ussher. Anne McGuire has left DWP and will be sadly missed for the manner in which she has fulfilled the role of Minister for Disabled People. We think she will be replaced by Jonathan Shaw who was previously at Defra and Minister for the South East.

At the Department of Health, Phil Hope joins as Minister of State while Ivan Lewis has been moved to the Department for International Development. We are not clear on individual responsibilities yet and will bring you news when we find out.

Work for Welfare Green Paper

The Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Mark Harper MP has laid out his party's manifesto relating to the Responsibility Agenda, Policy Green Paper No 3: Work for Welfare—Real Welfare reform to help make British poverty history. A pdf of this is attached to this Ebulletin. Comments are invited direct to the Shadow Minister.

Pathways to Work—New DWP Research

www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/report_abstracts/rr_abstracts/rra_525.asp

Little evidence that Pathways to Work has a long-term effect on benefit Receipt—New DWP research

Whilst the research reports that the pilots have had a positive effect on employment, and may also have helped reduce the extent to which individuals' health conditions limited their ability to go about their everyday affairs, it highlights that benefit receipt was not substantially reduced in the long-term.

This, the report suggests, is of particular importance in light of the government's aspiration to reduce the numbers receiving incapacity benefits from 2.74 million in 2005 to 1.74 million or fewer by 2015.

There is little evidence that Pathways to Work has a long-term effect on receipt of incapacity benefit, new research for the DWP has found.

The research - 'Pathways to Work for new and repeat incapacity benefits claimants' - focused on the circumstances and experiences of claimants in the original seven pilot areas where Pathways was introduced in 2003/2004.

However, whilst the research reports that the pilots have had a positive effect on employment, and may also have helped reduce the extent to which individuals' health conditions limited their ability to go about their everyday affairs, it highlights that benefit receipt was not substantially reduced in the long-term. This, the report suggests, is of particular importance in light of the government's aspiration to reduce the numbers receiving incapacity benefits from 2.74 million in 2005 to 1.74 million or fewer by 2015.

A second new research report, that looked at the circumstances and experiences of existing claimants in the original seven pilot areas, highlights that -

'... the majority ... were dealing with health conditions and disabilities that greatly limited their day-to-day activities. Their conditions, though varied, were commonly long-term and rarely improving. Furthermore, there was a greater proportion of older customers in the existing customer population, with the particular health and other barriers to work that they face. Compared to those in the new and repeat population, their position was considerably worse.' As a result, the research reports, only one in ten were in work 13 months after their start on Pathways to Work.

Inclusion Masterclass & Film Premiere

**How do you know it when you see it?
Practical approaches for supporting and
measuring Inclusion**

**11th November 08—West of Scotland
University, Paisley—9.30am-4pm**

A one-day master class for leaders and
practitioners in education with

Professor Mary Schuh from The University of
New Hampshire Institute on Disability

and **The Scottish Film Premier of Including
Samuel** Free if master class place booked

A pdf is attached to this E-bulletin giving further
information about the masterclass.

**The Scottish Premier of 'Including
Samuel' - 11th November 6.30-9pm**

Shown at film festivals around the world, Dan
Habib's new 58 minute documentary film
examines the educational and social inclusion of
youth with disabilities. The film is built on the
personal journey on Habib and his family to
make Samuel, 7, part of educational and
recreational activities open to kids without
physical, learning or emotional disabilities. It
features 4 other families with varied inclusion
experiences, plus interviews with teachers,
parents and disability rights experts. Dr Mary
Schuh will take part in a post-screening
discussion.

To book, or for further information, please
contact Jaynie Mitchell @

Inspiring Inclusion

39 Heritage Park

West Kilbride

KA23 9GD

TEL – 07837265159

inspiringinc@btinternet.com

One Parent Families Briefing Papers

One Parent Families Scotland
have produced 2 briefing papers
in response to findings collated
from lone parents, and lone
parent families affected by
disability. These are attached to
this E-bulletin. The first relates to
the implications for lone parents
with the new welfare reform
changes and the second on
barriers to employment for lone
parent/carers affected by
disability.

One Parent Families Scotland are
keen to establish links with
agencies working with lone
parent families as they have a
range of specialist information to
help. If you think you might be
able to help any families you are
working with, do encourage them
to phone their free helpline
service (0808 801 0323). They
can also help staff working with
lone parents with any queries.

They can send you some helpline
cards (credit card size) to distrib-
ute to lone parents that you work
with. A list of specialist factsheets
can be accessed via:

[www.opfs.org.uk/helpdesk/index.
php](http://www.opfs.org.uk/helpdesk/index.php)

You can also contact Justine
Davidson, Disability Support
Worker at: email:

justinedavidson@opfs.org.uk

tel: 0131 556 3899

Secretary of State for Work & Pensions—targeted support for those with mental health issues to stay in work

Increased funding for the Access to Work programme will be used to test new ways of helping people with mental health issues stay in work rather than move onto benefits, announced James Purnell, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions today. Support will be made available for people with mental health conditions either already in work and experiencing difficulty, or those about to enter employment, as well as for their employers. Crucially, the support will be available when it is needed, waiting in reserve to respond quickly when mental health deteriorates or problems emerge. From autumn a programme will be piloted in London to test the demand and monitor the effects. Announcing the pilot in a speech to the Social Market Foundation (SMF), James Purnell said:

“Depression, anxiety, phobia and severe stress often take a heavy toll on individuals and their families, yet stigma and ignorance still surround these often hidden conditions. In the UK mental health problems cost the economy of Great Britain more than £40 billion each year - nearly two-thirds of this is the impact on people’s ability to work. We know work is generally good for people’s health and well-being so we need to take steps to intervene earlier and support people before it is ever a serious issue. Statutory Sick Pay alone costs employers over £1 billion each year- the Government and employers must work together to bring that cost down by recognising that work can in fact aid recovery and give people their independence back.

Speaking at the SMF, James Purnell also welcomed a report the think tank has issued looking at how more people with mental health issues can be helped back into work. James Purnell said:

“The SMF report mirrors many of our own recommendations from previous reports and agrees that we should focus on what patients can do, rather than what they can’t. We are sure in the future we can successfully integrate our Fit for Work pilots better into communities by challenging local areas to pioneer these services, and pool funding from across health, skills and work budgets to give them critical mass.”

Access to Work funding will be doubled to £138 million by 2014. This doubling of funding was announced in the green paper No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility – available online at:

www.dwp.gov.uk/welfarereform/noonewrittenoff/

The Fit for Work pilots were also announced in the Green Paper, following the earlier report on health, work and wellbeing by Dame Carol Black, which can be found at: www.workingforhealth.gov.uk

New support and responsibilities for lone parents

New benefit rules to help lone parents into work by helping them find additional training, prepare for the workplace and find suitable childcare, have been laid in Parliament.

Under the current rules lone parents can claim Income Support until their youngest child reaches 16. As a result of these changes, from November 2008 those lone parents, whose children are aged 12 and over, will move off Income Support and onto Jobseeker's Allowance if they are capable of work or Employment and Support Allowance if they cannot work because they have a disability or health condition. Under the new proposals, first outlined in January 2006 in the Green Paper published by John Hutton, lone parents of older children will have increased contact with a Jobcentre Plus employment adviser for bespoke support and, for those that can, to help them find work.

The Government understands that lone parents need to balance responsibilities for their children with work requirements, paid work has benefits that go beyond making families better off. It improves the health and well-being and future prospects of both parents and children.

There will be additional flexibility for lone parents claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, as we recognise that some lone parents face circumstances that need special consideration. This includes taking into account the availability, suitability and affordability of childcare, including in the school holidays.

Secretary of State James Purnell said:

"More than a million lone parents across the UK are already working, supporting themselves and their families. The number of lone parents in work has risen by 11.6 per cent since 1997, meaning an extra 320,000 lone parents now have a job. Work is the best route out of poverty and these reforms will offer lone parents access to a range of support to help move into paid work and stay there."

As well as offering one-on-one back to work support Jobcentre Plus employment advisers can also offer Better Off In-Work calculations to show how much more money lone parents will have if they work, skills checks and advice on financial support such as In-work Credit, which is a tax-free weekly payment of £40 (£60 in London), available for up to a year.

Advisers also offer practical support such as helping lone parents find local, affordable childcare, discuss time management and arrange guaranteed interviews through Local Employment Partnerships.

The Government plans to further extend this support to lone parents whose youngest child is 10 from 2009 and whose youngest child is seven from 2010.

If the regulations are approved by Parliament they will come into force from 24th November 2008.

Consultation—The Social Security (Flexible New Deal) Regulations 2008

www.ssac.org.uk/press/press11.asp

The Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) has been asked by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to consider proposals for the above named regulations. The main changes these proposals would introduce are:

- a one week loss of benefit (sanction) for those who, without good cause, refuse or fail to carry out a jobseeker's direction which relates to attendance at a "Back to Work Session"
- the inclusion of the Flexible New Deal as an employment programme in regulation 75 (1) of the Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations 1996, meaning that benefit may not be payable to claimants who, without good reason, refuse or fail to take part in the Flexible New Deal or who lose their place on the scheme due to misconduct
- the application of the current New Deal approach of 2, 4 or 26 week benefit sanctions for acts or omissions relating to the Flexible New Deal
- unless the person is in a vulnerable group, hardship payments are not payable to claimants who are sanctioned in connection with acts or omissions relating to a Back to Work Session or during the period they are required to take part in the Flexible New Deal (the latter mirrors current New Deal policy)
- an additional case where a person is to be regarded as having good cause for not taking part in the Flexible New Deal where he or she is not notified in advance about the application of sanctions
- a minor change to the linking rules in relation to JSA housing costs to take account of the Flexible New Deal
- Income and capital disregards for certain payments made in connection with a person's participation in Flexible New Deal in the Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Housing Renewal Grants Regulations.

Before the Committee considers and reports on these proposals, it would like to hear from organisations including existing and potential providers and individuals who have views, in particular on the following aspects of the proposed changes:

mandatory 'Back to Work Sessions' the duration of sanctions
the contracting arrangements customer choice within the FND programme
the role of the private sector organisations in the sanctions regime
and the application of sanctions to the voluntary extension of the FND

Those wishing to make representations to the Committee may obtain copies of the Department's explanatory memorandum and draft regulations from the Committee Secretariat (contact Natalie Harwood on 0207 412 1508).

Representations should be sent to the Committee at New Court, 48 Carey Street, London, WC2A 2LS, or by email , or via the consultation response facility, to arrive no later than Friday 7 November 2008.

The 'Right to Bid' - providers driving innovation

SUSE 'Comment': The Right to bid is a proposal in the Green Paper 'No one Written Off'. It is interesting that the guide and application form are published on the 20-10-2008 while the consultation goes on until the 22-10-2008? See below extract from the Green Paper including the consultation question. Why ask if it has already been decided? 'Done deal comes to mind.' Below the extract is the link to the guide and application form for the Right to Bid.

The 'Right to Bid' – providers driving innovation

7.15 We are already giving our providers, working in particular areas and with particular groups of people, increased responsibilities for designing the best means of support. But we do not want delivery providers to see themselves unreasonably constrained by the scope of particular contracts in bringing forward innovative approaches to improving our services. The time has come to look again at using our current contracting strategies for all situations. Rather than identifying a need and inviting suppliers to fill it, we are proposing a more radical approach. The strength of our provider organisations is their potential to develop new solutions. Many providers are coming up with ideas about how our services could be improved, about how they could do more to help particular customer groups – such as how we can communicate better with a more diverse range of customers.

7.16 Where providers identify services they think they can improve to help more people back into work, we want to hear their proposals. We are ready to consider directly funding ideas that seem to offer a real prospect of greater success. To this end, we propose to build new contracting arrangements – putting in place a 'Right to Bid' process. Our supplier networks, our internet site and other channels for contacting us will be key. We will increasingly look to use our commercial relationships to build flexibility into contracts so that we can harness expertise across the delivery chain and create capacity for market innovation.

7.17 We cannot guarantee that every idea will be taken up and we will have to work within our legal obligations to fair and open competition, but this should not prevent us being able to support specific initiatives on a one-off basis. We will test these ideas alongside existing provision. We will be open to more radical ideas on how to improve our services. Not every proposal will be funded but every serious idea will be evaluated and reasons will be given if we do not proceed. As we develop these proposals, through consultation, we will publish a document this autumn, setting out in more detail the way that the process will operate. No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility

Question 26: What information would providers need to make the Right to Bid effective? How would the evaluation process need to work to give providers confidence that their ideas would be evaluated fairly and effectively? How do we get the balance right between rewarding those who come up with new ideas and the obligation to tender projects?

RIGHT TO BID Application form & Bidders Guide

www.workstep.gov.uk/uploads

A guide to the DWP's new 'Right to Bid' process ('Right to Bid Bidders Guide Final') has been lodged on the

above website, together with the relevant Application Form. You can contact: SHEFFIELDMAYFIELD COURTRIGHTTOBID@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK if you have any enquiries.

Scottish Accessible Information Forum recruiting for new members

The Scottish Accessible Information Forum (SAIF) is currently recruiting new members. SAIF is an advisory group promoting accessible information provision for disabled people and their carers throughout Scotland.

As a group dealing with issues affecting disabled people and their carers, it is a priority that the majority of SAIF members have direct experience of disability. They strongly encourage the participation of disabled people. To support this, they provide all material in members' preferred format, organise any aids/adaptations for meetings and will pay members and their personal assistants' expenses for travel and accommodation when required.

For more details and an application form, please email your contact details to: info@saifscotland.org.uk or you can download a job description by visiting their website: www.saifscotland.org.uk

**If you have information you would like included
in the next SUSE E-bulletin
please email it to: shona.davidson@yahoo.co.uk**