

DWP Better Regulation Stakeholder Group Meeting 23 January 2008 – headlines

Welcome and introductions

Mike O'Brien, chairing, opened the first meeting of the re-constituted Better Regulation Stakeholder Group, saying that the Department recognised the importance of the Group and hoped to learn a lot from it.

Terms of reference

Mike O'Brien said that the previous Group had been helpful but the focus had changed. He asked members how they thought they could best work with and help the Department. After discussion, the members agreed to broaden their remit to include looking at issues around the benefit structure and how it impacted on employers, but stressed the importance of not losing the primary focus of better regulation.

The Group suggested quarterly meetings – half yearly with DWP officials and half yearly meetings chaired by the Minister.

Updates

The Group was updated on progress on the following.

Employers' Liability Compulsory Insurance certificates review

Responses to the recent consultation had shown that there was scope to reduce regulatory burdens.

Statutory Sick Pay review

The Statutory Sick Pay Review Group had published its report and there would be some £4m regulatory savings from easing record keeping requirements, which would be introduced in the autumn at the same time as the Department introduced the Employment and Support Allowance.

Private Pensions deregulatory review

Following the Government's response to the independent review led by Chris Lewin and Ed Sweeney, measures to reduce the revaluation cap from 5% to 2.5% and to abolish safeguarded rights had been included in the Pensions Bill. There was also work going on in a number of other areas.

The Group said that the pensions deregulation measures were very important and that the momentum on deregulation should not be lost.

Simplification Plan

The Department was interested not only in administrative burdens reductions but was also looking at simplification in the areas of public sector and the Department's customers. The Department needed the group to identify gaps, and areas that the Department should look at in the future.

Business awareness was an issue to be addressed – the Department needed to know how to communicate most effectively what it had achieved and how to get buy-in from business.

Personal Accounts

DWP officials gave an overview of the current situation with Personal Accounts. Personal Accounts schemes were being introduced to address undersaving in private pensions provision. The provisions were contained in the Pensions Bill that was being considered by Parliament.

The Group had a discussion of the key issues.