

Work Programme Priorities: Welfare Reform Activity to Date

| Work Stream: Welfare Reform | |
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| Priority | Detail |
| <p>The role of councils in benefit administration is recognised and adequately resourced.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This work is ongoing as Universal Credit (UC) is rolled out, mainly via the Local Authority Associations Group. • LGA continues to host the UC Partnership Forum and attend the UC Programme Board. • Regular meetings between the Chairman and Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, informed by Resources Portfolio Holders views. • Secured Housing Benefit (HB) administration subsidy for 2016/17, and supported negotiations on the distribution formula. • Supported councils with negotiation of their Partnership Agreements for UC roll-out and transition. • Ensured that adequate and appropriate New Burdens payments are made. • We will continue to discuss with councils and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) the current and future use of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), and this is also being fed into discussions regarding Business Rates retention. • Commissioned a short research project into DWP administration of disability benefits, to explore potential for localisation (as part of Business Rates work). To report by end of April. |
| <p>The role of councils in supporting Universal Credit (UC) claimants to make and maintain a claim is recognised and adequately resourced.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made a written submission and gave evidence (Cllr Fuller) to the Work and Pensions Committee Inquiry on Local Welfare. • Working closely with employment & skills colleagues on proposals for disadvantaged jobseekers; design and implementation of the Work and Health programme, and proposals for the future role of councils. • Secured £240 million over the remainder of the Parliament for Universal Support delivered locally. |
| <p>The experience of councils re: the impact of welfare reform on low income</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held a National Welfare Conference in February 2016 chaired by Cllr Claire Hudson. • Commissioned research into impacts of the new raft of reforms being implemented by the current government, for completion |

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| households informs future policy development. | <p>Autumn 2016. This includes refreshing the current impacts tracker on LGINform and continued work with the authorities who attended the February conference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr David Renard has been sharing Swindon's work on identifying and targeting households in need of additional support. |
| The central role of local government in supporting households affected by the reforms is recognised and adequately resourced. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made a written submission and gave evidence (Cllr Fuller) to the Work and Pensions Committee Inquiry on Local Welfare. • Proposals for local safety net funding included in LGA's Business Rates work. • Working with Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on Pay to Stay and Temporary Accommodation management fee. • (Forthcoming) submission to Work and Pensions Committee Inquiry on the future of Job Centre Plus (JCP) drawing on considerable work to date). • Ongoing lobbying on the application of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to supported accommodation. |
| Councils have the freedom, funding and flexibility to integrate services and to improve life chances for claimants through local approaches to employment, housing, social care, education and health. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributed to the Housing Commission work stream on housing and employment. • Partnership working with employment & skills (see above). • Submission to joint Work & Pensions and Education Committee Inquiry on Life Chances (in partnership with Children and Young People Lead Members). • Working with DWP on the design of the Life Chances strategy. • Submission to Work & Pensions Committee Inquiry on Intergenerational Fairness. • Cllr Sue Murphy contributed to a recent Civitas round table on in-work progression, and is due to contribute to a forthcoming round table on the Work & Health programme. |