

News release

For immediate release



When will the war on welfare end?

Commenting on the publication today by the Department for Work and Pensions of 'Ready for Work: full employment in our generation' which affects single parent benefits and opportunities, Sue Cohen of Single Parent Action Network said:

“It is hugely disappointing that Government’s view of welfare is one in which family rights are destroyed before the infrastructure of parent and employer support is in place. A right to request flexible working does not mean that there are family-fair employers who are able or willing to offer flexible jobs, any more than a duty to provide childcare conjures up adequate numbers of skilled childcare workers and quality childcare places.

Jobcentre Plus Advisers are often insufficiently trained, sensitive to and knowledgeable about the complexity of lone parents lives, and yet are today given the power to take food from a family’s table. Where are the family-friendly jobs that will form the basis of their targets? Single parents cycling in and out of welfare reveal that they are few and far between. It is clear that without the thorough one parent proofing of welfare and work, sustainable employment for parents will remain a pipe dream afforded to politicians alone.

Tax credit fiascos and low paid, unskilled jobs have skipped hand in hand on the well-worn road to reform, with poor families falling by the wayside. How many one parent family casualties will there have to be before the war on welfare comes to an end? Perhaps it will be when the children of poverty-stricken one parent families camp at the doors of Whitehall asking ‘Can I have some more please, Sir?’”

Notes to editors:

One Parent Proofing is the process by which the views of parents are used to inform the development, implementation and evaluation of policy and practice so that they respond effectively to the needs of one parent families.

Download SPAN’s Proofed for Parents by Parents research report and toolkit at www.singleparents.org.uk/span/publications

Proofed for Parents by Parents report and toolkit have been produced from SPAN’s Participatory One Parent Proofing (POPP) project.

The project's main objective is to influence the development of innovative programmes and policies that can engage single parents in intermediate steps to employment, and enable them to sustain good quality jobs.

68 single parents have been involved in analytical group work across 5 cities of the UK: Bristol, Birmingham, Swansea, Sheffield and Glasgow. Partners involved in delivery of the POPP programme respectively are: Single Parent Action Network, Women Acting in Today's Society, Swansea Women's Centre, SCOOP Aid Ltd and Four Plus One.

SPAN is a uniquely diverse membership organisation empowering one-parent families throughout the UK. SPAN aims to support single parents to empower themselves and take control of their lives, and to give a voice to one-parent families from diverse cultures and backgrounds living in poverty and isolation. SPAN also supports the development of one parent family support groups, and aims to improve policies that affect the lives of one-parent families.

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