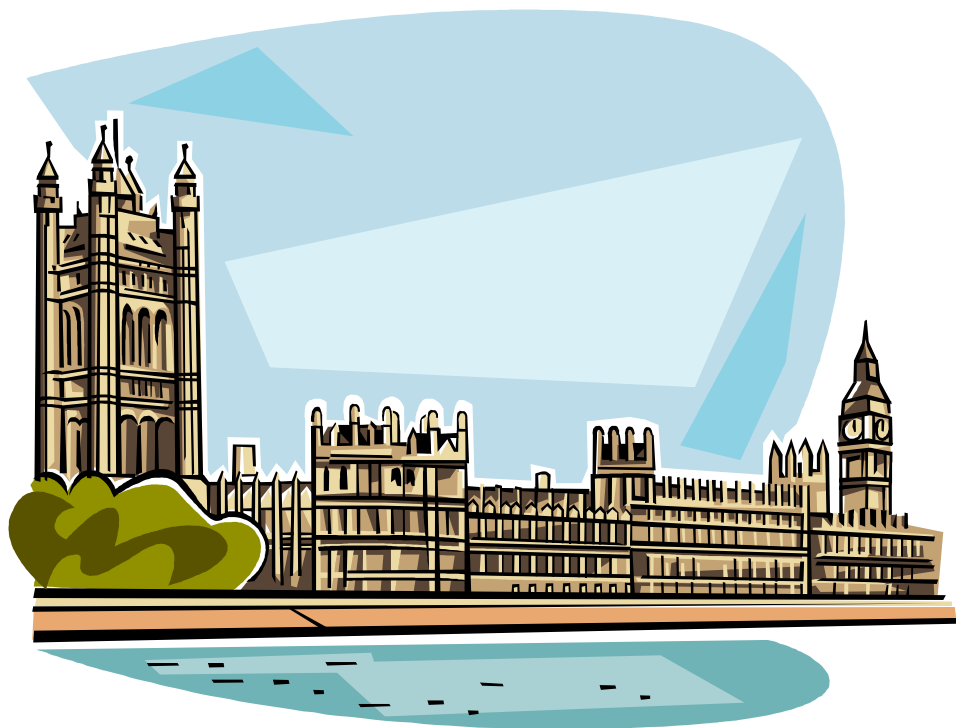




SPAN
Single Parent Action Network

SPAN response to DWP requirement to work announcement



20.07.2007

Single Parent Action Network is deeply disturbed at the decision of the new Secretary of State, Peter Hain, at the Department of Work and Pensions, to enforce lone parents to seek work in 2008 when their youngest child is over 12, and extending this to those with children over 7 by 2010.

SPAN along with other family organisations, the TUC and major charities combating poverty, lobbied strongly against the Freud Review, which proposed placing lone parents on Job Seeker's Allowance when their children were over 12. We felt that a work first enforcement programme was inappropriate for parents facing complex barriers particularly with regard to poor health and the poor health of their children. We were therefore dismayed when the new Minister not only ignored the consultation process, but then introduced more stringent proposals with regard to parents with children over 7. Those who fail to comply will lose their benefits.

No supplementary measures have been put in place to help more vulnerable lone parents in addressing low confidence/training/childcare needs. Nor are there plans for the Employment Retention Programme to be rolled out across the country. Twice as many single parents in employment move back onto benefits due to childcare problems, atypical hours and poor family friendly conditions of work.

These ill thought through proposals will undoubtedly impact on families living in poverty, poor housing conditions and unsafe neighbourhoods, placing parents, children and child poverty targets at greater risk.