

## EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

### THE SOCIAL SECURITY (JOBCENTRE PLUS INTERVIEWS FOR PARTNERS) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2008

2008 No. 759

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Work and Pensions and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
2. **Description**
  - 2.1 This instrument amends the Social Security (Jobcentre Plus Interviews for Partners Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/1886) (“the 2003 Regulations”). It introduces mandatory 6-monthly work-focused interviews (“WFIs”) for partners of claimants who have been continuously entitled to a jobseeker’s allowance (JSA) for at least 26 weeks where the benefit is payable at a higher rate referable to a partner, is administered in a designated Jobcentre Plus office, and the customer or the partner is responsible for a child or young person who is a member of their household.
3. **Matters Of Special Interest To The Joint Committee On Statutory Instruments**
  - 3.1 None.
4. **Legislative Background**
  - 4.1 The Harker Report<sup>1</sup> on Child Poverty said that the Government’s welfare to work programmes should become more attuned to the needs of both couple and lone parent families and that “*as a minimum, the level of information about the nature of jobs needs to improve. Job adverts do not routinely state whether there are opportunities to work flexibly*”.
  - 4.2 In the Child Poverty Strategy “*Working for Children*”, published in March 2007, the Department for Work and Pensions (“the Department”) agreed with this and said that Ministers wanted to focus the attention of Jobcentre Plus on parental employment and poverty and that one of the measures we would be looking at was our contact with partners.
  - 4.3 Currently, partners of those claiming JSA (other than a member of a joint-claim couple), Income Support (IS), Incapacity Benefit (IB) or Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) are only required to attend a single WFI to discuss the possibility of working.
  - 4.4 This instrument amends the 2003 Regulations so that the partners of certain JSA claimants can be required to take part in 6-monthly WFIs as a condition of the claimant continuing to be paid the full amount of benefit. These changes apply where the claimant has been continuously entitled to JSA for at least 26 weeks, the benefit is payable at a higher rate referable to a partner, is administered from a designated

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<sup>1</sup> Delivering on Child Poverty: what would it take? A report for the Department for Work and Pensions by Lisa Harker.

Jobcentre Plus office, and the customer or the partner are responsible for a child or young person who is a member of their household.

## **5. Territorial Extent and Application**

5.1 This instrument applies to Great Britain.

## **6. The European Convention On Human Rights**

6.1 As the instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

## **7. Policy Background**

### **6-Monthly work-focused Interviews for Partners**

7.1 Work-focused interviews for Partners (WFIPs) and an enhanced New Deal for Partners (NDP) were introduced in Jobcentre Plus offices in April 2004. The main policy objectives are to help partners of benefits claimants to find work or move closer to work, thereby helping to reduce the number of workless households and child poverty.

7.2 The purpose of a WFI is to discuss the possibility of help for partners who want to take up employment or training, or prepare for employment in the future. A personal adviser ensures that the partner is informed of the range of help available to them, including advice to partners looking for work through the voluntary NDP Programme.

7.3 WFIPs appeared to work best for partners of JSA claimants, but to be more problematic for partners of IS and IB claimants, especially those with health problems or disabilities, and for carers.

7.4 WFIPs have been successful in increasing participation in NDP. Both WFIP and NDP participation was found to be most relevant to those looking for work, helping partners in a number of ways, such as increased confidence, increased motivation to find work, considering jobs they might not have done beforehand and making them more aware of their options.

7.5 This instrument seeks to build on the success by extending the frequency of mandatory WFIs as outlined in paragraph 4.4 above.

### **Consultation**

7.6 The Department has formally consulted the Social Security Advisory Committee concerning the Regulations. The Committee has given its approval to proceed without public consultation.

### **Guidance**

7.7 Guidance will be provided to operational staff and Decision Makers.

7.8 A mail shot will be issued to all claimants affected by these changes informing them of requirement to attend 6-monthly WFIs.

### **Consolidation**

7.9 Informal consolidation of the instrument will be included in due course in the Department's "the Law Relating to Social Security" (the Blue Volumes) which are available on the internet at:  
[http://www.dwp.gov.uk/advisers/docs/lawvols/bluevol/pdf/c\\_0031.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/advisers/docs/lawvols/bluevol/pdf/c_0031.pdf) at no cost to the public.

## **8. Impact**

8.1 A full impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no impact on the private or voluntary sectors is foreseen.

8.2 There will only be a negligible impact on the public sector.

## **9. Contact Details**

9.1 Sarah Cooke at the Department for Work and Pensions (telephone 0113 2519320, e-mail [sarah.p.cooke1@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.p.cooke1@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk)) can answer any queries regarding the instrument.