

Consultation Response UK Green Paper: Work, Health and Disability**Report by Dr Mary Smith, Director, Education, Communities and Economy****1 Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with the background to the UK Government's consultation, and to ask that it note the attached response submitted by the community planning partnership, to meet the deadline of 17 February 2017.

2 Background

2.1 The UK Government Green paper on work, health and disability sets out proposals for change in respect of support to people affected by long term ill health or disabilities.

2.2 The Green paper sets out the issues:
"Employment rates amongst disabled people reveal one of the most significant inequalities in the UK today: less than half (48%) of disabled people are in employment compared to 80% of the non disabled population. Despite a record-breaking labour market, 4.6 million disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are out of work leaving individuals, and some large parts of communities, disconnected from the benefits that work brings. People who are unemployed have higher rates of mortality and a lower quality of life.

- Almost 1 in 3 working-age people in the UK have a long-term health condition which puts their participation in work at risk.
- Around 1 in 5 of the working-age population has a mental health condition.
- As many as 150,000 disabled people who are in work one quarter are out of work the next.
- Over half (54%) of all disabled people who are out of work experience mental health and/or musculoskeletal conditions as their main health condition.
- It is evident that our health and welfare systems are struggling to provide meaningful support, and, put simply, the system provides too little too late.
- Too many people are falling into a downward spiral of declining health and being out of work, denying them the benefits that employment can bring, creating pressures on the NHS and sustaining a major injustice in our society".

2.3 The Green paper proposes to:

- Ensure that disabled people and people with long-term health conditions have equal access to labour market opportunities and are given the support they need to prevent them from falling out of work and to progress in workplaces which embed effective health and wellbeing practices.
- Help employers take action to create a workforce that reflects society as a whole and where employers are equipped to take a long-term view on the skills and capability of their workforce, managing an ageing workforce and increased chronic conditions to keep people in work, rather than reacting only when they lose employees.

- Ensure people are able to access the right employment and health services, at the right time and in a way which is personalised to their circumstances and integrated around their needs.
- More effectively integrate the health and social care and welfare systems to help disabled people and people with long-term health conditions move into and remain in sustainable employment.
- Put mental and physical health on an equal footing, to ensure people get the right care and prevent mental illness in the first place.
- Invest in innovation to gain a better understanding of what works, for whom, why and at what cost so we can scale promising approaches quickly.
- Change cultures and mind-sets across all of society: employers, health services, the welfare system and among individuals themselves, so that we focus on the strengths of disabled people and what they can do.

2.4 Whilst the Green paper chiefly refers to England's system of health and social care and how this interacts with the Department for Work and Pensions, it makes explicit reference to the devolved governments as follows:

"We recognise that the devolution administrations are important partners, particularly because of their responsibilities for health as a devolved matter and other related areas. The government is committed to working with the devolved administrations to improve the support accessible to disabled people and people with health conditions across the country at a national, local and community level".

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There are no resource implications arising from this report.

3.2 Risk

There are significant potential issues arising from UK Government system changes that have the potential to overlap with Scotland's additional powers, devolved budgets and proposals to establish a Scottish Social Security Agency.

There is a risk that with a UK and a 'Scottish' bureaucracy delivering these services, the opportunity may be missed to develop real synergies with existing devolved services in a way that simplifies access, strengthens outcomes and provides more local and personalised services.

There are clearly challenges in Scotland's ability to pursue its own direction in how it treats people with disabilities and chronic ill health.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The reduction of inequalities in Health, Learning and Economic Circumstances are the top priorities for the Single Midlothian Plan. Social Security reform is a major factor in all these.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

It is too early to define this.

3.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Green paper proposes to reshape support to prevent aspects of poverty related to Health and Disability.

3.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

This is a UK consultation to which the CPP is responding, including the views of Council services involved in direct delivery of advice and support to current claimants. The attached response is the result of wide stakeholder engagement led by the Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network, in which the Council is a partner.

3.8 Ensuring Equalities/ Supporting Sustainable Development

The intention of the UK Government proposals are to reduce inequality, and they have carried out an EQIA. As this report deals with the consultation response, rather than a policy or strategy, there is not yet a requirement for an Integrated Impact assessment.

3.9 IT Issues

There are no IT issues.

4 Recommendations

Council is requested to note the attached partnership response.

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Background Papers: CPP response to UK Green Paper: Work, Health and Disability

