

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....4th December 2014

1. Title of Item/Report

Welfare Reform Q2 Report

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that presented an update on Quarter 2 monitoring of the outcomes / impact of Welfare Reform including emerging issues.

Quarterly reports were provided to Cabinet providing information on a range of indicators which showed how welfare reforms were impacting. These reports also included detail on any updates the Council had received with regard to further roll out of welfare reform and interventions the Council was making to manage the impact. Since reporting at Quarter 1 there was no further national update to report this quarter, however monitoring data for Quarter 2 was provided within the report and full details were attached to the report.

Peter Clark (Job Centre Plus) was in attendance at the meeting to answer any Member questions. Member's questions / comments centred around:-

- The impact of the new sanctions regime
- The unfairness of some of the sanctions that are imposed on JSA and ESA claimants
- Targets for Job Centre Plus staff to reach with regard to imposing sanctions
- Claimants that are having sanctions imposed are having to rely on crisis loans
- The figures for the number of appeals that have been won and lost
- Reassurance that there are no inappropriate referrals to Stockton Council for hardship allowance
- Timescales for the imposition of a sanction and for reinstatement are unfair
- Any commitment from Job Centre Plus to engage with children

Peter Clark (Job Centre Plus) responded as follows to some of the questions that had been raised and reported that he would report back to

the Director of Resources with any information that he did not have with him:-

- There are no targets nationally or locally for Job Centre Plus staff to reach with regard to imposing sanctions on claimants
- Job Centre Plus Staff need all of the relevant information and the conditionality needs to be correct before they can make a decision
- Team Leaders have regular observations to make sure that any sanctions are fair and appropriate
- Every sanction case is looked at individually and if any doubts are raised the case is referred to a decision maker
- Claimants should be informed before a sanction is imposed and depending on why a sanction has been imposed will have implications for the timescale for the lifting of the sanction
- Job Centre Plus have been tasked with doing some outreach work with children

The Chair thanked Peter Clark for his attendance at the meeting.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contents of the report be noted;
2. The Quarter 2 performance monitoring outcomes and observations be noted.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The report provided an update on the various welfare reforms, highlighting early indications of impact and areas of concern.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a person non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 4 – Welfare Reform Update as she was the Chair of Stockton District Advice and Information Service.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 12th December 2014

Proper Officer  
08 September 2014