

## **EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

### **THE SOCIAL SECURITY (QUARTERLEY WORK-FOCUSED INTERVIEWS FOR CERTAIN LONE PARENTS) REGULATIONS 2004 No. 2244**

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. These Regulations introduce quarterly Work Focused Interviews for certain Lone Parents in Extended Schools Childcare Pilot areas from September 2004.

#### **3. Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments**

3.1. Not applicable.

#### **4. Legislative Background**

4.1. The Regulations fulfil an undertaking given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his pre Budget Report of 10 December 2003.

4.2. The Regulations are similar to those that define the current Work Focused Interview regime for lone parents, (the Social Security (Work-focused Interviews for Lone Parents) and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2000) (S.I. 2000/1926) the essential difference being the frequency with which certain lone parents will be expected to attend work-focused interviews.

4.3. The Regulations are subject to the negative resolution procedure.

#### **5. Extent**

5.1. The Regulations extend to Great Britain.

#### **6. European convention on Human Rights**

6.1. Not applicable.

#### **7. Policy background**

7.1. In his pre Budget Report of 10 December 2003 (Para 4.16), the Chancellor of the Exchequer made the following announcement:

'In April 2004, the Government will be introducing extended schools childcare pilots in three areas. As a result of the availability of quality childcare, from September 2004 parents in workless households whose children could benefit from these pilots, and who have been on certain benefits for more than a year and whose youngest child is aged 12 or over will be required to attend quarterly work focused interviews'.

- 7.2. Subsequent decisions led to further areas being included in the Extended Schools Childcare Pilot (which is a Department for Education and Skills pilot scheme), and Quarterly work focused interviews will also be introduced to these additional locations.
- 7.3. The Extended Schools Childcare Pilot will build on existing childcare and increase the availability of affordable childcare in the participating Local Education Authorities of Lewisham, Haringey, Greenwich, Bradford, Leicester, Leicestershire, Sandwell and Torfaen in England and Wales and the Scottish Education Authority areas of Aberdeenshire and Fife. The pilots are expected to run from October 2004 to March 2006.
- 7.4. The reason for linking this lone parent work focused interview requirement with the Extended Schools Childcare Pilot is that the lack of high quality, affordable, childcare can present a barrier to the uptake of employment and/or training opportunities. The purpose of work focused interviews is to ensure that lone parents know about and understand the help and opportunities that are available to them.
- 7.5. The Extended Schools Childcare Pilots, which commenced in April of this year, will run for a period of two years. However, these Regulations will not come into force until 30 September thus there is a period of only 18 months during which they will impact. The 13-week period between interviews strikes a balance between ensuring sufficient opportunity for engagement within this limited window and not subjecting clients to an unnecessary or intrusive level of intervention.
- 7.6. The Social Security (Quarterly Work-focused Interviews for Certain Lone Parents) Regulations 2004 will therefore provide for certain lone parents living in the Extended Schools Childcare Pilot areas to attend mandatory work focused interviews on a quarterly basis (every 13 weeks). The requirement applies to lone parents who have been in receipt of Income Support for a period of 12 months, who are aged between 18 and 60 years and whose youngest child is at least twelve years old. The provision will come into effect from September 30<sup>th</sup> 2004.
- 7.7. The current work focused Interview regime requires claimants to attend an initial interview before their claim to Income Support is processed then a subsequent six monthly interview before attending on an annual basis. The current regime will not apply to a person to whom these Regulations apply.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1. The Social Security Advisory Committee and the Council on Tribunals were consulted on the Regulations and were satisfied with their content.

## **9. Regulatory Impact**

- 9.1. A full Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been produced for these Regulations, as they have no impact on the costs of business.

## **10. Contact**

Pat Wall  
Lone Parents and Partners Division  
Level 4 Rockingham House  
123 West Street  
Sheffield  
S1 4 ER  
Tel: 0114 259 5829  
Email: [Pat.wall1@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Pat.wall1@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk)