Press notice

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‘Select Committee to inquire into simplifying the UK benefit system’

The House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee today announced an inquiry “to examine the feasibility of simplifying the UK benefit system.”

Particular areas of interest are likely to include:

- the consequences of historical benefit changes and reform on the current system;
- the effectiveness of current communications between the relevant executive agencies and claimants;
- issues surrounding the delivery of three ‘types’ of benefit in the system – means tested, universal and contributory;
- the consequences of the current system on incentives and disincentives to work;
- the effectiveness of the Benefits Simplification Unit, progress of the DWP Simplification Plan and implications of the Freud review;
- case study examples to illustrate the reality of a complex benefits landscape in terms of application for, interrelation of and communication about benefits; and
- international examples, where benefit systems have been reformed and/or developed to retain relative simplicity.

The Committee seeks written contributions on this issue from interested organisations and individuals. The deadline for written evidence is 05 April 2007. Oral evidence sessions will take place after the Easter recess.

Please note:

Each submission should:

- begin with a short summary in bullet point form;
- have numbered paragraphs;
be in Word format with as little use of colour/logos as possible; and

be emailed to the Committee, where possible, including full details and postal address.

A guide for written submissions to Select Committees may be found on the parliamentary website at: http://www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/witguide.htm

A copy of the submission should be emailed to workpencom@parliament.uk and marked “Benefits Simplification Inquiry”. Full postal address and contact details should be included.

Paper copies should be sent to: Emily Gregory, Work and Pensions Select Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London, SW1P 3JA.

Material already published elsewhere should not form the basis of a submission, but may be referred to within a proposed memorandum, in which case a hard copy of the published work should be included.

Memoranda submitted must be kept confidential until published by the Committee, unless specifically authorised.