

# Work and Pensions Committee

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## From the Chair

4 February 2010

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP  
Minister for Employment  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
LONDON SW1H 9NA

Dear Minister,

### **Transition arrangements for the Work Programme**

As you may know, the Committee took oral evidence on Wednesday from potential prime and sub-contractors as part of our inquiry into the provider and contracting arrangements for the Work Programme. The session highlighted a significant and immediate issue surrounding the transitional arrangements from existing employment programmes to the Work Programme which we are anxious to clarify with you.

As the Government has emphasised, delivery of the Work Programme will be dependent on a diverse supply chain ranging from large private companies to small, local voluntary and community organisations. The success of the programme relies on these organisations remaining active and fit for purpose in June 2011 when the Work Programme starts.

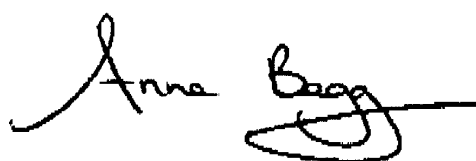
Witnesses were however concerned that a gap in welfare-to-work provision between the termination of many existing programmes and the launch of the Work Programme may result in a widespread fall in capacity across services and will disrupt the service that many clients receive. The Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) advised us that the gap will adversely affect a wide range of organisations from both the private sector and the voluntary and community sector. They suggested that many organisations are commencing staff redundancy consultation exercises, and that some organisations may not have the commercial viability to survive for several months without funding.

We are grateful to you for agreeing to give oral evidence on 14 March and no doubt we will discuss these matters in detail then. However given that it is still more than a month until that session and that existing programmes may be very close to closure by then, the Committee would be grateful if you could provide us with information now on what actions the DWP will take to ensure that:

- Clients who are receiving welfare-to-work services continue to receive effective support across all regions and will not experience significant disruption in the help they receive;
- Organisations which currently deliver DWP employment-related services and which you expect to continue under the Work Programme are supported during the transition period in terms of maintaining their financial capacity and their ability to retain key staff;
- Staff working in employment-related services across the supply chain receive the clarity and detailed information they need about contracting arrangements and timescales to enable them to plan for the transition period and ensure that their organisation is able to play an effective role within the Work Programme.

I look forward to an early response to the urgent concerns I have raised in this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Begg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

**Dame Anne Begg MP**  
**Chair**