

BRIEFING PAPER

Thursday 26th April 2012

Scottish Parliament: Welfare Reform Committee

The Welfare Reform Committee of the Scottish Parliament was established on 25th January 2012. Its role is to keep under review the passage of the UK Welfare Reform Bill and monitor its implementation as it affects welfare provision in Scotland. The Committee also has responsibility over consideration of relevant Scottish legislation.

The Committee was established as a result of the UK Coalition Government's Welfare Reform Bill, which received Royal Assent and became the Welfare Reform Act on 8th March 2012 (the UK Act). The new legislation introduces Universal Credit, which will replace a range of benefits including Income Support, Income Based Job-Seekers Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance, Working and Child Tax Credits and Housing and Council Tax Benefits.

These changes will affect thousands of people across Scotland. The establishment of this Committee indicates that the Scottish Parliament is committed to monitoring the changes in the welfare benefit system put in place by the Westminster Government.

Committee Timeline

- Michael McMahon MSP was selected as Convener and Jamie Hepburn MSP as Vice Convener at the first meeting of the Committee on 23rd February.
- On the 13th March and took evidence from various organisations and individuals on the general implications of Welfare Reform and the specific impact on children and families.
- Following this, a Call for Evidence was opened on the general principles of the **Welfare Reform (Further Provision) (Scotland) Bill**. This proposes that the Scottish Government be given powers to introduce regulations under the UK Act and amend other Scottish legislation relating to the Act.
- The Committee took oral evidence from a number of organisations on Tuesday 17th April and Tuesday 24th April.
- **The SWC submitted written evidence on the Bill. This can be downloaded from our website.** The SWC will provide further updates on the work of the Committee.

www.scottishwomensconvention.org

