



United Kingdom

Trends, Recent Developments, “Feeding in” and “Feeding out”

A Study of National Policies

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Summary: most important areas of concern in relation to 'feeding in' and 'feeding out'

Under 'Key Trends' (3.) and 'Key policy and legislative developments' (4.), we review recent trends and report on some of the main policies which have emerged since the publication of the latest version of the National Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion.

The remainder of the report is devoted to an assessment of the UK's implementation report on the National Reform Programme (NRP). This was published (quietly) in September 2007, but was supplemented by an updating letter in October following the PreBudget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) which contained the most significant recent policy proposals. The UK has again called its report 'Jobs and Growth', rather than the more usual EU phrase 'Growth and Jobs'. We focus below on issues of concern in the implementation report.

In relation to feeding out:

- There is no mention of gender equality and few references to other equalities.
- There is very little on active inclusion.
- There is more attention to the sustainability of public finances than the adequacy of social protection.
- We are not convinced that the Government can meet its employment targets, which has implications for achieving the child poverty targets.
- There is insufficient attention to employment retention and progression.
- There is very little discussion about the extension of conditionality, the viability of incomes in employment and the need to improve in-work incomes.
- There needs to be more attention to the quality and costs of private childcare supply.

In relation to feeding in:

- There is little evidence that the Lisbon social goals, the OMC, and the revised Lisbon objectives are salient issues in the UK.
- The priority seems to be flexibility and openness rather than social inclusion.
- Flexicurity is espoused but not defined and is widely contested.
- The Comprehensive Spending Review is a deeply depressing document – giving away £1 billion in raising the threshold on inheritance tax compared with, for example, £25 million to poor families in tax credits.
- There is no discussion of the impact of efficiency gains in the public services on users, or on the capacity to deliver the employment targets.

Trends:

- Poverty increased for all groups in the most recent year.
- Employment levels are stuck.
- Inequality is no better than when the Government came to power.
- The Comprehensive Spending Review indicates that there is a serious gap between the social inclusion rhetoric of the government and the reality of its plans; but it does for the first time include a Public Service Agreement target on social exclusion..
- There is a serious (and totally neglected) problem building up related to the uprating of benefits and tax credits. This needs attention in the UK as well as in the EU as a whole.

1. Summary of implementation report

The **implementation report** updating the National Reform Programme was published on 21 September 2007. As before, the UK's report is called 'Jobs and Growth', rather than the more usual 'Growth and Jobs'.¹

The government says its priorities are: maintaining macroeconomic stability; raising the sustainable rate of productivity growth; providing employment opportunities for all; ensuring fairness by delivering world-class public services; and addressing environmental challenges. It confirms good progress towards the Lisbon goals of jobs and growth (including having met the employment targets already). Chapter 2 says that macroeconomic stability is key and that the government is meeting its fiscal rules. The 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) sets spending for 2008/09-2010/11, and includes a 'value for money' programme to achieve efficiency gains and release money for front-line delivery. A new performance management framework includes a streamlined set of 30 Public Service Agreements (PSAs) for 2008-11. Total public spending will increase by 2% per year in real terms. The devolved administrations will announce their own draft budgets in the autumn.

Housing supply is being prioritised, with at least 240,000 net additional homes per year in England by 2016 (and equivalents in the devolved administrations). There will be a 50% increase in social housing supply between 2007-08 and 2010-11 following the Hills review. Attention will be paid to the infrastructure to support these increases (but planning gain supplement will not now be introduced). Pensions are being reformed, with improvements in the basic pension and the introduction of auto-enrolment into new private pensions with a mandatory employer contribution.

Chapter 3 says measures to improve productivity involve microeconomic reforms to the business environment and enhancing skills in particular. The government says it creates a vibrant climate for entrepreneurialism and small and medium enterprise success. It is simplifying business support schemes and launching a new impact assessment mechanism to ensure that all new regulation is necessary and imposes minimum burdens. Tax burdens will also be reduced. The new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills brings these three areas together. The report says research and development (R & D) in services outperforms that in manufacturing.

¹ HM Treasury, *Lisbon Strategy for Jobs and Growth: UK National Reform Programme – Update on progress*, September 2007.

Targets for improving basic and low skills levels have already been achieved; but the Leitch review recommended shifting the balance to higher levels. A Commission for Employment and Skills puts employers at the centre of the system. The European Social Fund (ESF) 2007-13 helps the participation of low-skilled adults in training. The government is consulting on raising the education participation age to 18. It supports energy markets liberalisation and action on climate change. The report describes the steps the devolved administrations are taking in all these areas.

Chapter 4 focuses on employment and is the chapter of most obvious relevance to social inclusion goals. The report says the goal is to deliver employment opportunity for all; labour market policies which seek to maximise access to work for disadvantaged groups while protecting those in greatest need complement the National Report and are consistent with flexicurity. The government's goal is an 80 per cent employment rate, and reductions in the gaps between disadvantaged groups and the rest of the population.

This report responds to the recommendation to further improve employment prospects for the most disadvantaged and sets out childcare measures. The recent Green Paper proposes more focus on retention and progression, working in partnership across sectors, and more personalised and localised approaches to welfare to work. Benefit simplification is a higher priority. Incapacity benefit is being replaced with a new allowance, and employers' attitudes to disabled people are being challenged, to help reduce the numbers claiming by a million. There will be measures to help older people into work (with 1 million as the target). The City Strategy aims to reduce worklessness in disadvantaged areas, giving more local discretion. Specific initiatives will target ethnic minorities (including non-working partners). Lone parents will no longer be able to claim benefit without seeking work once their youngest child is 12 (and then 7);² in-work financial support will be improved or extended. A section on childcare sets out targets to increase places and to increase the number of low-income families using formal care. Sure Start children's centres are being increased, with more focus on paid work. Local authorities must now assess the sufficiency of childcare in their areas. Activity agreements are intended to help reduce the percentage of young people not in education, work or training. Benefit claimants will be amongst the beneficiaries of the new emphasis on skills, and employers are being asked to commit themselves to helping long-term benefit claimants back into work. The ESF will focus on extending employment opportunities and developing a skilled workforce; this will support the government's policies to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities.

An update letter was also sent to the Commission on 15 October, about the PreBudget Report and CSR.³ The letter focuses on announcements, which complement the implementation update:

- On macroeconomic stability, the letter describes the new performance management framework with the government's top 30 policy priorities. It gives public spending figures to 2010/11 (an average increase of 2.1% in real terms), with at least 3% value for money savings across central and local government. It says resources are provided for 2 million new homes by 2016 and details are given of the pension reforms described in the report
- On microeconomic reforms, there is a new PSA to raise productivity by enhancing skills, investing in science and innovation, modernising infrastructure, improving the business environment and narrowing the regional productivity gap. Another PSA should deliver the

² The wording in the report (4.17) is not so specific: '... an eventual move into the labour market in return for the necessary personalised support'.

³ Letter from Neil McMillan, CMG, Director, European Secretariat, Cabinet Office, to Ms Catherine Day, European Commission, 15 October 2007.

conditions for business success, via the necessary competition regime and corporate governance framework, and reduction of administrative burdens. A single business support brokerage service will be created and three tax reviews are planned. Investment in science and innovation will increase, as will spending on skills. Over 250 employers, including government departments, have pledged to train their low-skilled workers. Various measures to pursue action to tackle climate change are described as well.

- On employment, a new PSA to maximise employment opportunity for all is announced. It will also drive reductions in the gap between overall employment rates and those for disadvantaged groups, and in the numbers on out-of-work benefits and time spent on them. Various benefit and tax credit increases and extensions will help make work pay. Sure Start children's centres will have outreach workers and support for fathers. There will be more support for disabled children and their parents, following a review. An integrated employment and skills service will be developed, including help for claimants.

The implementation report emphasises flexibility and openness, saying that growth must be based on the principles of sustainable development, including 'social equity'. The government says it consults widely with stakeholders on policies.

1.1. Addressing the Lisbon recommendations and points to watch

The implementation report is assiduous in addressing the Lisbon recommendations and points to watch; the sections below summarise the responses and then comment (in bold italics) on them:

1.1.1 *Improving basic and intermediate skills*

As noted, the update claims progress in tackling low skills levels and obtaining pledges from some employers to train their low-skilled workers. The letter adds a plan to create an integrated employment/skills service. ***The government is starting from quite a long way back on this, and it is important to ensure that measures answer the needs of individuals as well as employers; but it is taking the problem very seriously. One issue conspicuous by its absence is gender. The under-use of women's skills and the tendency for many, especially part-time, workers to work below their capabilities is not mentioned. In addition, Level 3 or above is often the key step towards higher pay levels for women; the current clear focus on basic and Levels 1 and 2 skills does not always provide the springboard they need - but this may be modified in future.***

1.1.2 *Further improve employment prospects for the most disadvantaged*

This is said by the government to involve personalised services, private provision, more in-work support and increased conditionality. ***The report is vague over the latter, calling it a new social contract, and not mentioning the fact that it includes plans for lone parents to 'sign on' when a child is 7 by 2010. The UK is currently somewhat out of line on this compared with other countries; but our lone parent population is also somewhat different, and many lone parents with older children not in the labour market have been shown to have significant barriers. Some groups are also sceptical about whether the 'offer' to lone parents will be sufficiently generous and reliable for increased conditionality to be acceptable.***

1.1.3 Ensuring effective implementation of the pension reform proposals

This is proceeding. The basic state pension will be uprated in line with earnings increases. ***This will be significant in reducing pensioner poverty and means testing of pensioners. But it is only being done from 2012/13, and 'subject to affordability and the fiscal position'. Whether auto-enrolment will increase private pension saving is not yet known.***

1.1.4 Increasing housing supply to reduce house price pressures

There is a stronger focus on housing, and the Hills review has highlighted social housing. ***This is an overdue and welcome development.***

1.1.5 Implementing its science and innovation strategy, and strengthen investment incentives, increase private sector engagement

As far as can be judged, the government is responding to this recommendation appropriately.

1.1.6 Further improve access to child care

The report covers childcare issues. The letter (but not the update) mentions work-life balance issues, and the existing plan to increase maternity leave. ***Neither mentions the proposal for fathers to be able to take some 'maternity leave' if the mother is back at work. This is generally not seen as the best way to promote fathers' involvement (which is encouraged in other countries by eg a 'daddy month' reserved for fathers). In general, there is very little on work-life balance policies, though they could be seen as simultaneously growth-enhancing and pro-social cohesion.***

1.2 Any other major developments reported on

The key change in performance management is the reduction of PSAs from a myriad of targets to 30 overarching priorities (each one with an associated delivery agreement, which may break down the priority into smaller parts). There is a new PSA on social exclusion. The government stresses user engagement in delivery planning and trust in those delivering public services.

2. Assessment from the perspective of social inclusion

2.1 The 'feeding out' aspects (creating an economic environment that supports social policy and its objectives)

2.1.1 *Promoting social cohesion and economic growth*

The emphasis on skills and lifelong learning has an economic rationale, in that it addresses weaknesses in the UK's performance in terms of international competitiveness; but it also contributes to social cohesion, by contributing to the potential for people to escape poverty.

Whilst the implementation report faithfully describes sustainable development principles as including 'social equity', it does not mention this again. What is not included in the report is perhaps significant. For example, there is no explicit mention of gender equality, despite the introduction of the 'gender duty' in April 2007 applying to all public bodies (to promote gender equality, as well as guard against sex discrimination, both as an organisation and in the policies they pursue); in a recent parliamentary question, one department of HM Government (Revenue and Customs) argued that the gender duty does not apply to policy on taxation, displaying an unfortunate lack of awareness of the correct legal position. Yet gender equality can be seen to be simultaneously growth enhancing and pro-social cohesion. There are also few references to other equalities, despite the creation of the Equality and Human Rights Commission in October 2007 - except disability, which is covered briefly.

The update could be said to cover some of the policy areas which simultaneously promote growth and social cohesion, such as building up human capital. But several others – including active ageing, active inclusion and the pursuit of quality jobs – are conspicuous by their absence. To take active inclusion seriously would involve a discussion of benefit rates for those out of work as well as in. Concerns over adequacy in social protection systems are not given equal importance with the sustainability of public finances. And the pursuit of quality jobs would require more debate about intervention in the labour market. Even education (as opposed to skills) is not central to this year's update.

2.1.2 *Ensuring an adequate income from work*

The report this year does not have much detail on this objective, although 'making work pay' has been one of the government's key policy goals in relation to both employment and child poverty. The letter sets out details of various policy measures, especially relating to tax credits, which were included in the PreBudget Report/CSR; uprating policies for benefits are announced later in the year.

2.1.3 *Targeting job creation at vulnerable groups*

The main element of 'feeding out' is the employment strategy and there is no doubt that the UK's employment rate is already very high. However, we are not convinced that the government can reach its ambitious employment targets; and there is still a high proportion of workless

households in the UK relative to other countries. This also has implications for the achievement of the government's child poverty targets.

The report does mention ethnic minorities and women in relation to enterprise (3.4) and ethnic minorities in relation to employment (4.13). It mentions tackling employers' attitudes towards disabled people, but not towards women or ethnic minorities. There is some discussion of local employment strategies, with the City Strategy as a recent example of more localised initiatives on employment. There is no mention of immigration or its impact, despite the report having a chapter devoted to employment. Yet in a recent Oral Answer (House of Commons *Hansard*, 8 October 2007), the Work and Pensions Secretary said that of the 2.7 million increase in jobs in recent years, 800,000 were taken by people from outside the UK; and the Prime Minister, at the Labour Party conference this year, talked about a goal of 'British jobs for British workers'.

There may still be insufficient focus on employment retention and progression, although this is certainly moving up the agenda. Chapter 4 (on employment) is the only one that cites social inclusion aims as relevant. However, recently a (then) minister argued that work is the only (rather than the best) route out of poverty. Lack of training for low-skilled workers is a continuing problem, as is the high number of young people not in education or work (4.23). The report and letter, however, do take both of these complex issues on board and suggest ways to tackle them.

2.1.4 Addressing territorial differences and regional gaps

There is little on the need to address inequalities between regions, though the update letter mentions narrowing the productivity gap between them. Regeneration of disadvantaged areas is not explored in the report either, though local employment strategies are mentioned.

Housing is also relevant to regional gaps, and even if the plans for additional housing are implemented on time, there will obviously be a gap of some years before supply meets demand. The International Monetary Fund's latest World Economic Outlook reports that the UK is one of 5 OECD countries to have had the largest increases in house prices relative to incomes; but it has been argued that the planned changes to inheritance tax threaten to inflate house prices further.

2.1.5 Assessing the impact on social protection systems

The phrase 'social protection' as a concept embracing both social security and employment protection is not common in the UK and there is little reference to either of these in this report. The report is not explicit about the increase in conditionality which is being attached to benefits for many groups of claimants. There are major ongoing debates - about whether the 'offer' to claimants is of sufficient extensiveness and quality to justify the higher levels of work-related activity (if not work) expected of them; about whether private providers will have the power to implement sanctions or not; and about whether there should be greater flexibility in the conditions imposed on individuals in a more personalised system, rather than following their claimant label. None of these debates is reflected in the text of the report, which does not seem to recognise the issues as salient to its subject matter. Yet they are key to the public acceptability, and hence 'workability', of the proposals (e.g. on lone parents and partners). There is also little about the concern about benefit levels which are too low to meet the government's poverty thresholds (especially for childless adults of working age) and the emphasis on means-tested support.

2.1.6 Addressing the contribution of fiscal policies

The update letter sent on 15 October omits the (contested) capital gains tax changes, and the inheritance tax changes which will be likely to increase inequality. The government has been committed for some time to further aligning the tax and national insurance systems, and is taking this further in a separate publication alongside the PreBudget Report. It is important to ensure that this does not undermine the UK's social protection system.

2.1.7 Other policies

There are some areas which can be identified as simultaneously growth-enhancing and pro-social cohesion. These can be said to straddle feeding in and feeding out but are dealt with here. They include: education; gender equality; reconciliation of work and family life; active ageing; active inclusion; improving the health status of the population; the pursuit of quality jobs; a balanced approach to flexicurity; and public expenditure in its role of building up human capital.

Some of these issues are dealt with under other headings above. Some are not mentioned in the implementation update. Some are dealt with below under 'feeding out'.

In relation to work-family reconciliation (which the UK calls 'work-life balance'), childcare provision has increased significantly, and the UK is investing in improving the childcare workforce. But there remain concerns about quality, and about high cost, often associated with private sector provision. The government's focus on labour market participation – improving the employment rate yet further – tends to suggest that child care is related to facilitating parental (especially maternal) employment in particular. The government has a target of persuading more low-income families to use formal child care, and to that end is pursuing a policy of communication via tabloid newspapers etc., as well as asking local authorities to recruit parent advocates to help persuade other parents. It is important in this context to emphasise the importance of (high quality) child care in terms of child development.

Public expenditure in its role of building up human capital is perhaps most visible in education and training. The government has made substantial progress in attacking the 'long tail of under-achievement' in the UK's education system, with a focus on raising attainment in schools at first and more recently more emphasis on basic skills for adults. But it is only with the new PSAs that it has started to focus on narrowing the gap in educational achievement between those on lower incomes and/or in disadvantaged groups and the rest. A recent OECD assessment of the UK's economic performance said that there had been recent improvements in standards in the most disadvantaged schools but that pupils in the middle and lower half of the distribution continued to perform poorly relative to students in countries with the best education systems, and overall socio-economic gaps in the education system remained large. The report said that this might be because local authorities and schools were not distributing funds as intended by government.

2.2 The 'feeding in' aspects (how social protection/inclusion policies contribute to economic growth and more jobs)

2.2.1 *Links with the EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process*

There is a general lack of reference in the update to social priorities, and a failure to integrate the Lisbon (or other) social goals into its frame of reference. There is no ongoing machinery, as far as is known, to coordinate the OMC and revised Lisbon objectives, and debate about them tends to happen in different parts of government and with different stakeholder involvement.

The report identifies flexibility and openness, rather than social protection and inclusion, as key to growth and jobs, and only gives space to the contribution of policies in this area in chapter 4. Whilst it claims that the UK's policies are contributing to 'flexicurity', this (contested) concept is not discussed, and the tensions between its twin goals of flexibility and security are therefore not explored. Arguably the UK emphasises flexibility rather than security – though the emphasis on 'self-reliance' rather than 'dependency' in last year's report is thankfully absent from this year's.

In our last report, on the 2006 update report, we noted that the upcoming CSR was prioritising greater efficiency and better targets, rather than large-scale additional resources. We argued that there were areas which did require additional resources, including benefit rates for adults of working age (including those without children), and that this should not be ruled out. There has been no indication of more generous benefit levels for adults of working age – although the CSR did include an increase in benefit rates for 16 and 17 year olds, as part of the review of financial provision for this age group, which is very welcome.

There is not much detail in the report or letter about services, though the update letter stresses the government's policies for 'investment in the future' via higher levels of public spending, and the report repeats its support for the services directive.

The impact of efficiency gains on users is as yet unclear, but provokes concern. They may, for example, have implications for the government's capacity to deliver on its employment targets. The government could argue that some of the cuts in posts are being made because of technological developments, which mean that fewer 'backroom' staff are required. But the welfare to work policies are tailored to individuals' personal needs, according to the government, and are thus highly labour-intensive. With targets of getting 1 million people off incapacity benefits, and 300,000 lone parents and 1 million older people into work, the danger is that claimants will be caught in a pincer movement between targets for employment and for efficiency savings. The implementation report update does not dwell on the major administrative problems of some largescale IT systems in the UK (such as child support), or the tax credit overpayments.

The new prime minister has initiated a change of tone in debates about public services, in which (for example) the emphasis on user 'choice' seems to be reduced and is replaced by more stress on user input; and there appears to be more willingness to trust public servants to deliver quality services. Whether this is due to the change in leadership, or whether it is the result of experience in finding that 'working to the target', as dictated by central government, does not necessarily lead to the best outcomes, is not clear. But it is a welcome change of tone for many.

2.2.2 Links to 2007 Joint Report challenges

The challenges identified for the UK in the 2007 Joint Report were :

- To continue efforts to reduce persistent inequalities, such as those in income, health, skills and 'life chances'
- To tackle levels of economic inactivity by improved engagement with vulnerable groups whilst adequately supporting the transition to quality and sustainable work
- To pursue the reform process and continue to address the pensions adequacy gap, in particular for those with more modest incomes; to ensure continued and increasing access to quality supplementary pension provision and that the pension system offers adequate incentives to work and save longer
- To address health inequalities (...), particularly with regard to access in both health care and long-term care [referring to whether personal care is free or not]
- To look at ways of integrating health and social care services to achieve a uniform setting for the continuation of adequate and high quality care throughout the UK

Although the government is very conscious of the challenge posed by the high levels of inequalities in British society, it cannot be said to have made sustained efforts to reduce persistent inequalities in the recent past. As Lisa Harker, author of an independent report on child poverty for the Department for Work and Pensions, wrote:

'... the major drivers of poverty – such as high levels of wage and wealth inequality – remain considerable impediments towards reaching the 2020 child poverty target, suggesting that far greater changes to the distribution of wealth, earnings and opportunities in society will be necessary before child poverty is eradicated.'

(Delivering on Child Poverty: What would it take?, A report for the Department for Work and Pensions, 2006, p. 9)

Health inequalities are particularly stubborn. And populist political tactics (such as the recent decision to implement reforms for couples in inheritance tax) sometimes appear to take precedence over policies to tackle inequality in income and wealth. On the other hand, despite popular concern about unfairness, echoed by some tabloid newspapers, there is not a clear objective of tackling rewards at the top of the income scale (insofar as it is possible to do so by government action). The changes to capital gains tax, and for individuals with non-domiciled tax status, announced in the recent PreBudget Report do represent efforts to use the tax system to tackle inequalities; but we appear to be as far as ever from implementing the easiest measures to achieve this, via increases in the tax rate on all those with higher incomes.

(See above on government policies to improve engagement with vulnerable groups in terms of employment opportunities.) There has been an increasing focus on progression in work and sustainability of jobs for those in employment, and the government does take this issue seriously. But some measures being taken are not mentioned, such as the increase in holiday entitlement. And the low quality of many jobs seems to be rooted in the characteristics of the labour market in

the UK that the government emphasises, ie its flexibility and openness. In practice, there are more initiatives than are mentioned in the report. In particular, the government has set up a forum on vulnerable worker enforcement. The government has held out against further protection for agency workers (one of the biggest areas of complaints for both migrant and British-born workers).

(See above on pensions reform, which was also highlighted in the Joint Report on the NRP.)

A debate about potential changes to policy on personal care is developing. This is in part due to the introduction of free personal care in Scotland. The government appears to have committed itself, perhaps inadvertently, to some change. But this does not seem to be in the direction of free personal care for all; instead, some contribution would be expected from everyone, but some allowance of free care might also be made. However, this is not mentioned in the update report.

2.2.3 Examples of good practice

Concrete examples of 'feeding in' which could be seen as examples of good practice include the government's efforts to tackle **child poverty** – especially the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The government often highlights the long-term nature of its aspirations to eliminate child poverty within a generation, and is particularly concerned about the evidence about intergenerational transmission and (lack of) social mobility.

There has in fact been some concern about the tendency of the government to view children as an investment. Gordon Brown, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, was fond of saying that whilst children were 20 per cent of the population they were '100 per cent of our future'. Some critics have suggested that this may encourage a rather instrumentalist view of children as the workforce of the future, and that the goal of creating a flourishing childhood should be the one which guides government policy.

However, the report itself does not make much of the contribution of an assault on child poverty to the creation of higher economic growth and more employment. And the recommendation in the Harker report suggesting that more attention should be paid to parental responsibilities in the delivery of employment services is not mentioned specifically.

Another example of the way in which social policies could contribute to economic growth and employment is the **social integration of migrants and ethnic minorities**. There is a lively and sometimes strained debate about this issue in the UK, as elsewhere, often catalysed by civil disturbances. There have been recent policy developments in relation to British citizenship, English language requirements etc. But none of this is mentioned in the update report.

Housing also contributes to economic growth and employment. The introduction of the local housing allowance for private rented accommodation (a flat-rate allowance paid to those on low incomes on the basis of a local average, rather than matching the exact rent) is intended to help with work incentives. The review of social housing led by John Hills of LSE explored the potential role of social housing landlords in relation to employment. And there has been concern about the unaffordability of houses to buy, especially for key workers in some towns and cities.

2.3 Aspects related to governance

It is significant that the government released the National Reform Programme update/implementation report from HM Treasury on 21 September, but without press releasing it. The NRP process is treated as subsidiary to the UK government's own 'project', even though it is complementary to it. This is probably due to the ambivalent attitudes towards the EU and EU governance in the UK, especially at the moment because of the debate over whether there should be a referendum about the latest agreement on EU processes etc. It means that an assessment of the update report is not necessarily the same as an assessment of the government's policies on growth and jobs and how these relate to broader social goals.

2.3.1 Monitoring and assessment of impact of policies

The UK government has a clear focus on targets, indicators and performance measurement in the *Opportunity for All* report (see below).

The government is adopting a new impact assessment method. However, there is as yet no explicit 'poverty proofing' of policies. There also appears to be more energy going into the diminution of burdens on business and the voluntary sector than into similar efforts for citizens.

2.3.2 Involvement of Stakeholders

There has been fairly systematic development of stakeholders' involvement in the social protection and inclusion agenda. The report argues that specific policies are consulted on rigorously. (Indeed, the government has just launched a consultation on its methods of consultation.) But this is not the same as participating in a dialogue with stakeholders about relative priorities between policies, or about overarching goals which should shape the choices of policies to be followed. This is the level that tends to be missing in the UK, and the update suggests that only one seminar and a web-based consultation were organised for debate on the implementation of the NRP this year, which hardly seems sufficient (especially if, as seems likely, few organisations knew about the web consultation). There is also less sustained involvement of people with direct experience of poverty in the growth and employment agenda than there is in the social protection and inclusion area, despite its centrality to their lives.

The Child Poverty Accord is a forum for central and local government to discuss their respective contributions to tackling child poverty. There have also been joint ministerial groups for the Westminster and devolved governments to discuss other poverty issues.

2.3.3 Coordination and joining up of economic, employment and social policies

Some targets are owned by more than one government department, including HM Treasury. The UK government would argue that its economic, employment and social policies form a seamless whole. We believe that the long-term goals should be social equity and sustainability, and that economic growth and employment may be some of various means towards these goals.

3. Key trends

3.1 Poverty and social exclusion

When in 1999 the UK government committed itself to abolishing child poverty in 20 years and tackling poverty and social exclusion more generally, it established a series of reports called *Opportunity for All* (OfA) as the main vehicle for monitoring progress. These have been published every autumn and the latest (ninth) report was published in October 2007.⁴ In the past there has been a text reviewing policy trends and a set of indicators covering children and young people, people of working age, people in later life and communities. However, in the latest report there is very little text and the report is called *Indicators Update*. Instead of a review of policy, reference is made to other publications that provide information on the key developments in the poverty and social exclusion strategy. In particular, reference is made to the *National Action Plan*,⁵ *Opportunity Age*,⁶ and *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*.⁷ In our view this is a welcome development – we have commented before that there was a good deal of unnecessary overlap between the NAP reports and OfA, and avoiding it in this way is likely to raise the status of the NAP reports (now part of the National Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion).

Another reason given for not updating the policy review may be very significant :

‘During this time, there has been considerable progress in many areas as the indicators in this publication reveal. However the Government recognises that many challenges still remain. Tackling these challenges requires a new focus, with more emphasis on, for example, action at a local level and an increased focus on those for whom existing strategies may not have provided the necessary support.’ (paras 1 and 2)

Out of 59 indicators, 34 have moved in the right direction since a baseline (mostly 1997), 7 are broadly constant, on 6 the data has moved in the wrong direction and for 12 no trend can be determined. The report provides details of the indicators, including the trend since the baseline and the direction of the latest data. The latter trends are summarised in the Table below:

Opportunity for All indicators: Trends in the latest data

	Getting better	Getting worse	No change	No trend data	All
Children and young people	10	3	10	1	24
People of working age	2	1	9	6	18
People in later life	5	0	5	0	10
Communities	4	0	2	1	7
All	21	4	26	8	59

⁴ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/ofa/reports/2007/OpportunityforAll2007.pdf>. The DWP website contains a useful list of key strategy documents relevant to the *Opportunity for All* goals and indicators, with hyperlinks to the documents. (Note that UK government websites are currently being rationalised.)

⁵ www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2006/nap

⁶ www.dwp.gov.uk/opportunity_age/indicators/

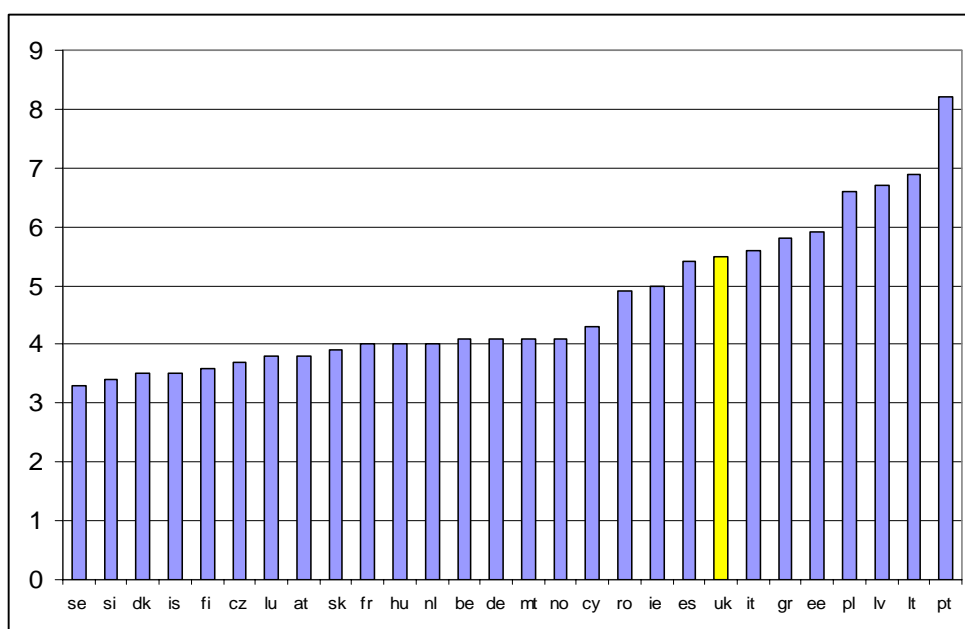
⁷ http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/disability/

There are a number of details to highlight in the latest report:

- The relative poverty rates for the latest year (2005/6) were up and the absolute poverty rates did not improve for all the population groups.
- The trends in child health are not good – class differentials in infant mortality, smoking among children, and obesity are either static or getting worse.
- In general the situation of people in later life has been improving more consistently than that of children or adults of working age.
- Employment rates did not improve in 2007. Unfortunately the Labour Force Survey moved from seasonal quarters to calendar quarters in 2006 and there is a break in the series which prevents detailed comparison with 2007; but it does appear that there has been no improvement in lone parents' employment rates since 2005.

These trends need to be seen in the context of trends in inequality in the UK. The latest (HBAI table A3) estimate (in 2005/6) of the Gini Coefficient for the UK was 35 before housing costs. In 1996/97, the year before Labour came to power, it was 33. However, the picture is not entirely clear – the 90/10 and 75/25 ratios improved slightly.⁸ The best that can be said is that there is no consistent evidence that inequality has fallen under Labour governments. Furthermore, it can be seen in the Figure below that the UK has the eighth highest level of inequality (using the 80/20 income quintile share ratio ratio) out of 28 countries.

Inequality in the EU 2005. Income quintile share ratio 80/20



Source: Own analysis of Eurostat Living Conditions and Welfare

⁸ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=1804> Table 27.

3.2 Demographic Trends

The major news relating to the UK's demographic trends is to do with migration. The Office of National Statistics has revised its population estimates. It now expects the UK population to increase from 60.59 million in 2006 to 71.1 million in 2031. This is partly the result of a higher than expected fertility rate which was 1.85 (provisional) in 2006 compared to 1.61 in 2001; but mainly it is the result of net inward migration, which is now estimated to be running in excess of 200,000 per year, mainly from central and eastern European countries.

On other indicators: the infant mortality rate at 5.0 in 2006 has not improved since 2004. The overall mortality rate fell to 9.6 in 2006, and the expectation of life at birth continues to rise - to 76.6 for males and 81.0 for females in 2004 (latest). The divorce rate has been falling since 2003; but is a fairly useless statistic, as fewer couples are getting married and the marriage rate reached a record low of 22.8 for England and Wales in 2005. Live births outside marriage rose to 43.7 per cent in 2006, but 63.7 per cent of these are jointly registered by couples living at the same address. Nevertheless, the proportion of families with children headed by a lone parent continues to rise: the latest estimate for 2005/6 (from the Family Resources Survey) is that 24.8 per cent of children live in a lone parent family; about 90 per cent are headed by a woman.

3.3 Economic Trends

The Chancellor published the *2007 Pre-Budget Report* and *Comprehensive Spending Review* in October 2007. He claimed that the UK economy has continued to perform strongly, with economic growth reaching 3.25 per cent per year in the first half of the year. He predicted GDP growth of 3 per cent for 2007, slowing to 2 to 2.5 in 2008 and 2.5 to 3 in 2009 and 2010. There is a current budget deficit of 0.6 per cent of GDP in 2007/08 but it is predicted to move into surplus over the economic cycle and public sector debt is due to stabilise below 39 per cent of GDP. Current public spending is planned to grow by 2.1 per cent per year in the period 2007/08 to 2010/11.

The inflation rate was 1.8 per cent in August 2007 and 2.5 per cent over the year. The average increase in earnings was 3.3 per cent over the last year.

The *Comprehensive Spending Review* detailed plans for additional spending of £14.5 billion on education, £900 million on science, £3.6 billion on transport, £19 billion on the NHS and £8 billion on housing.

In relation to the poverty and social exclusion agenda, there is a section on 'Fairness and Opportunity for All' which reiterates the objectives to maximise employment opportunities and eradicate child poverty. However, the policies that are announced - an increase of £25 in Child Tax Credit in 2008 and again in 2010, and an increase in the child maintenance disregard from £10 per week to £20 in 2008 and to £40 in 2010 - will only lift an extra 100,000 children out of poverty. Together with the measures announced in the 2007 Budget, existing plans will only reduce child poverty by 300,000 by 2010. That will still leave us 700,000 children short of the 2010 target to halve child poverty. The total cost of these measures is £30 million in 2008 and £60 million in 2010. This compares starkly with the cost of £1000 million in 2008 and £1400 million in 2010 to raise the inheritance tax threshold for the rich. The *Comprehensive Spending Review* has produced general gloom among those concerned with poverty and social exclusion

and one commentator (Lisa Harker) in oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee Inquiry into child poverty, *The Best Start in Life?*, said (24 October 2007) that the Government had a *reality/rhetoric gap*.

The fact is that with the spending plans already having committed the proceeds of growth to improvements in services, unless the Government has got its revenue forecasts very wrong (and in the recent past it has overestimated revenue) there is no scope for extra spending on financial support to meet the poverty targets, without increases in taxation.

The problem is being exacerbated by existing policies for uprating benefits. Between 1948 and until the mid 1970s, most benefits doubled their value in real terms and maintained their value in relation to average earnings. The Conservative Government in 1973 decided to distinguish between 'long-term' and 'short-term' benefits. Labour in 1977 began to link long-term benefits to movements in earnings or prices, whichever was higher, and short-term benefits were to be linked at least to prices. This arrangement did not last long, because the Conservative Government first abandoned the link with earnings for long-term benefits and then adapted price indexation by introducing in 1982 the Rossi index - supplementary benefit (SB) and associated means-tested benefits were to be uprated by the Retail Prices Index less housing costs - on the grounds that people on SB had their housing costs covered separately by the state.

As a result, a gap began to emerge between the net income of people in employment and people on benefits, and between those people receiving benefits that were uprated by at least movements in the RPI and those receiving benefits which were uprated by the Rossi index. However, none of this was formalised in legislation, nor was any principle adhered to consistently: some benefits - including child benefit - were not uprated at all in a number of years.

When the Labour Government came to power in 1997, it inherited this system and eventually in some ways adopted it more formally than its predecessors. Although there are no more legislative requirements to uprate benefits than there were a decade ago, the current government has been more ready to announce uprating *policies* for specific benefits. There have also been substantial improvements in the real levels of some benefits, usually in favour of children and pensioners.

When setting benefit levels and their differentials, a government has to have regard to the resources available; the relative needs of different types of claimant; how their labour supply, savings, family formation and other behaviour might be influenced by financial incentives - and no doubt the political costs and benefits of its decisions. However, the present situation is absurd - because, for example, partly as a result of uprating policy, from April 2007:

- A single pregnant woman under 24 gets £45.85 per week on Income Support (IS).
- A single unemployed women aged 59 gets £59.15 per week on IS.
- When she is 60 she will have her income raised by Pension Credit to at least £119.05.
- The basic Retirement Pension for a single person is only £87.30.
- A lone parent with one child on IS gets £59.15 for herself and £63.88 for the child.
- All this has completely disrupted the implied equivalence structure in the scales of benefits - which were never based on a very secure foundation!

There is no rationale for the differentials in the level of benefits - there is no basis in need, justice or equity; no basis in concerns about incentives; and as long as many benefits and tax credits are uprated by less than movements in earnings, poverty and inequality are bound to grow. There is no debate, or apparent concern in the minds of policy makers, about this situation.

3.4 Employment Trends

There is no doubt that employment trends have been one of the great successes of the UK economy. The latest figures for May–July 2004 give an overall employment rate of 74.4 per cent, up over the year and up over the previous quarter. ILO unemployment was 5.4 per cent, down over the year and down over the previous quarter. The claimant count was 2.5 per cent in August 2007, also down over the year and the quarter.

The worrying aspect on labour supply is that the Government looks unlikely on present trends to achieve its employment aspiration (note not target) of 80 per cent. As we have seen above, it is most unlikely to achieve its target of 70 per cent of lone parents in employment by 2010, despite the proposal to increase conditionality, and although the numbers of recipients of Incapacity Benefit have at last begun to fall it seems unlikely to meet the targets for people on such benefits.

4. Key policy and legislative developments

4.1 Children and young people

4.1.1 *Child poverty, benefits and child support*

Lisa Harker (*Delivering on Child Poverty: What would it take?*, 2006) suggested radical steps for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to achieve the child poverty targets, including a family focus in employment services. The government's response *Working for Children* (DWP, 2007) focused on employment. A new Public Services Agreement (PSA9) is shared between the DWP, HM Treasury (HMT) and the new Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF); it described the new material deprivation element of the child poverty measures. But measures announced to date are not sufficient to meet or even approach the child poverty targets for 2010.

A universal grant will be paid in late pregnancy from April 2009 in England. Child benefit will go up to £20/week by 2010 for the first/eldest eligible child (slightly more than prices). Revised guidance for Sure Start children's centres said they should do more to reach marginalised families. The government's policy review of families at risk suggested the needs of those with complex problems were not being met. The Nurse Family Partnership programme will give intensive help to disadvantaged mothers after childbirth until their children are aged two.

The government introduced a Bill to replace the Child Support Agency with a Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission at arm's length from government. Parents with care on benefits will no longer have to try to obtain maintenance from non-resident parents and there will be an assumption of voluntary arrangements, with strong fall-back provisions if required. There will be a disregard of £20 per week maintenance for parents on benefit from 2008, rising to £40 in 2010.

4.1.2 Children and young people

The government is preparing a Children's Plan to improve UK children's wellbeing, and a new PSA aims to improve the health and wellbeing, and safety, of children and young people and increase the numbers on the road to success. The Welsh Assembly government proposed extra legal powers to help it improve child welfare, and published a national youth service strategy. A parenting experts network in England will support parents of children with behaviour problems. The government published a 10-year youth strategy. A Youth Taskforce has replaced the Respect Taskforce (focused on antisocial behaviour).

4.2 Disability and care

The government is planning a Green Paper to change the financing of personal care; but this will not mean free personal care (which is under review in Scotland). In a review of support for families with disabled children it set out proposals for improvements and more coordination, with funding of £340m. A Standing Commission on Carers is being set up to ensure carers' voices are heard; and from April 2007 carers have the right to request flexible working from employers. The UK signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the government consulted disabled people on monitoring equality for them. Independent Living Funds will be merged with personalised budgets for care in the longer term. And a cross-government strategy to support people with learning disabilities proposed service improvements.

4.3 Education

4.3.1 Adult, further and higher education

The Leitch Review on skills published its final report, proposing making full- or part-time education/training compulsory up to 18, and more say over training for employers. The government plans an Education and Skills Bill for England and Wales to make these changes. Adults under 25 (instead of 18) in England will get free tuition to obtain a first Level 3 qualification. Local education authorities will distribute funding for education/training for 16-19 year olds in future. A Bill aims to streamline and restructure the Learning and Skills Council; an employment and skills Commission will bring these two policy areas together. More students are to get non-repayable maintenance grants; Scotland announced plans to scrap the graduate endowment fee.

4.3.2 Schools

The priorities of the new Department for Children, Schools and Families include 'personalised learning' in schools (funded by £150m), and an extra £265m (in addition to £1b over 3 years) for extended schools to provide after-school activities, especially for less well-off children; every school should offer extended services by 2010. A new Act allows every school to acquire 'trust' status; it also places a legal duty on schools in England and Wales to promote children's wellbeing. New rules on school admissions in England seek to block covert selection techniques. New PSAs aim to raise the educational achievement of all children/young people, and to narrow the gap for low-income/disadvantaged children, with new targets for schools in England.

4.3.3 *Early years*

All registered providers must use the new Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework on education, development and care from September 2008. Details were announced of a grant of over £4b for children's centres, early years education and child care.

4.3 Environment and transport

A White Paper proposes planning system reform, with decisions on large infrastructure projects by an independent commission. Planning is also being reformed in Scotland. But the Sustainable Development Commission says efforts to build houses quickly have led to neglect of resident facilities and economic development. Free off-peak local bus travel is being introduced for pensioners and disabled people. The Scottish Executive published a long-term transport strategy, including affordability measures.

4.4 Equalities

An Equality and Human Rights Commission started work in October 2007 (replacing the previous separate bodies on race and gender equality and disability rights, and adding age, sexual orientation and religion, as well as human rights). A Government Equalities Office is also being created (but race and faith will stay with communities issues). A new PSA aims to address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. The Scottish Parliament created a Commissioner for Human Rights.

On more specific equalities: from April 2007, public bodies have a duty to promote gender equality, as employers and in terms of their policies and practices; but it is not clear that all government departments have yet taken the implications of this on board, and HM Revenue and Customs appears to believe that the new duty does not apply to taxation policy. The Welsh Assembly Government plans to appoint a Commissioner for older people, the first in the UK. The government has been active in proposing measures to combat illegal immigration and trafficking. A report of an official Commission said that new patterns of migration pose challenges for communities; and from autumn 2007, all schools in England have a duty to promote community cohesion. Anyone seeking permanent settlement will have to pass a test about the UK. A new Act provides civil remedies for victims of forced marriages.

4.5 Government (central and local) and services

The new prime minister announced a shake-up of government departments. A minister was given responsibility for each English region; but regional assemblies will be phased out. The Welsh Assembly Government will create local service boards to bring together devolved and non-devolved services. A new PSA aims to build more cohesive, empowered and active communities.

The government announced a new impact assessment process to minimise the impact of regulation, and published proposals to make it easier for third sector bodies to deliver public services. Papers were published on long-term challenges and strategic priorities in advance of the CSR; but the promised public debate did not really take place. The Westminster government and the Scottish Executives published action plans on social enterprise.

4.6 Health

4.6.1 *Health care and health costs*

The government published a new framework for continuing healthcare and legislation for closer integration of health and social care; a new regulator will be created in 2008. People in Wales were given the right to free prescriptions. But access to NHS dentists seems not to be improving. More flexibility for family doctors to use NHS money for other purposes is being considered; and the government published guidance on adopting a human rights approach to health care. The government reviewed the health of the working age population as a benchmark for the future.

4.6.2 *Mental health*

A Mental Health Act makes it easier to detain mental health patients; but they will have the right to have an advocate. New guidance said teachers, nurses and doctors should be trained to recognise children's mental health problems. The Scottish Executive published a mental health delivery plan, focusing on prevention, more local care and support to help recovery.

4.6.3 *Health inequalities*

An advisory body said reducing health inequalities should be a cross-government responsibility. There will be an extra £8.9b. of spending on health promotion, focusing on deprived areas. Scotland passed an Act to ensure only healthy meals in its schools and is developing a health and wellbeing action plan. New PSAs aim to promote better health and wellbeing and care for all.

4.7 Housing

4.7.1 *Homelessness and vulnerable people*

The government published a package of measures in conjunction with charities to deal with youth homelessness and eliminate bed and breakfast for 16-17 year olds by 2010. It published a framework for joint planning to improve the access of homeless people to local health services. A new government strategy for housing-related support services for vulnerable people suggests integrated assessment. The Housing Corporation also published a strategy for vulnerable people.

4.7.2 *Housing supply*

A new PSA aims to increase long-term housing supply and affordability. The government plans to increase housebuilding, with more affordable homes, and more than double social housing construction compared with 2004, backed by £8b for 2008-11. £500m goes to local councils which speed up housing delivery. A new agency will work on regeneration and housing in England. A review proposed regulation of social housing independently of government.

4.8. Poverty, social security, taxation and employment

4.8.1 *Poverty and social exclusion*

The Northern Ireland Executive published an anti-poverty strategy (before devolved government was restored). The government set out the next steps in its financial inclusion strategy, and a new taskforce will design a national financial advice service. The 2007 Budget proposed aligning the national insurance upper earnings limit with the higher rate tax threshold from April 2009. The government is said to be setting up a Cabinet Committee on life chances. Following work carried out by the Social Exclusion Taskforce, there is a new PSA to increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training. Another new PSA aims to tackle poverty and promote greater independence and wellbeing in later life.

4.8.2 *Employment*

The minimum wage was increased again in October 2007 by 3.2% to £5.52/hour; the government also announced tougher enforcement rules for the minimum wage and employment agencies. The minimum holiday entitlement is being increased in stages from October 2007. A new PSA aims to maximise employment opportunity for all.

4.8.3 *Social security and taxation*

The government published a welfare reform Green Paper, in response to a review by David Freud, proposing more private/voluntary sector involvement in welfare to work and obligations on lone parents on benefit to seek work once their youngest child is 12 (and 7 by 2010). The Welfare Reform Act replaces incapacity benefit with an employment and support allowance, with more focus on back to work activities and sanctions. The local housing allowance pilot will be extended nationally; and housing benefit will be cut for tenants evicted for antisocial behaviour refusing to engage in a rehabilitation programme.

The Pensions Act 2007 restores the link between the basic state pension and earnings increases (during the next Parliament) and makes qualifying for a basic pension easier; raises the state pension age to 68 over time; and creates an authority to deliver personal accounts (which will not be subsidised). Reviews of pensions institutions and private pension regulation were published. The 2007 PreBudget Report brought forward the date at which accruals to the state second pension would become flat-rate rather than earnings-related to 2009.

Taxes were raised in the PreBudget Report 2006; the 2007 Budget made changes to personal income tax and also increased elements of tax credits. The 2007 PreBudget Report included (backdated) changes to inheritance tax thresholds for couples and the replacement of business asset taper relief by a flat rate of capital gains tax (compared to 10% currently for private equity investors). Individuals non-domiciled for over 7 years for tax reasons will pay a charge.

4.9 Governance

The Government has set up a stakeholders group with representatives from different government departments to discuss the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion. Representatives from the Social Policy Task Force, the group of NGOs which interacts with the Government on the NAP, also attend these meetings.

The discussion of developments in relation to the social inclusion strand of the National Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, in particular on the specific challenges identified in the 2007 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, is contained in Section 2. above.

Annex: Main relevant legislation and key documents

PreBudget Reports, Budgets, Comprehensive Spending Review etc.

2006

HM Treasury, *PreBudget Report 2006: Investing in Britain's Potential: Building our long-term future*, Cm 6984, London: The Stationery Office

HM Treasury, *Long-term Opportunities and Challenges for the UK: Analysis for the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review*, London: HMT

Strategy Unit, *Strategic Priorities for the UK: The policy review*, London: Cabinet Office

2007

Department for Communities and Local Government, *Delivering Value for Money in Local Government: Meeting the challenge of CSR07*, London: DCLG

HM Treasury, *Budget 2007: Building Britain's Long-term Future – Prosperity and fairness for families*, Cm 342, London: The Stationery Office

HIM Treasury, *Finance Act 2007*, London: The Stationery Office

HM Treasury, *Meeting the Aspirations of the British People: 2007 PreBudget Report and Comprehensive Spending Review*, Cm 7227, London: The Stationery Office

HM Treasury, *PSA Delivery Agreements (1-30)*, London:HMT

Children and young people

2006

Department for Education and Skills, *Sure Start Children's Centres Practice Guidance*, London: DfES

Harker, Lisa, *Delivering on Child Poverty: What would it take?, A report for the Department for Work and Pensions*, Cm 6951, London: The Stationery Office

2007

Cabinet Office, *Reaching Out – Think Family: Analysis and Themes from the Families at Risk Review*, London: Cabinet Office

Department for Children, Schools and Families, *Time to Talk*, London: DCSF

Department for Education and Skills, *Care Matters: Time for change*, Cm 7137, London: The Stationery Office

Department for Work and Pensions, *Child Maintenance and Other Payments Bill*, London: The Stationery Office

Department for Work and Pensions, *Working for Children*, Cm 7067, London: The Stationery Office

Hirsch, D., *Experiences of Poverty and Educational Disadvantage*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation (+ collection of reports published simultaneously on different aspects)

HM Treasury and Department for Education and Skills, *Aiming High for Children: Supporting families*, London: HMT and DfES

HM Treasury and Department for Education and Skills, *Policy Review of Children and Young People: A discussion paper*, London: HMT and DfES

HM Treasury and Department for Children, Schools and Families, *Aiming High for Young People: A ten-year strategy for positive activities*, London: HMT and DCSF

Hoxhallari, L., Conolly, A. and Lyon, N., *Families with Children in Britain: Findings from the 2005 Families and Children Study (FACS)*, DWP Research Report 424, Leeds: Corporate Document Services

London Child Poverty Commission, *Interim Report*, London: Greater London Authority

Office of the Children's Commissioner, *Five Year Plan: April 2007 to March 2012*, London: OCC

Social Exclusion Taskforce/Cabinet Office, *Families at Risk: Background on families with multiple disadvantages*, London: SET/Cabinet Office

UNICEF UK, *Child Poverty in Perspective: An overview of child wellbeing in rich countries*, Report Card 7, London: UNICEF UK

Disability and care

2006

Department for Education and Skills, *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*, London: The Stationery Office

2007

Department for Transport, *Concessionary Bus Travel Bill [HL]*, London: The Stationery Office

HM Treasury and Department for Education and Skills, *Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families*, London: HMT and DfES

Department for Communities and Local Government, *Independence and Opportunity: Our strategy for supporting people*, London: DCLG

Henwood, M. and Hudson, B., *Review of the Independent Living Funds*, London: Department for Work and Pensions

Platt, D., *The Status of Social Care? A review 2007*, London: Department of Health

Education

2006

Department for Education and Skills, *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, London: The Stationery Office

Lord Leitch, *Prosperity for All in the Global Economy: World Class Skills – Final report*, Cm 9966, London: HM Treasury/The Stationery Office

2007

Department for Children, Schools and Families, *Faith in the System: The role of schools with a religious character in English education and society*, London: DCSF

Department for Education and Skills, *Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage*, London: DfES

Department for Education and Skills, *Raising Expectations: Staying in education and training post-16*, Cm 7065, London: The Stationery Office

Department for Education and Skills, *School Admissions Code*, London: DfES

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, *Further Education and Training Bill [HL]*, London: The Stationery Office

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, *World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch review of skills in England*, Cm 7181, London: The Stationery Office

Environment and transport

2006

Barker, K., *Barker Review of Land Use Planning: Final Report – Recommendations*, Cm 9997, London: HM Treasury/The Stationery Office

2007

Department for Communities and Local Government, *Planning for a Sustainable Future*, Cm 7120, London: The Stationery Office

Department of Trade and Industry, *Meeting the Energy Challenge: A White Paper on Energy*, Cm 7124, London: The Stationery Office

Equalities

2006

Department for Communities and Local Government, *Advancing Equality for Men and Women: Government proposals to introduce a public sector duty to promote gender equality – The Government response to consultation*, London: DCLG

2007

Commission on Integration and Cohesion, *Our Interim Statement*, and *Our Shared Future*, London: Department for Communities and Local Government

Forced Marriage (Civil Protection Act) 2007, London: The Stationery Office

Home Office, *Managing Global Migration: A strategy to build stronger international alliances to manage migration*, London: HO

Home Office, *UK Borders Bill*, London: The Stationery Office

Home Office, *Enforcing the Rules: A new strategy to ensure and enforce compliance with our immigration laws*, London: HO

Home Office, *UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking*, London: HO

Women and Work Commission, *Towards a Fairer Future: Implementing the Women and Work Commission recommendations*, London: Department of Trade and Industry

Government, services, voluntary sector

2006

Better Regulation Executive, *Simplification Plan Initiatives*, London: Cabinet Office

Cabinet Office, *Charities Act 2006*, London: The Stationery Office

Cabinet Office, *Partnership in Public Services: An action plan for third sector involvement*, London: Cabinet Office

Cabinet Office, *The Customer Voice in Transforming Public Services: The government response*, London: Cabinet Office

Cabinet Office and HM Treasury, *The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration: Interim report*, London: Cabinet Office and HMT

Office of the Third Sector, *Scaling New Heights: Social enterprise action plan*, London: Cabinet Office

Varney, D., *Service Transformation: A better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for taxpayers*, London: HM Treasury

2007

Cabinet Office, *Draft Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Bill*, London: The Stationery Office

Cabinet Office, *The Tools to Deliver Better Regulation: Revising the Regulatory Impact Assessment – Government response*, London: Cabinet Office

Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, *Next Steps on Regulatory Reform*, London: DBERR

Department for Communities and Local Government, *Third Sector Strategy for Communities and Local Government*, London: DCLG

Department for Communities and Local Government, *Making Assets Work: The Quirk review of community management and ownership of public assets*, London: DCLG

HM Treasury, *Review of Sub-national Economic Development and Regeneration*, London: HMT

Leader of the House of Commons, *The Governance of Britain: The Government's draft legislative programme*, Cm 7175, London: The Stationery Office

Lyons Inquiry into Local Government, *Place-Shaping: A shared ambition for the future of local government*, London: The Stationery Office

Ministry of Justice, *The Governance of Britain*, Cm 7170, London: The Stationery Office

Strategy Unit, *Building on Progress: The role of the state*, London: Cabinet Office

Strategy Unit, *Building on Progress: Public services report*, London: Cabinet Office

Health

2006

Council for Science and Technology, *Health Impacts – A strategy across government*, London: Department of Trade and Industry

Department for Constitutional Affairs, *National Health Service Act 2006 and National Health Service (Consequential Provisions) Act 2006*, London: The Stationery Office

2007

Department for Communities and Local Government, *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill*, London: The Stationery Office

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