

**Universal credit in-work progression: early stats**

The DWP has published a 'progress update' on the 'in-work progression trial'. In this trial, randomly selected universal credit claimants who are already in work are subject to conditionality (or as the DWP calls it, 'labour market support') to encourage attempts to increase their earnings.

Early statistics from the trial show that, up to November 2016, 98 per cent of claimants in the trial had not been sanctioned. Most of the 319 sanctions that had been applied were low level sanctions – eg, for failing to attend an interview without good reason. Most claimants were still in work 12 weeks after joining the trial, with an overall slight increase in average earnings, although the DWP is unable to interpret that as an effect of the trial.

*"In Work Progression Trial Progress Update: Data for April 2015–October 2016, DWP, 23 March 2017, www.gov.uk*

**Two-child limit: a call for cases**

CPAG is looking into the possible routes of a legal challenge to the two-child limit and would like your help in locating potential claimants who would be affected by this rule and who would be willing to be part of a CPAG legal challenge. For more details, and a test case referral form, see [www.cpag.org.uk/test-case-referrals](http://www.cpag.org.uk/test-case-referrals). For an overview of the two-child rules, see p4.

**Two-child limit and SSAC concerns**

Correspondence between the Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) and the government about aspects of the legislation introducing the two-child limit was published in late March.\*

SSAC chair Paul Gray set out a number of concerns about the (then) draft legislation, in particular concerning the 'non-consensual conception' exception – ie, the one that covers rape and coercion. Concerns were expressed about privacy, the requirement for the claimant not to be living with the perpetrator, and how decision-making would operate given the important role given to third-party professionals and non-statutory guidance.

Responding for the government on 1 March, Minister for Employment Damian Hinds

announced no changes to the legislation. On privacy, he confirmed that award notices will not state the reason for the exception. On separation from the perpetrator, although it was acknowledged that not all victims are able to leave the perpetrator, the government is 'concerned about paying the child element to claimants for third and subsequent children born in these circumstances'; for those who remained with the perpetrator, 'other forms of victim support are more appropriate'. On decision making, the third party will not be required to attest to the credibility of the claimant, just (probably using a tick box) the consistency of the claimant's account with her/his circumstances. The list of third-party professionals will be set out in guidance, which is being 'treated as a priority'.

*\*[www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-security-restrictions-on-amounts-for-children-and-certain-young-people-ssac-correspondence](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-security-restrictions-on-amounts-for-children-and-certain-young-people-ssac-correspondence)*

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We operate the following welfare benefit advice services for advice workers.

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Telephone advice line: 020 7812 5231  
Monday to Friday from 10am – noon and 2pm – 4pm.

**For advisers in the England, Wales and Northern Ireland:**

Email advice is now limited to enquiries that are specifically about child benefit or tax credits.  
Email: [advice@cpag.org.uk](mailto:advice@cpag.org.uk)

**For advisers in Scotland:**

Email: [advice@cpagscotland.org.uk](mailto:advice@cpagscotland.org.uk)  
Telephone advice line: 0141 552 0552  
Monday to Thursday 10am – 4pm  
Friday 10am – noon

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