

# Call for evidence: localisation

The Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) launched its latest project (as part of its Independent Work Programme) on 'localisation' at its most recent Stakeholder day which was held in London on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November.

As part of this project the Committee invites submissions about 'localisation and social security'.

The topic of 'localisation and social security' was chosen for enquiry following consultation with our stakeholder community. We invite submissions to inform and assist the Committee in their consideration of this complex topic. We are interested in social security in a wide sense that, for example, embraces tax credits, child benefit and tax reliefs for social purposes. We would welcome views on how the current arrangements, both in terms of policy and operational delivery, could be improved.

The key questions we would like you to consider are:

## **1. What is understood by the term 'localisation'?**

The word 'localisation' is being used with increasing frequency in the context of social security policy making (and delivery) but the meaning of the term is far from clear. So:

- (i) Can 'localisation' be distinguished from devolution, decentralisation, deconcentration or subsidiarity?
- (ii) What is the rationale for having some benefits/entitlements configured and accessed on a national basis and some on a sub-national or local basis?
- (iii) What have been the dominant trends over recent years?

## **2. What has been the impact of 'localisation' on particular benefits and services?**

The enquiry will concentrate on experiences in England and Wales but submissions from Scotland and Northern Ireland will be welcome. We want to focus primarily on 'localisation' rather than devolution but realise there are overlaps between the concepts and that 'localisation' may affect England.

Respondents may wish to distinguish between: Policy, Finance, Commissioning and Delivery and focus on one (or more) of the following case studies:

- (i) Transfer of responsibility for the Social Fund;

- (ii) Council Tax Support;
- (iii) Housing Benefit;
- (iv) Discretionary Housing Payments;
- (v) Universal Support – Delivered Locally;
- (vi) Closure of the Independent Living Fund.
- (vii) Employment support and skills.

**3. *What is working well and what is not – and why?***

Do you have experience of co-commissioning or co-location of advice services? Are there examples of local authorities seeking to change or better coordinate their own services to meet the needs of social security claimants? Is there an adequate consideration of how the 'tax system' interacts with the 'benefits system' at the local level? Will increased 'localisation' change any aspect of the relationship between tax and social security? Is there evidence that Welfare Reform is displacing costs from central to local government? Detailed examples will be very useful, including experiences from the current DWP-sponsored pilot projects.

**4. *In the context of 'localisation' of social security are there particular claimant groups/categories whose circumstances place them at particular risk?***

Examples may include, for example, homeless people or survivors of domestic violence, those with mental health problems or members of traveller communities. Please provide examples.

The evidence received by SSAC will help inform its report which will be submitted to the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, next spring.

Responses should be submitted to the committee's Secretary by 12 December 2014:

The Committee Secretary  
Social Security Advisory Committee  
5th Floor  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London  
SW1H 9NA

Alternatively you can email responses to [ssac@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ssac@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

