



# *Open Lines*

Issue No. 3

**Letter sent to Members of  
Parliament in October 1991 by  
Government executive agencies in  
reply to Parliamentary Questions**

With an introduction by  
**Paul Flynn MP**

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# Introduction

by Paul Flynn, M.P.

The right of Members of Parliament to put questions to Ministers on matters for which their Departments are responsible, and the duty of Ministers to answer those questions, are a fundamental safeguard of our liberties. The Government's decision to curtail this right by referring a wide range of parliamentary questions to the chief executives of the recently created executive agencies is a matter of serious concern.

The first reason for concern is that letters from chief executives, unlike ministerial answers, are not published in Hansard. Instead, copies are placed in the Commons Library and Public Information Office, where those with enough time and determination (a good deal of both may be required) can inspect them. Since June 1991, *OPEN LINES* has provided a temporary means of making most of the information in these letters more readily available. By the time this third issue appears, the Government may have responded to the House of Commons Procedure Committee's recommendation that chief executives' letters should be published in Hansard. If that recommendation or a satisfactory alternative is adopted, *OPEN LINES*, having served its purpose, will cease publication.

But there is a second reason for concern. Ministers have always been held responsible to Parliament not only for

matters of policy but also for the administrative standards of public services: indeed, policy and administration are often inseparable. Ministers are now evading that responsibility, leaving it to chief executives to carry the can.

There might be some justification for this if the executive agencies were independent bodies, but they are not. The Benefits Agency, for example, is part of the Department of Social Security. Its officials, including the chief executive, are directly answerable to the Secretary of State. Indeed, as the Minister revealed in reply to a question tabled by me last month, the chief executive's letters are submitted for ministerial approval before they are sent (Hansard, 21 October 1991, column 438). That being the case, nothing whatsoever is gained by the letter being signed by the chief executive rather than by the Minister - but a crucial dimension of ministerial responsibility is lost.

What is needed, therefore, is not merely the publication of chief executives' letters, whether in Hansard or elsewhere, but an end to this whole unworthy attempt by Ministers to dodge their constitutional responsibilities to Parliament and to the public.

Paul Flynn, M.P.

House of Commons

November 1991

## Editorial note

A generous grant by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd has made it possible to continue publishing *OPEN LINES* and to widen its distribution.

This issue includes most of the letters sent to M.P.s in October 1991 by chief executives and their deputies in reply to parliamentary questions. As in previous issues, only letters from agencies in the fields of social security, employment and training are included, since these are most likely to be of general interest. Thus, a letter to Tony Speller, M.P., from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate on organo-phosphorous compounds in sheep dips, and a letter to Paul Flynn, M.P., from the Meteorological Office about the European Organisation for the Exploitation of

Meteorological Satellites, have been excluded.

The only other letters not reproduced are one from the Benefits Agency to Sir John Farr, M.P., about a constituent's claim for a funeral payment, and three letters to Austin Mitchell, M.P., from the Resettlement Agency, regarding the closure of Bridge House Resettlement Unit, which add nothing of substance to the letter sent to Dudley Fishburn, M.P., in July 1991 and published in *OPEN LINES* No. 2.

*In every case, unless otherwise stated, the main body of the letter and any attached documents are reproduced in full, only the formal opening and closing paragraphs being omitted.*

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# BENEFITS AGENCY

## Family Credit

**Mr Graham Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many individuals in the Nottingham area are (a) entitled to family credit and (b) are claiming family credit.

**Letter from Mr Michael Bichard,** Chief Executive, 21 October 1991:

The only figures available for Nottingham are for the number of families actually in receipt of Family Credit on a particular date. They do not include those who had claimed by that date but whose claim had not yet been decided.

On 6th September 1991, the latest date for which these figures are available, the number of families receiving Family Credit in the areas covered by the Benefits Agency offices in Nottingham were as follows:-

|                                 |      |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Nottingham (Castlegate)         | 1057 |
| Nottingham (David Lane)         | 1506 |
| Nottingham (Shakespeare Street) | 637  |
| Nottingham (Station Street)     | 969  |

Information about the total number of families eligible for Family Credit can be obtained only for Great Britain as a whole, and only retrospectively, from Family Expenditure Survey data.

## Archway Tower Office

**Mr Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what plans exist for the replacement of the Archway Tower office of Highgate and Finsbury Park DSS; and if he will make a statement.

**Letter from Mr Michael Bichard,** Chief Executive, 14 October 1991:

Property Holdings were commissioned to undertake a search for suitable premises for both offices. I will deal with the offices in turn.

### Finsbury Park

A lease agreement was signed at the end of June this year for a building in Seven Sisters Road N4. Work to provide the necessary ingoing services is expected to start on site early in 1992 with completion in the Spring.

### Highgate

One appropriate site has been found and Property Holdings have just identified two others. District Office management is now considering the suitability of these new locations. The information on these proposals is confidential for commercial reasons and therefore I am unable to give details of the options being pursued at the present time.

## Social Fund

**Mr Maxton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many claimants applied for grants or loans under the social fund during the financial year 1990-91 in each of the benefit offices in Kincardine and Deeside constituency; how many were turned down and for what reason; what was the average size of the grant, crisis loan or budgetary loan in the year; and if he will provide comparable figures for the first three months of 1991-92.

**Letter from Mrs Ann Robinson,** Director of Policy and Planning, 22 October 1991:

The statistical information you request is on the attached sheet. The Kincardine and Deeside constituency is served solely by the Benefits Agency's Grampian and Shetland District. This District

covers an area which was administered, prior to April 1991, by four former Departmental offices: Aberdeen North, Aberdeen South, Lerwick and Peterhead.

**Grampian and Shetland District, April, May and June 1991 (the former departmental local offices, Aberdeen North, Aberdeen South, Lerwick and Peterhead for 1990/91)**

|                               |     | 1990/91 | April 91 | May 91 | June 91 |
|-------------------------------|-----|---------|----------|--------|---------|
| Nos. of applications          | BL* | 5651    | 486      | 477    | 459     |
|                               | CCG | 3412    | 446      | 416    | 407     |
|                               | CL  | 4446    | 380      | 363    | 370     |
| Average award (£)             | BL  | 209.04  | 216.48   | 206.47 | 220.73  |
|                               | CCG | 247.35  | 289.97   | 239.07 | 256.40  |
|                               | CL  | 48.03   | 50.46    | 48.12  | 51.91   |
| <b>Reason for refusal #</b>   |     |         |          |        |         |
| Savings over £500             | BL  | 4       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CCG | 16      | 0        | 3      | 3       |
|                               | CL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Not receiving IS §            | BL  | 247     | 13       | 27     | 15      |
|                               | CCG | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Not receiving IS for 26 weeks | BL  | 633     | 55       | 82     | 72      |
|                               | CCG | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| IS entitlement unlikely       | BL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CCG | 256     | 14       | 33     | 19      |
|                               | CL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Excluded item(s)              | BL  | 102     | 4        | 9      | 11      |
|                               | CCG | 61      | 7        | 10     | 12      |
|                               | CL  | 4       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Excluded applicant            | BL  | 3       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CCG | 5       | 1        | 2      | 0       |
|                               | CL  | 1       | 0        | 0      | 2       |
| Applied for less than £30     | BL  | 36      | 4        | 3      | 1       |
|                               | CCG | 10      | 1        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Adjusted amount less than £30 | BL  | 20      | 2        | 5      | 2       |
|                               | CCG | 2       | 0        | 1      | 1       |
|                               | CL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Total debt over £1,000        | BL  | 3       | 0        | 1      | 1       |
|                               | CCG | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CL  | 2       | 1        | 0      | 0       |
| Previous application for item | BL  | 113     | 12       | 14     | 9       |
|                               | CCG | 69      | 6        | 7      | 6       |
|                               | CL  | 4       | 0        | 2      | 1       |
| No serious risk               | BL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CCG | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CL  | 51      | 3        | 1      | 1       |
| Inability to repay            | BL  | 141     | 10       | 17     | 11      |
|                               | CCG | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CL  | 13      | 3        | 0      | 0       |
| Help available elsewhere      | BL  | 9       | 0        | 0      | 1       |
|                               | CCG | 13      | 1        | 0      | 2       |
|                               | CL  | 11      | 1        | 0      | 1       |
| Insufficient priority         | BL  | 584     | 73       | 112    | 71      |
|                               | CCG | 290     | 31       | 51     | 61      |
|                               | CL  | 1       | 0        | 1      | 0       |
| Alternative available         | BL  | 8       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CCG | 8       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                               | CL  | 3       | 0        | 0      | 1       |

|                                     |     | 1990/91 | April 91 | May 91 | June 91 |
|-------------------------------------|-----|---------|----------|--------|---------|
| Loan refused                        | BL  | 183     | 27       | 24     | 12      |
| CCG paid                            | CCG | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                                     | CL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Enough money for crisis             | BL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                                     | CCG | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Direction 4 not satisfied           | CL  | 2       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                                     | BL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                                     | CCG | 1041    | 188      | 198    | 177     |
|                                     | CL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Savings over £1000 (age 60 or over) | BL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                                     | CCG | 1       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
| Other reason                        | CL  | 0       | 0        | 0      | 0       |
|                                     | BL  | 53      | 3        | 4      | 0       |
|                                     | CCG | 66      | 3        | 2      | 1       |
|                                     | CL  | 13      | 0        | 0      | 0       |

\* BL = Budgeting Loan. CCG = Community Care Grant.

CL = Crisis Loan.

# The definitions for "reason for refusal" are necessarily brief. Please consult the Social Fund Manual for a more comprehensive explanation of the decision making process.

§ IS = Income Support.

#### Benefits Agency: Uniforms

**Mr. Rhodri Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what guidelines he has issued to the Benefits Agency regarding the use of uniforms for counter staff at Social Security offices on (a) voluntary or (b) compulsory basis;

(2) what representations he has had regarding the provision of uniform clothing for use by counter staff dealing directly with social security claimants in the Benefits Agency.

**Letter from Mr Michael Bichard,** Chief Executive; 14 October 1991:

In recent years, a growing number of local offices have elected to provide distinctive clothing for some of their staff, normally those who have face-to-face contact with members of the public. In view of the growing interest in distinctive clothing, guidelines were issued to local office Managers in October 1990. The guidelines stressed the need for discussions with management teams, Whitley representatives and staff at all stages, and confirmed that the wearing of distinctive clothing is voluntary and that disciplinary action is not appropriate for members of staff who decline to do so.

During discussions with my Area Directors in November 1990 it was agreed that it was not sensible for each of our Districts to proceed independently, with the inevitable result of a variety of styles of distinctive dress. It was felt that a corporate image would be reinforced by adopting a single range of corporate clothing. A working party was set up early this year to look at the various design options available, and a wearer trial took place in the summer. Districts will be able to start ordering from the corporate clothing range at the end of the year.

I wrote to my District Managers in April to bring them up-to-date with progress, and to confirm that the wearing of corporate clothing like distinctive clothing, is voluntary.

The Department's Trade Union Side have made several representations about the corporate clothing package during the last eighteen months. They have made some very helpful comments, and expressed some concerns. Happily, we have been able to address all of these concerns. For example, we have been able to assure them that: summer and winter clothing will be included; maternity wear will be included; provision will be made for people

with disabilities and ethnic minority groups; changing facilities will be provided; and virtually all clothing will be washable, thus avoiding dry cleaning costs.

Staff in Districts have shown a great deal of interest in the corporate clothing package, and we estimate that about 1450 sets of corporate clothing will be purchased by our Districts during this financial year, and about 2000 sets during the next. The cost of the clothing will be met from existing administrative budgets and will not affect benefit payments in any way.

#### Local Offices

**Mr Martin Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list his Department's offices that have the provision of answerphones for use after hours, to receive and impart information.

**Letter from Mr Michael Bichard,** Chief Executive, 21 October 1991:

The latest figures show that 191 sites throughout the Agency have an answerphone for use after hours. This represents 41% of the total number of offices. The information was collated during the Quality Assessment exercise which took place in all our offices in November 1990. I attach a list as requested.

#### Offices using answerphones outside normal office hours

|                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Aberdeen (North)          | Carmarthen            |
| Aberystwyth               | Castleford            |
| Abingdon                  | Chatham               |
| Ammanford AO              | Chelmsford            |
| Andover                   | Chester-le-Street     |
| Anglesey (Llangefni)      | Chichester            |
| Arbroath                  | Colchester            |
| Ashford                   | Coventry (East)       |
| Ashington                 | Crawley               |
| Aylesbury                 | Cumbernauld           |
| Banbury                   | Cwmbran               |
| Barnsley (East)           | Dewsbury              |
| Barnsley (West)           | Diss                  |
| Barnstaple                | Doncaster (West)      |
| Basingstoke               | Dover                 |
| Bathgate                  | Dudley (North)        |
| Birmingham (Handsworth)   | Dudley (South)        |
| Birmingham (Northfield)   | Dundee (West)         |
| Birmingham (Perry Barr)   | Ebbw Vale             |
| Birmingham (Sparkhill)    | Elgin                 |
| Birmingham (Washwood Hth) | Exeter                |
| Blackpool (South)         | Fareham               |
| Blyth                     | Folkestone            |
| Bognor Regis              | Galashiels            |
| Bradford (South)          | Glasgow (Annie'sland) |
| Bridgwater                | Gloucester            |
| Brighton                  | Grantham              |
| Bristol (Central)         | Guildford             |
| Bristol (Horfield)        | Halifax               |
| Bristol (South)           | Harlow                |
| Bristol (West)            | Harrogate             |
| Broadstairs               | Hastings              |
| Burnley                   | Hatfield              |
| Burton-on-Trent           | Haverfordwest         |
| Buxton                    | Hemsworth             |
| Caerphilly                | Hereford              |
| Campbeltown               | Hertford              |
| Cardiff (East)            | Hornchurch NIO        |
| Cardiff (West)            | Huddersfield          |

|                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ilkeston                  | Newcastle (Staffs)          |
| Inverness                 | Newport (Gwent)             |
| Ipswich                   | Newtown                     |
| Irvine                    | Northallerton               |
| King's Lynn               | Norwich (Chantry)           |
| Kirkcaldy                 | Norwich (Mountergate)       |
| Launceston                | Nottingham (Castlegate)     |
| Leamington                | Nottingham (David Lane)     |
| Leeds (East)              | Nottingham (Station Street) |
| Leeds (North West)        | Nuneaton                    |
| Leeds (North)             | Oban                        |
| Leeds (West)              | Oxford AO                   |
| Leicester (Burleys Way)   | Oxford NIO                  |
| Leicester (Norton Street) | Perth                       |
| Lewes                     | Peterborough                |
| Lichfield                 | Peterhead                   |
| Lincoln (Newland)         | Plymouth (Crownhill)        |
| Liverpool (Breckfield)    | Pontefract                  |
| Llanelli                  | Pontypridd                  |
| London (Barnet)           | Poole                       |
| London (Battersea)        | Porth                       |
| London (Bexley)           | Porthmadog/Dolgellau        |
| London (Bloomsbury)       | Preston (North)             |
| London (Camberwell)       | Reading                     |
| London (Cricklewood)      | Rotherham (North)           |
| London (Crystal Palace)   | Rotherham (South)           |
| London (Dartford)         | Rugby                       |
| London (Ealing) DO        | Salford (North)             |
| London (Edgware)          | Scarborough                 |
| London (Fulham) DO        | Sheffield (North East)      |
| London (Hounslow)         | Sheffield (South East)      |
| London (Ilford)           | Sheffield (South West)      |
| London (Kennington Park)  | Shotts                      |
| London (Kensington)       | Sittingbourne               |
| London (Neasden)          | Skipton AO                  |
| London (Orpington)        | Slough                      |
| London (Stepney) AO       | Stirling                    |
| London (Stoke Newington)  | Stoke-on-Trent (South)      |
| London (Tottenham)        | Stornoway                   |
| London (Twickenham)       | Stroud                      |
| London (Uxbridge)         | Sunderland (North)          |
| London (Watford)          | Swansea                     |
| London (Wimbledon) AO     | Thanet                      |
| London (Wimbledon) NIO    | Tonypandy                   |
| London (Woolwich)         | Torbay                      |
| Loughborough              | Trowbridge                  |
| Lowestoft                 | Tunbridge Wells             |
| Luton                     | Wakefield                   |
| Maidstone                 | Walsall (East)              |
| Manchester (Openshaw)     | Walsall (West)              |
| Merthyr Tydfil            | West Bromwich               |
| Middlesbrough             | Weymouth                    |
| Milton Keynes             | Wishaw                      |
| Morrison                  | Worksop                     |
| Neath                     | Wrexham                     |
| New Malden                | Yeovil                      |
| Newbury                   |                             |

#### Doncaster offices: staff

**Mr Martin Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many (a) permanent and (b) temporary staff were employed in each category for each of his Doncaster offices on 1 January; what were the numbers in each category at 1 May under

the district management unit; and what is the current position for the latest date for which he has figures.

**Letter from Mr Michael Bichard, Chief Executive, 21 October 1991:**

The number of staff employed in each of the Doncaster offices on 1 January 1991 is shown at Appendix A.

The number of staff employed in the District Management Unit on 1 May 1991 is shown at Appendix B. The figures for 1 May 1991 include casual staff, who were not included in an earlier reply. I apologise for this oversight.

The current staffing position at the Doncaster District Office is shown at Appendix C.

#### Appendix A

##### Number of staff - Castle House Doncaster - 1 January 1991

|                          | <i>Permanent</i> | <i>Temporary</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grade 7                  | 1                |                  |
| Senior Executive Officer | 1                |                  |
| Higher Executive Officer | 8                |                  |
| Local Officer 1          | 43.5             |                  |
| Administrative Officer   | 68               |                  |
| Administrative Assistant | 16               | 4                |
| Others                   | 6                |                  |
| <i>Total</i>             | <u>143.5</u>     | <u>4</u>         |

##### Number of staff - St Peters House Doncaster - 1 January 1991

|                          | <i>Permanent</i> | <i>Temporary</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grade 7                  | 1                |                  |
| Higher Executive Officer | 6                |                  |
| Local Officer 1          | 29               |                  |
| Administrative Officer   | 57               |                  |
| Administrative Assistant | 13.5             | 2                |
| Others                   | 6                |                  |
| <i>Total</i>             | <u>112.5</u>     | <u>2</u>         |

##### Number of staff - Mexborough - 1 January 1991

|                          | <i>Permanent</i> | <i>Temporary</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Higher Executive Officer | 1                |                  |
| Local Officer 1          | 4                |                  |
| Administrative Officer   | 10               |                  |
| Administrative Assistant | 1                | 2                |
| Others                   | 2                |                  |
| <i>Total</i>             | <u>18</u>        | <u>2</u>         |

#### Appendix B

##### Number of staff in the Doncaster District as at 1 May 1991

|                          | <i>Permanent</i> | <i>Temporary</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grade 7                  | 1                |                  |
| Senior Executive Officer | 2                |                  |
| Higher Executive Officer | 12               |                  |
| Local Officer 1          | 70               |                  |
| Administrative Officer   | 138.5            |                  |
| Administrative Assistant | 23               | 14               |
| Others                   | 16               |                  |
| <i>Total</i>             | <u>262.5</u>     | <u>14</u>        |

#### Appendix C

##### Number of staff in the Doncaster District as at 1 October 1991

|                          | <i>Permanent</i> | <i>Temporary</i> |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Grade 7                  | 1                |                  |
| Senior Executive Officer | 1                |                  |
| Higher Executive Officer | 12               |                  |
| Local Officer 1          | 67.5             |                  |
| Administrative Officer   | 140              |                  |
| Administrative Assistant | 33               | 8                |
| Others                   | 12.5             |                  |
| <i>Total</i>             | <u>267</u>       | <u>8</u>         |

### Doncaster Area: Targets

Mr Martin Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what are the current targets for his Department's offices covering the Doncaster area for meeting (a) delivery and (b) accuracy for benefits administered.

Letter from Mrs Ann Robinson, Director of Policy and Planning, 22 October 1991:

The area in question is covered by Doncaster District. The performance targets for 1991/92 have been published in the Doncaster District Business Plan and are given in the annex to this letter.

#### Annex

|                             | Clearance times |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Appeals                     | 24.8 days       |
| Social Fund                 |                 |
| Crisis Loans                | 1.0 day         |
| Community Care Grants       | 7.1 days        |
| Budgeting Loans             | 6.0 days        |
| Income support              |                 |
| Claims                      | 4.0 days        |
| Assessment Review           | 2.5 days        |
| Sickness/Invalidity Benefit |                 |
| Claims                      | 8.0 days        |
| Retirement Pension          |                 |
| Claims                      | 20.5 days       |
| Load*                       | 13.0 days       |

\*Load includes any claim taken from files to answer a query after a final award has been made.

#### Accuracy rates

|                             |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Income Support Accuracy     | 94.2% |
| Short Term Benefit Accuracy | 97.4% |

### Services, Dearne Valley

Mr Martin Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the result of his Department's questionnaire sent to a random sample of clients, requesting their views on the proposed changes in the Dearne Valley area of centralising his Department's services; and if he will list the questions asked and the responses received to them.

Letter from Mrs Ann Robinson, Director of Policy and Planning, 22 October 1991:

During June and July 1991, as part of a comprehensive consultation exercise, the Benefits Agency's offices in South Yorkshire and Humberside issued questionnaires, copies of which are attached, to a random selection of customers to test the level of satisfaction with the services which they provide. The responses of customers in Mexborough, Goldthorpe and Wath-on-Deerne to questions concerning office location were taken into account in increasing service provision in the Dearne Valley. At present the offices concerned do not offer a full service across the whole range of benefits but, as you will see below, the opportunity is to be taken to provide a wider enquiry service from next year.

You will wish to note that 94% of customers in the Mexborough area who responded, 94% in the Goldthorpe area and 67% in the Wath area said they were happy with the location of the individual offices concerned. Mexborough customers were also asked if they would like a full range of services locally. All replies were in the affirmative.

As a result, it has been decided to offer an across the board caller service at Mexborough, Goldthorpe and Wath-on-Deerne from April 1992. Goldthorpe and Mexborough customers will then be able to make Income Support and Social Fund enquiries at their

local office instead of having to go to Wath as at present. Also, Wath customers will be able to make Contributory Benefits enquiries at the Wath office instead of having to go to Rotherham, Goldthorpe or Mexborough. There is, therefore, no proposal to centralise the work of the Dearne Valley offices. On the contrary, we are working to increase the services provided to the advantage of our local customers.

### Customer Questionnaire

[All questions are reproduced below, with reply options in italics, but the actual layout of the questionnaire has not been reproduced]

1. When you last got in touch with your Social Security office how did you do it? *Phone* *Letter*  
*Someone else on my behalf* *Visit to the office*

2. How do you prefer to get in touch with your Social Security office? *Phone* *Letter*  
*Someone else on my behalf* *Visit to the office*

Please explain why:

*Cheaper* *Quicker* *Other (please specify)*

3. The last time you telephoned the office were you satisfied with the service you got? *Yes* *No*

If NO please say why not?

Were you satisfied with

- the information you were given? *Yes* *No*

- the speed of service? *Yes* *No*

- the way the staff treated you? *Yes* *No*

If you answered NO to any of these please say why?

4. The last time you wrote to your local Social Security office were you satisfied with the service you got? *Yes* *No*

If NO please say why not?

Were you satisfied with

- the information you were given? *Yes* *No*

- the speed of the service? *Yes* *No*

5. The last time you came into the office were you satisfied with the service you got? *Yes* *No*

If NO please say why not?

Were you satisfied with

- the information you were given? *Yes* *No*

- the speed of the service? *Yes* *No*

- the way the staff treated you? *Yes* *No*

- the privacy arrangements? *Yes* *No*

- the cleanliness and comfort of the waiting room? *Yes* *No*

- the location of the office? *Yes* *No*

If you were not satisfied with any of the above please say why not.

6. Is there anything about the office that makes you unwilling to come into it? *Yes* *No*

If you answered YES, why?

*Physically unable to* *Transport problems* *Cost*

*Other (please explain)*

7. When you have asked about your benefit payments have you always been satisfied with what you have been told about -

- how the decision has been made? *Yes* *No*

- how the amount was worked out? *Yes* *No*

- when you will be paid *Yes* *No*

If you answered NO please say why not?

8. Where do you live? (You may, if you prefer, put just the district or village where you live.)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Please return it in the enclosed envelope, which does not need a stamp. If you have any other comments about your Social Security office, please put them below.

### Caller Questionnaire

- What is your home address?  
(Town, district or village will suffice if desired)
- How did you travel to the office?  
*Bus Train Car On foot Other (please specify)*
- How long did your journey take?
- Is the visit to our office your only reason for your journey today?
- How much will the entire journey cost?
- (a) Where do you go to shop?  
(b) Where do you normally pay bills?  
(c) Which Post Office do you use?
- (a) How long do you think you should have to wait before seeing someone?  
*Less than 5 mins 5-10 mins 10-15 mins 15-20 mins Over 20*  
(b) Bearing in mind the reason for your call, what do you consider to be a reasonable length of time to have to spend in the office in total?  
*Less than 10 mins 10-20 mins 20-30 mins Over 20 Don't know*
- Is it necessary for someone to travel with you to the office?  
*Yes No If yes, why?*
- Why did you call at the office today?  
*Making a claim Explanation of a claim Giro/order book not received For payment enquiry General enquiry (specify) Other*
- If you are calling for someone else why are they unable to call themselves? *Explain:*
- How often have you called at the local office in the last 12 months?  
*Nil Once 2-6 times more than 6 times more than 12 times*
- If you have to visit our office more than 6 times a year please state main reason for visits?
- Do the opening hours from 9.30am - 3.30pm suit you?  
*Yes No*
- (a) If NO, why not?  
(b) If NO, what hours would be more suitable?
- Are you happy with the location of your social security office?  
*Yes No*  
If NO, why not?
- How did you find the service you have just had?  
*Satisfactory Not satisfactory*  
If not satisfactory, why?
- Was the information you were given -  
*Satisfactory Not satisfactory*  
If not satisfactory, why?
- Were the privacy arrangements - *Satisfactory Not satisfactory*  
If not satisfactory, why?
- Was the speed of the service - *Satisfactory Not satisfactory*
- Was the way the staff treated you - *Satisfactory Not satisfactory*  
If not satisfactory, why?
- Was the cleanliness and comfort of the waiting room -  
*Satisfactory Not satisfactory*  
If not satisfactory, why?
- Do you have any other suggestion on how we could improve our service?

### Hardship claims

**Ms Clare Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each region and for Great Britain as a whole for each quarter since October 1989, how many income support and unemployment benefit claimants have (a) successfully and (b) unsuccessfully claimed income support under the hardship rules, showing those whose claim was in doubt due to (i) not actively seeking work, (ii) refusing suitable employment and (iii) availability for work.

**Letter from Ms Ann Robinson, Director of Policy and Planning, 25 October 1991:**

The information available has been taken from the Benefits Agency Management Information Statistics and is attached at Annexes A and B. The numbers of customers who have successfully or unsuccessfully applied for a hardship payment because they have refused suitable employment are included in the numbers of customers whose claim is in doubt because of their availability for employment. I regret that it is not possible to break this figure down.

Figures prior to April 1991 are based on the Department's former Regional Organisation. Figures from April 1991 are based on the Benefits Agency's new Territorial structure.

#### Annex A: Successful/unsuccessful hardship claims from December 1989 to April 1991

|                 |   | 12/89 |    | 3/90 |    | 6/90 |    | 9/90 |    | 12/90 |    | 3/91 |    |
|-----------------|---|-------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|-------|----|------|----|
|                 |   | *     | +  | *    | +  | *    | +  | *    | +  | *     | +  | *    | +  |
| North East      | A | 41    | 10 | 27   | 11 | 37   | 7  | 10   | 2  | 8     | 6  | 7    | 2  |
|                 | R | 12    | 3  | 8    | 0  | 14   | 4  | 17   | 1  | 3     | 0  | 5    | 0  |
| Midlands        | A | 17    | 5  | 10   | 3  | 17   | 9  | 10   | 2  | 5     | 1  | 9    | 1  |
|                 | R | 8     | 3  | 7    | 3  | 7    | 2  | 6    | 1  | 1     | 1  | 0    | 1  |
| London North    | A | 223   | 23 | 78   | 27 | 62   | 23 | 33   | 14 | 16    | 4  | 18   | 5  |
|                 | R | 10    | 2  | 17   | 4  | 9    | 2  | 9    | 10 | 1     | 3  | 4    | 1  |
| London South    | A | 35    | 9  | 24   | 10 | 16   | 7  | 21   | 1  | 4     | 1  | 22   | 2  |
|                 | R | 16    | 1  | 7    | 2  | 1    | 4  | 2    | 1  | 2     | 9  | 10   | 2  |
| Wales & S. West | A | 37    | 1  | 29   | 18 | 53   | 13 | 29   | 9  | 15    | 1  | 10   | 2  |
|                 | R | 15    | 4  | 20   | 8  | 32   | 9  | 16   | 4  | 5     | 2  | 5    | 2  |
| North West      | A | 14    | 3  | 25   | 3  | 21   | 3  | 37   | 4  | 13    | 13 | 15   | 10 |
|                 | R | 10    | 1  | 10   | 3  | 12   | 3  | 56   | 5  | 37    | 1  | 31   | 9  |
| Scotland        | A | 16    | 7  | 30   | 14 | 20   | 4  | 16   | 1  | 8     | 11 | 10   | 22 |
|                 | R | 6     | 1  | 12   | 1  | 4    | 4  | 7    | 2  | 7     | 0  | 9    | 8  |
| National        | A | 383   | 58 | 223  | 86 | 226  | 66 | 156  | 33 | 69    | 37 | 91   | 44 |
|                 | R | 77    | 15 | 81   | 21 | 79   | 28 | 113  | 24 | 56    | 17 | 64   | 23 |

A = Awarded R = Refused

\* = Figures in this column refer to those applying for hardship payments due to doubt over availability for employment.

+ = Figures in this column refer to those applying for hardship payments due to doubt over the "actively seeking work" criteria.

#### Annex B: Successful/unsuccessful hardship claims since April 1991 by territory

|                             |   | 6/91 |    | 9/91 |    |
|-----------------------------|---|------|----|------|----|
|                             |   | *    | +  | *    | +  |
| Southern                    | A | 63   | 32 | 93   | 24 |
|                             | R | 19   | 8  | 26   | 4  |
| Wales & Central England     | A | 29   | 8  | 26   | 8  |
|                             | R | 36   | 4  | 45   | 18 |
| Scotland & Northern England | A | 13   | 46 | 58   | 15 |
|                             | R | 25   | 20 | 48   | 39 |
| National                    | A | 105  | 86 | 177  | 47 |
|                             | R | 80   | 32 | 119  | 61 |

A = Awarded R = Refused

\* = Figures in this column refer to those applying for hardship payments due to doubt over availability for employment.

+ = Figures in this column refer to those applying for hardship payments due to doubt over the "actively seeking work" criteria.

### Burleys Way office, Leicester

**Mr Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what action his Department is taking to improve the service for unemployed people who use the DSS Burleys Way Office in Leicester.

**Letter from Mr Michael Bichard,** Chief Executive, 14 October 1991:

As you will probably already be aware, process work on Pensions and Income Support is now computerised. Leicester Burleys Way is one of our smaller offices and it was more vulnerable than some of our larger units to the effects of absences in key work areas and to the pressures of the conversion. I'm afraid that these factors have at times adversely affected the office's performance during the last 18 months.

Since the launch of the Benefits Agency last April, the new District Managers and their teams have been drawing up their plans for the future. In doing so they are consulting widely within the local community to identify their customers' needs: this will help them to provide the kind of service their customers want.

Happily, Burleys Way is increasingly benefitting from the completion of computerisation and, as part of an integrated District, it is now less vulnerable to the effect of staff absences. The following statistics, for the current year, illustrate the kind of improvements we're now making in the work areas most important to unemployed people, and have been achieved despite substantial increases in workloads. They show the number of days taken to clear a claim and the accuracy rate shown as a percentage. The first column shows the statistics as they were formerly collated within the Burleys Way office prior to its incorporation into the South Leicestershire District. Columns 3 and 4 show the statistics as they are now collated in the district as a whole.

|                 | <i>Burleys Way<br/>Yr. ending<br/>31/3/91</i> | <i>Target<br/>91/92</i> | <i>South Leics<br/>1/4/91 to<br/>31/8/91</i> | <i>South Leics<br/>1-31/8/91<br/>only</i> |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|--|---|
| IS Claims       | 9.5   | 5                       | 4.3  | 2.8                                       |
| IS Assessment   |   |                         |  |   |
| Reviews         | 5.7   | 2.5                     | 3.1  | 3.0                                       |
| IS Accuracy     | 93.2%   | 92.1%                   | 96.2%  | 98.7%                                     |
| SF Crisis Loans | 0.32  | 1.0                     | 0.2  | 0.2                                       |
| SF Grants       | 10.81   | 8.8                     | 10.3   | 7.9                                       |
| SF Loans        | 7.55  | 7.1                     | 7.6  | 4.8                                       |

There have been important moves recently to improve our service to customers in the South Leicestershire District, which includes Burleys Way. A Customer Care Manager has been appointed to oversee all aspects of our service to customers in the district, and a leaflet "Have Your Say" inviting comments on the service offered is available to the public. In this way, complaints and suggestions will be used in a positive way to plan improvements in service.

A survey of local customers has also been carried out to find out what kind of service they expect and want from us, and this too will be very useful in service planning terms.

Ideally we want to offer our customers a "one-stop" service, and in South Leicestershire a programme of training has been set in motion which will help staff with direct contact with the public to be knowledgeable about all benefits and answer all enquiries to customers' satisfaction.

I am sure that the District Manager and his team in South Leicestershire will continue to take all possible measures to improve the service to all customers.

## CONTRIBUTIONS AGENCY

**Mr Terry Rooney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many companies in the last year for which figures are available were prosecuted for late or non-payment of national insurance contributions.

**Letter from Miss Ann Chant,** Chief Executive, 17 October 1991: The Contributions Agency uses both civil and criminal proceedings to recover National Insurance contributions that have not been paid over by employers. The last year for which figures are available is 1990/91 and the requested information is as follows:

|          | <i>No. of cases</i> | <i>Amount</i> |
|----------|---------------------|---------------|
| Civil    | 1,760               | £5,969,386    |
| Criminal | 14                  | £14,560       |

Of course, not all criminal prosecutions necessarily involve the recovery of unpaid National Insurance contributions. Employers can be, and are, prosecuted for offences under Section 58 of the Social Security Act 1986, including wilful delay or obstruction of an inspector, refusal or neglect to furnish information to an inspector and failure to produce documents to an inspector.

## SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY (NORTHERN IRELAND)

**Mr John McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on events and publicity surrounding the launch of each agency in his Department.

*[In a written answer to this question on 19 July 1991, Dr Mawhinney said: "The information regarding the launch of the Social Security Agency which took place on 24 June 1991 is not yet available. I have asked the chief executive to write to the hon. Member as soon as the figures are known ..."]*

**Letter from Mr A Wylie,** Chief Executive, 9 September 1991:

We have now received the final accounts which show that the overall expenditure for the launch and accompanying publicity amounted to £27,949.79.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

### Low Paid Jobs

**Mr Graham Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what guidance is issued by his Department to the Employment Service to ensure that the service (a) does not advertise jobs which are paying below the legal wage council minimum and (b) reports to the wages inspectorate any such offence in order that prosecution can take place; and if he will make a statement.



**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden, Chief Executive, 18 October 1991:**

Comprehensive guidance has been issued to Jobcentres to ensure that the vacancies they handle comply with Wages Council Minimum Rates where applicable. These instructions require Jobcentres to challenge employers notifying vacancies with wages below the agreed minimum level and, if necessary, bring the matter to the attention of the Wages Inspectorate.

**Mr Graham Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the extent to which job centres and employment service offices are advertising jobs with wage rates below the appropriate Wages Council minima.

**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden, Chief Executive, 24 October 1991:**

My offices are instructed not to advertise *any* job which offers wage rates below the appropriate Wages Council minimum. As I explained in my letter of 18 October my offices have comprehensive guidance on the action to take when handling vacancies covered by Wages Council Orders. These instructions include the requirement that they will refuse to accept vacancies if the employer is not prepared to pay the appropriate Wages Council Minimum Rates where applicable.

#### Unemployment Benefit Disqualification

**Mr Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many unemployed people were disqualified for unemployment benefit in the South Gwent and Islwyn district in September 1991 under each paragraph of section 20(1) of the Social Security Act 1975; and in how many cases disqualification was imposed for the maximum period of 26 weeks.

**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden, Chief Executive, 21 October 1991:**

All decisions on claims for unemployment benefit are made by the independent adjudicating authorities. An analysis of adjudication officers' decisions is published quarterly by the Department of Social Security, under the title "Unemployment Benefit Statistics, Quarterly Analysis of Decisions". This shows the number of adjudication officers' decisions in each Employment Service region. Each category of doubt is shown, together with the numbers of cases allowed, disallowed or disqualified.

I am afraid that the information is not available in the form you requested. It is not compiled separately by county or district, nor on a monthly basis. The analysis for the quarter ending September 1991, for Wales as a whole, has not yet been published, but I will write to you again when it is available.

No records are kept of the lengths of disqualifications imposed under section 20 of the Social Security Act 1975.

#### Job Interview Guarantee

**Mr Ron Leighton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many interviews have so far taken place under the job interview guarantee; and how many got jobs.

**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden, Chief Executive, 21 October 1991:**

The JIG initiative was originally piloted in 20 inner city areas. A significant expansion was approved in November 1990 and took effect from 1 April 1991. From 1 April to 4 October 1991 65,278 interviews took place through the JIG initiative and 16,436 people have been placed in work. JIG is currently available in over 200 locations.

#### National insurance contribution fraud

**Mr Terry Rooney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many staff in the Employment Service numerically and proportionately are engaged in fraud detection relating to national insurance contributions.

**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden, Chief Executive, 21 October 1991:**

The latest period for which records are available is the month ending 31 August 1991. During this period a total of 961 people were engaged in the investigation of clients suspected of claiming unemployment benefit fraudulently. This figure includes Employment Service Inspectors and those people employed in administrative support duties. Proportionately, this represents 2.3% of all Employment Service personnel. It is not possible to give a breakdown of those Inspectors investigating national insurance contribution fraud but this will feature as part of their work on fraud generally related to benefits for the unemployed.

#### Not actively seeking work or refusing suitable employment

**Ms Clare Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many claimants in each quarter since September 1990 for each region and for Great Britain as a whole have (a) been issued with warning letters for not actively seeking work, (b) had their claim referred to an arbitration for not actively seeking work, (c) had their claims allowed or disallowed for not actively seeking work, (d) had their claim referred to an officer for refusing suitable employment and (e) how many of those in (d) have had their benefit disqualified or not disqualified.

**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden, Chief Executive, 24 October 1991:**

I am afraid the information you have requested is not available in the precise form requested. No statistical information is kept on the number of referrals to the adjudication authorities; and, at the time of writing, statistics about decisions are only available up to and including March 1991.

The statistical tables enclosed give the number of adjudication decisions on unemployment benefit claims that have been allowed or disallowed as a result of the actively seeking employment condition, and the refusal of employment condition.

|                           | Actively Seeking Employment        |         |                 |                                 |         |                 |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------|-----------------|
|                           | Quarter ending<br>31 December 1990 |         |                 | Quarter ending<br>31 March 1991 |         |                 |
|                           | Warning<br>letters                 | Allowed | Dis-<br>allowed | Warning<br>letters              | Allowed | Dis-<br>allowed |
| Northern                  | 695                                | 117     | 25              | 394                             | 142     | 10              |
| Yorkshire &<br>Humberside | 637                                | 137     | 37              | 398                             | 144     | 34              |
| East Midlands             | 453                                | 20      | 10              | 338                             | 20      | 8               |
| London &<br>South Eastern | 2,339                              | 68      | 65              | 1,895                           | 27      | 25              |
| South West                | 533                                | 55      | 15              | 400                             | 24      | 38              |
| Wales                     | 386                                | 9       | 24              | 311                             | 11      | 10              |
| West Midlands             | 853                                | 25      | 25              | 634                             | 18      | 15              |
| North West                | 1,247                              | 44      | 29              | 1,032                           | 48      | 31              |
| Scotland                  | 1,623                              | 236     | 62              | 1,001                           | 326     | 33              |
| Great Britain             | 8,766                              | 711     | 292             | 6,403                           | 760     | 204             |

### Refusal of employment

|                           | Quarter ending<br>31 December 1990 |            | Quarter ending<br>31 March 1991 |            |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|
|                           | Allowed                            | Disallowed | Allowed                         | Disallowed |
| Northern                  | 42                                 | 16         | 26                              | 9          |
| Yorkshire &<br>Humberside | 36                                 | 20         | 42                              | 16         |
| East Midlands             | 61                                 | 44         | 50                              | 23         |
| London &<br>South Eastern | 228                                | 227        | 110                             | 87         |
| South West                | 44                                 | 15         | 23                              | 5          |
| Wales                     | 22                                 | 13         | 14                              | 3          |
| West Midlands             | 56                                 | 17         | 28                              | 11         |
| North West                | 94                                 | 24         | 47                              | 14         |
| Scotland                  | 54                                 | 12         | 17                              | 15         |
| Great Britain             | 637                                | 388        | 357                             | 183        |

### Restart

**Ms Clare Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each region and for Great Britain as a whole, how many people have attended a Restart interview since 1 April; and what were the results of those interviews, broken down in the same way as the answer given to the hon. Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee) on 18 December 1990, *Official Report*, column 148.

**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden,** Chief Executive, 24 October 1991:

#### Outcomes of Restart Interviews, April 1991 - June 1991

| Region                    | Interviews | Job placings | ET     | Jobclub | Restart Course | EAS   |
|---------------------------|------------|--------------|--------|---------|----------------|-------|
| Northern                  | 34,206     | 136          | 1,309  | 1,345   | 3,921          | 76    |
| Yorkshire and Humberside  | 42,688     | 229          | 1,373  | 1,377   | 3,853          | 111   |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 38,180     | 488          | 894    | 1,503   | 2,533          | 139   |
| London and South East     | 105,883    | 1,229        | 2,532  | 5,253   | 4,696          | 530   |
| South West                | 23,918     | 229          | 852    | 1,098   | 1,500          | 184   |
| Wales                     | 24,704     | 291          | 745    | 1,200   | 1,702          | 94    |
| West Midlands             | 40,476     | 240          | 1,313  | 1,785   | 3,219          | 162   |
| North West                | 72,217     | 536          | 1,547  | 3,361   | 7,848          | 207   |
| Scotland                  | 53,416     | 658          | 2,217  | 2,694   | 5,596          | 192   |
| Great Britain             | 435,688    | 4,036        | 12,782 | 19,616  | 34,868         | 1,695 |

### Restart

**Ms Clare Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each region and for Great Britain as a whole how many unemployed people have been referred to restart courses by Employment Service counsellors since January 1991; how many of them were unemployed for over two years; how many attended and completed the courses; what were the outcomes of the participants; how many had benefit penalties imposed for not attending or failing to complete their attendance at the restart course; and if he will make a statement.

**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden,** Chief Executive, 25 October 1991:

Restart Courses are short courses normally lasting for one week. They aim to help those people who have been unemployed for a long time and are having most difficulty in getting back to work. They are designed to help people rebuild their confidence and motivation, reassess their strengths and skills, increase their awareness of options open and available to them locally and agree the best way back to work.

Restart Courses are not therefore an alternative to regular job

The information you asked for is given in the attached annex. As you will appreciate, these figures reflect only the *direct* results of Restart. We do not know how many people subsequently take up a job or a place on an employment or training programme as a result of the guidance given to them at their interview.

The Restart programme should not be seen as a placements programme, but as part of a coherent system of help and advice which we offer to longer term unemployed people. This process continues to be developed. We now have in place the additional help for people who do not find work within thirteen weeks of becoming unemployed which was announced by the Secretary of State in March 1991. The majority of clients are now interviewed by a Claimant Adviser when they cross the 13 week threshold of unemployment to review their Back To Work Plan and to see what further support and guidance they would benefit from.

We have also put in place three new programmes to help people get back to work. These are a Job Referral Service to match people against vacancies; Jobsearch Seminars to help improve jobsearch techniques and Job Review Workshops to help those who wish to change their career and reassess the opportunities available to them within the jobs market.

In the period 1 April 1991 to the end of June 1991 we have placed 55,111 long term unemployed people into jobs. A further 104,998 people have started on Employment Training or in a Jobclub. This demonstrates that the support and guidance we are offering is proving effective in helping back into the labour market those people with the greatest difficulties.

search or to other employment and training programmes. Rather they form a bridge between unemployment and other programmes or a job.

Since December 1990 people who have been unemployed for 2 years or more who at their Restart interview refuse or fail to take up a place on an Employment Department employment or training programme are asked to attend a Restart Course.

Your question raised a number of specific points. For the sake of clarity I am setting out the information you have asked for in the two tables attached; one deals with all Restart Course attenders, the other just those covered by the requirement to attend. You will see that we collect at regional level numbers of people referred to Restart Courses who have been unemployed for 2 years or more and those details are provided. We have not felt it necessary to keep similar figures for all those referred. It is the Benefits Agency who make a decision on whether an individual's benefit should be reduced for non-attendance or failure to complete a course. Their figures are compiled by their Districts which have different boundaries to our Regions. To avoid confusion I have given only a national figure.

### All Restart Course Attenders Jan - June 1991

|  | Northern      | Yorkshire & Humberside | E Midlands & Eastern | London & South East | South West    | Wales         | W Midlands    | North West    | Scotland      | Total         |
|--|---------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. People referred to Restart Courses                  | not available | not available          | not available        | not available       | not available | not available | not available | not available | not available | not available |
| 2. Starters  | 7,004         | 7,567                  | 5,004                | 9,456               | 3,449         | 3,845         | 7,229         | 13,592        | 9,866         | 67,012        |
| 3. Total completers                                    | 6,556         | 6,952                  | 4,431                | 8,251               | 2,971         | 3,414         | 6,119         | 12,508        | 8,822         | 60,024        |
| Completers who arranged to follow up:                  |               |                        |                      |                     |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| Jobs   | 1,350         | 1,699                  | 1,216                | 1,481               | 530           | 810           | 1,278         | 2,488         | 4,276         | 15,128        |
| ET   | 586           | 844                    | 473                  | 1,748               | 510           | 531           | 1,630         | 1,886         | 1,333         | 9,541         |
| Jobclub  | 444           | 558                    | 462                  | 1,467               | 480           | 538           | 788           | 1,537         | 773           | 7,047         |
| Other employment, training and related opportunities   | 3,549         | 3,019                  | 2,440                | 3,702               | 1,264         | 1,408         | 2,447         | 5,823         | 3,222         | 26,874        |
| 4. Total number of people with an outcome to follow up | 5,323         | 5,306                  | 3,790                | 6,962               | 2,420         | 2,735         | 5,314         | 10,566        | 7,852         | 50,268        |

### Restart Course Attenders Unemployed for 2 years or more Jan - June 1991

|  | Northern                   | Yorkshire & Humberside | E Midlands & Eastern | London & South East | South West | Wales | W Midlands | North West | Scotland | Total  |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------|-------|------------|------------|----------|--------|
| 1. People referred to Restart Courses  | 9,018                      | 10,565                 | 6,036                | 10,819              | 3,172      | 4,742 | 8,066      | 19,794     | 15,173   | 87,385 |
| 2. Starters  | 6,228                      | 6,797                  | 3,651                | 6,402               | 2,012      | 2,885 | 4,871      | 12,086     | 8,736    | 53,668 |
| 3. Total completers  | 5,872                      | 6,297                  | 3,247                | 5,605               | 1,781      | 2,600 | 4,246      | 11,143     | 7,844    | 48,635 |
| Completers who arranged to follow up:  |                            |                        |                      |                     |            |       |            |            |          |        |
| Jobs   | 1,192                      | 1,523                  | 916                  | 900                 | 262        | 601   | 886        | 2,165      | 3,725    | 12,170 |
| ET   | 483                        | 721                    | 325                  | 1,004               | 232        | 345   | 955        | 1,562      | 1,139    | 6,766  |
| Jobclub  | 377                        | 468                    | 291                  | 902                 | 201        | 339   | 442        | 1,331      | 642      | 4,993  |
| Other employment, training and related opportunities                         | 3,218                      | 2,838                  | 1,754                | 2,517               | 703        | 1,080 | 1,766      | 5,188      | 2,838    | 21,902 |
| 4. Total number of people with an outcome to follow up                       | 4,735                      | 4,733                  | 2,708                | 4,685               | 1,348      | 2,016 | 3,642      | 9,382      | 6,923    | 40,172 |
| 5. People for whom a reduction in Income Support was made by Benefits Agency | not available by ES region |                        |                      |                     |            |       |            |            |          | 925    |

#### Job Interview Guarantee Scheme

**Ms Clare Short:** (1) To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each region and for Great Britain as a whole how many agreements have been made with employers to operate the job interview guarantee scheme since it was extended nationally in April 1991; how many unemployed people have taken part in the scheme in each area; and how many participants have secured full-time employment with their sponsoring employer.

(2) To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each region and for Great Britain as a whole how many employers have participated in job interview guarantee work trials since the national extension of the scheme on 1 April 1991; how many claimants have participated in such work trials; how many claimants are currently participating in work trials; and how many participants have got full-time employment with their work trial employer.

**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden, Chief Executive, 25 October 1991:**

You asked how many agreements have been made with employers to operate the JIG initiative since it was extended nationally in April 1991, how many unemployed people have taken part in the initiative and how many participants have secured full time employment with their sponsoring employer. Annex A sets out this information for the period 1 April to 4 October.

You also asked how many employers have participated in JIG Work Trials since the expansion of the initiative, how many claimants are currently participating and how many participants have got full-time employment with their Work Trial Employer. This information is at Annex B.

We are not able to supply separate information on the number of employers who have participated in each Work Trial nor are we able to record accurately the number of participants currently undertaking a JIG menu option at any one time. This information is not required to monitor the success of the programme.

## Annex A

The latest information on the Job Interview Guarantee is as follows:

| Region                  | Number of employer agreements | Number of unemployed people* | Number placed into jobs |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Northern                | 596                           | 3,753                        | 912                     |
| Yorkshire & Humberside  | 360                           | 3,243                        | 987                     |
| East Midlands & Eastern | 211                           | 2,176                        | 668                     |
| London & South East     | 2,178                         | 28,159                       | 6,925                   |
| South West              | 704                           | 3,223                        | 841                     |
| Wales                   | 560                           | 3,443                        | 1,043                   |
| West Midlands           | 1,443                         | 5,656                        | 1,169                   |
| North West              | 953                           | 5,448                        | 1,759                   |
| Scotland                | 1,374                         | 10,905                       | 2,291                   |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>8,379</b>                  | <b>66,006</b>                | <b>16,595</b>           |

\* Figures in this column represent the number of submissions to Job Interview Guarantee Initiatives.

\*\* The figures supplied for the number of agreements made with employers to operate the JIG initiative are only available from

1 April to 6 September 1991. From 4 October we no longer ask regions to supply this information as we do not require it to monitor the success of the programme.

## Annex B

The latest information on the Job Interview Guarantee Work Trials is as follows:

| Region                  | Number of unemployed people who have participated | Number placed into jobs |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Northern                | 57  | 24                      |
| Yorkshire & Humberside  | 15  | 5                       |
| East Midlands & Eastern | 21  | 7                       |
| London & South East     | 42  | 26                      |
| South West              | 32  | 11                      |
| Wales                   | 15  | 11                      |
| West Midlands           | 21  | 6                       |
| North West              | 22  | 13                      |
| Scotland                | 114   | 64                      |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>339</b>  | <b>167</b>              |

## Job Clubs

**Ms Clare Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment for each region and for Great Britain as a whole since April 1991 how many people have joined job clubs; how many have left; how many leavers got jobs; how many entered another positive outcome; and if he will give that information broken down by the ethnic origin and male/female characteristics of participants.

**Letter from Mr M E G Fogden,** Chief Executive, 25 October 1991: Table "A" attached shows for each region and nationally the numbers who have joined Jobclubs since Monday 1 April 1991 up until 27 September 1991 together with information during that

same period about members leaving. Leavers who are shown as going into other positive outcomes have gone on to either training, full time education or self-employment.

Information on the ethnic background and male/female characteristics of Jobclub leavers is collected on a quarterly sample survey basis. Tables "B" attached show the estimated performance between 1st April 1991 and 27 September 1991 for male and female Jobclub leavers and by ethnic origin separated on a regional basis and Great Britain as a whole. The basis of this information has been arrived at by using the results of the past two surveys carried out during the period.

**Table A**  
Jobclub entrants and leavers information, 1 April 1991 to 27 September 1991

| Region                 | Jobclub entrants | Jobclub leavers | Leavers into jobs | Leavers into jobs % | Leavers into other positive outcomes | Leavers into positive outcomes % |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Northern               | 6,049            | 6,093           | 2,430             | 40%                 | 661                                  | 51%                              |
| Yorkshire & Humberside | 7,561            | 7,374           | 3,174             | 43%                 | 1,058                                | 57%                              |
| East Midlands          | 7,272            | 6,851           | 3,535             | 52%                 | 1,176                                | 69%                              |
| London & South East    | 22,609           | 20,439          | 8,113             | 40%                 | 3,037                                | 55%                              |
| South West             | 5,793            | 5,356           | 2,817             | 53%                 | 759                                  | 67%                              |
| Wales                  | 5,070            | 4,978           | 2,473             | 50%                 | 561                                  | 61%                              |
| West Midlands          | 8,448            | 7,892           | 3,670             | 47%                 | 1,225                                | 62%                              |
| North West             | 13,816           | 13,862          | 6,394             | 46%                 | 1,533                                | 57%                              |
| Scotland               | 9,614            | 9,812           | 4,648             | 47%                 | 1,318                                | 61%                              |
| <b>Nationally</b>      | <b>86,232</b>    | <b>82,657</b>   | <b>37,254</b>     | <b>45%</b>          | <b>11,328</b>                        | <b>59%</b>                       |

**Table B**  
Jobclub leavers information by ethnic group and male/female characteristics, 1 April 1991 to 27 September 1991

| <i>National</i>       |                   |                                      |               |              |                   |                                      |               |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
|                       | Leavers into jobs | Leavers into other positive outcomes | Total leavers |              | Leavers into jobs | Leavers into other positive outcomes | Total leavers |
| White                 | 32,410            | 8,798                                | 71,029        | Male         | 27,633            | 9,004                                | 65,020        |
| Black/Afro Caribbean  | 1,962             | 718                                  | 3,972         | Female       | 9,621             | 2,323                                | 17,637        |
| Indian/Pakistani      |                   |                                      |               | <b>Total</b> | <b>37,254</b>     | <b>11,327</b>                        | <b>82,657</b> |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken | 2,275             | 1,485                                | 6,063         |              |                   |                                      |               |
| None of the above     | 358               | 275                                  | 1,186         |              |                   |                                      |               |
| Preferred not to say  | 249               | 51                                   | 407           |              |                   |                                      |               |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>37,254</b>     | <b>11,327</b>                        | <b>82,657</b> |              |                   |                                      |               |

|                                    | <i>Leavers into jobs</i> | <i>Leavers into other positive outcomes</i> | <i>Total leavers</i> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|
| <b>Northern</b>                    |                          |   |                      |
| White                              | 2,382                    | 641   | 5,910                |
| Black/Afro Caribbean               | 12                       | 10  | 46                   |
| Indian/Pakistani                   |                          |   |                      |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken              | 24                       | 10  | 91                   |
| None of the above                  | 12                       | 0   | 46                   |
| Preferred not to say               | 0                        | 0   | 0                    |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>2,480</b>             | <b>661</b>                                  | <b>6,093</b>         |
| Male                               | 1,871                    | 549   | 5,057                |
| Female                             | 559                      | 112   | 1,036                |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>2,430</b>             | <b>661</b>                                  | <b>6,093</b>         |
| <b>Yorkshire &amp; Humberside</b>  |                          |   |                      |
| White                              | 2,888                    | 868   | 6,563                |
| Black/Afro Caribbean               | 48                       | 21  | 147                  |
| Indian/Pakistani                   |                          |   |                      |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken              | 159                      | 169   | 590                  |
| None of the above                  | 47                       | 0   | 74                   |
| Preferred not to say               | 32                       | 0   | 0                    |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>3,174</b>             | <b>1,058</b>                                | <b>7,374</b>         |
| Male                               | 2,349                    | 846   | 5,899                |
| Female                             | 825                      | 212   | 1,475                |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>3,174</b>             | <b>1,058</b>                                | <b>7,374</b>         |
| <b>East Midlands &amp; Eastern</b> |                          |   |                      |
| White                              | 3,288                    | 1,010                                       | 6,234                |
| Black/Afro Caribbean               | 53                       | 24  | 69                   |
| Indian/Pakistani                   |                          |   |                      |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken              | 177                      | 118   | 480                  |
| None of the above                  | 17                       | 24  | 68                   |
| Preferred not to say               | 0                        | 0   | 0                    |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>3,535</b>             | <b>1,176</b>                                | <b>6,851</b>         |
| Male                               | 2,616                    | 870   | 5,344                |
| Female                             | 919                      | 306   | 1,507                |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>3,535</b>             | <b>1,176</b>                                | <b>6,851</b>         |
| <b>London &amp; South East</b>     |                          |   |                      |
| White                              | 5,404                    | 1,678                                       | 13,735               |
| Black/Afro Caribbean               | 1,411                    | 503   | 2,780                |
| Indian/Pakistani                   |                          |   |                      |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken              | 1,055                    | 623   | 2,984                |
| None of the above                  | 162                      | 219   | 736                  |
| Preferred not to say               | 81                       | 14  | 204                  |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>8,113</b>             | <b>3,037</b>                                | <b>20,439</b>        |
| Male                               | 5,679                    | 2,308                                       | 15,125               |
| Female                             | 2,434                    | 729   | 5,314                |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>8,113</b>             | <b>3,037</b>                                | <b>20,439</b>        |
| <b>South West</b>                  |                          |   |                      |
| White                              | 2,676                    | 638   | 5,034                |
| Black/Afro Caribbean               | 85                       | 8   | 107                  |
| Indian/Pakistani                   |                          |   |                      |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken              | 28                       | 105   | 161                  |
| None of the above                  | 28                       | 8   | 54                   |
| Preferred not to say               | 0                        | 0   | 0                    |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>2,817</b>             | <b>759</b>                                  | <b>5,356</b>         |
| Male                               | 2,254                    | 592   | 4,606                |
| Female                             | 563                      | 167   | 750                  |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>2,817</b>             | <b>759</b>                                  | <b>5,356</b>         |

|                       | <i>Leavers into jobs</i> | <i>Leavers into other positive outcomes</i> | <i>Total leavers</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------|
| <b>Wales</b>          |                          |   |                      |
| White                 | 2,349                    | 527   | 4,729                |
| Black/Afro Caribbean  | 49                       | 23  | 100                  |
| Indian/Pakistani      |                          |   |                      |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken | 26                       | 11  | 100                  |
| None of the above     | 49                       | 0   | 49                   |
| Preferred not to say  | 0                        | 0   | 0                    |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>2,473</b>             | <b>561</b>                                  | <b>4,978</b>         |
| Male                  | 1,929                    | 494   | 4,032                |
| Female                | 544                      | 67  | 946                  |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>2,473</b>             | <b>561</b>                                  | <b>4,978</b>         |
| <b>West Midlands</b>  |                          |   |                      |
| White                 | 3,009                    | 764   | 6,282                |
| Black/Afro Caribbean  | 184                      | 105   | 513                  |
| Indian/Pakistani      |                          |   |                      |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken | 440                      | 316   | 971                  |
| None of the above     | 11                       | 13  | 70                   |
| Preferred not to say  | 26                       | 26  | 56                   |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>3,670</b>             | <b>1,224</b>                                | <b>7,892</b>         |
| Male                  | 2,642                    | 955   | 5,919                |
| Female                | 1,028                    | 269   | 1,973                |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>3,670</b>             | <b>1,224</b>                                | <b>7,892</b>         |
| <b>North West</b>     |                          |   |                      |
| White                 | 5,882                    | 1,380                                       | 12,926               |
| Black/Afro Caribbean  | 96                       | 24  | 182                  |
| Indian/Pakistani      |                          |   |                      |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken | 320                      | 107   | 588                  |
| None of the above     | 32                       | 11  | 61                   |
| Preferred not to say  | 64                       | 11  | 105                  |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>6,394</b>             | <b>1,533</b>                                | <b>13,862</b>        |
| Male                  | 4,668                    | 1,257                                       | 11,090               |
| Female                | 1,726                    | 276   | 2,772                |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>6,394</b>             | <b>1,533</b>                                | <b>13,862</b>        |
| <b>Scotland</b>       |                          |   |                      |
| White                 | 4,532                    | 1,292                                       | 9,616                |
| Black/Afro Caribbean  | 24                       | 0   | 28                   |
| Indian/Pakistani      |                          |   |                      |
| Bangladesh/Sri Lanken | 46                       | 26  | 98                   |
| None of the above     | 0                        | 0   | 28                   |
| Preferred not to say  | 46                       | 0   | 42                   |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>4,648</b>             | <b>1,318</b>                                | <b>9,812</b>         |
| Male                  | 3,625                    | 1,133                                       | 7,948                |
| Female                | 1,023                    | 185   | 1,864                |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>4,648</b>             | <b>1,318</b>                                | <b>9,812</b>         |