

## BITS N' PIECES

### MI5 JOIN THE FRAY?

The DSS have admitted that for several years MI5 have been part of the war against benefit fraud!! So the next time you have queued up for several hours at the BA, have a close look at the benefits clerk. Is the pen they are using, just a pen? Could one push of a button see your seat propelled into the air? What other deadly gadgets do they have at their disposal? - **Makes you think?**

### JSA and THE NEW DEAL

Just thought we would clear up some confusion. New Deal and Welfare to Work are not replacing JSA. They are additional to JSA.

### BETTER LATE THEN NEVER

Earlier this year, Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre (MUWC) campaigned very vigorously on the issue of backdating sickness claims. From April 1997, claims could only be backdated three months. We argued that unlike other benefits, Industrial Injuries and Disablement Benefit was compensatory.

Our campaign was unsuccessful, and was criticised in one local paper by the BA and the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM).

We now see that the UDM think it is 'disgraceful'.

Their excuse is, they were only notified last week. (!!!)

We can't help thinking that they missed the point of what was really happening a little late in the day. We hope it does not become a habit. Come to think of it, it has.

## UNITE TO SCRAP THE JSA

The Unemployment Unit have approached a number of organisations who have been prominent in the campaign against the JSA to establish a coalition which will feed into the new governments consultation process on welfare-to-work.

Members of the coalition include the Local Government Forum against Poverty, the TUC, Child Poverty Action Group, UNISON, National CAB, and the National Unemployed Centres Combine (NUCC).

The National Unemployed Centres Combine is an organisation bringing together TUC Unemployed Workers Centres on a national campaigning basis.

The new coalition is firmly committed to the scrapping of the JSA, and is already creating a framework of ideas for the immediate reform of the JSA, that will ultimately see it scrapped altogether.

## MAN FROM THE PRU

Peter Davies, Chief Executive and star of the Prudential's current TV campaign is to be appointed head of the government's 'Welfare to Work' taskforce.

This should be a totally new experience for the 'man from the Pru' who at his previous firm was responsible for laying off 900 staff.

The phrase "poacher turned gamekeeper" springs to mind, along with several others which are unrepeatable.



You've heard of the New Deal?

Well, here's your cards

# Not the New NOTTINGHAMSHIRE JOBS NOT JSA

ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 1997

## CAUGHT AGAIN!!

The Employment Service (ES) has been caught cheating again. Prior to the May General Election they were caught fiddling their job placement figures in order to meet ministers targets.

People attending Police Identity line-ups, musicians with the occasional evening gig, and even ES staff taking an evening job themselves, were all added into the job placement figures.

The Employment Service is an executive agency delivering services under an Annual Performance Agreement (APA). Job placements are part of those figures.

Another target figure is that 29.5% of all unemployed placements to be long term unemployed (over 6 months).

Falling short of this target, ES staff were instructed to hold back vacancies for 48 hours, for the long term unemployed, before making them available to all other jobseekers.

Eighteen months ago we were asked to research the effectiveness of different methods in securing jobs among the unemployed by the Mansfield Social Strategy Group. After securing figures from ES, TEC's, etc, we came to the conclusion that if their figures were accurate, the every person in Mansfield must have at least two jobs. We haven't.

So we know that the claimant figures are wildly inaccurate, and now we know that the actual placement figures are also inaccurate - (alright, fiddled). Is it any wonder that the politicians are unable to solve unemployment when the real position is kept hidden from them.

## EDITORIAL

We are back!! Bigger than ever. With New Labour initiating up to 15 reviews of the system, with New Deal just around the corner, we thought we had better publish another issue. We start looking at New Deal, more in future issues. We will also look at the Benefit Integrity programme, JSA, campaigns et al in our next issue.

Finally, we are only able to publish Notts Jobs not JSA because of the financial support received from individual Trade Unionists. If you can afford a donation, send it to MUWC, 2 Beech Avenue, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 1EY, payable to NOTTS OFFA. If you would like more info on OFFA contact us at MUWC.

JON

## SUCCESSFUL JOBSEEKERS

Many of you, I know, were concerned about the fate of former Tory ministers after May 1st. As the incompetence of the previous government had contributed to its crushing and splits over Europe defeat, would the adjudication officers decide that they had wilfully lost their previous employment and thus sanction them on JSA. Well, stop worrying, (I wasn't), most of them have done remarkably well, as the following list testifies.

Kenneth '3 jobs' Clarke, MP - Chair of Unichem, £120,000pa - Direct Foreign & Colonial Investment Trust £20,000pa.

Sir Michael Forsyth, ex MP - Life Peerage, Director of Murray Ventures, £7000pa.

Malcolm Rifkind, ex MP - Director BHP Petroleum, salary not known.

George Kynoch, ex MP - Director Silvertech International.

Angela Knight, ex MP - Chief Executive, APIMS, six figure salary.

Baroness Cumberledge, ex MP - Executive Director-MJM Healthcare Solutions, six figure salary.

If they are as successful in their new directorships, as they were in running the country, then we would suggest our readers scan the job pages for the expected increase in insolvency practitioners.

## JOBS NOT JSA

### supporters

### include:-

MUWC CPSA NUCPS  
Notts CATUC Trades  
Councils in Notts MSF  
Advice Group

If you wish to include any articles or campaigning activities around JSA in the region, please send them to :-





## NEW DEAL OR OLD SCHEMES?

The election of a Labour government with a huge majority after 18 years of Tory misrule has released the pent-up hopes of millions for a decent future for themselves and their families. New Labour cautioned that not everything can be changed overnight, but did promise early radical action in a few areas including unemployment. In a massively popular move, they instituted a windfall levy on the excessive profits of the privatised utilities, and announced that the bulk of the £5 Billion raised would be devoted to helping 250,000 young people to move from Welfare to Work. With commendable speed the government included the levy in its first Budget. It has since embarked on a regionally based consultation exercise.

## SO WHAT IS ACTUALLY ON OFFER?

It must be said that the information we have is in a process of change, and the final picture may be different. But as things stand, young people between 18 and 24, who have been registered unemployed for more than six months will be interviewed and assessed for a range of options. These are:

1. The Employment option
2. Full time Education or Training
3. A job with the voluntary sector
4. The Environmental Task Force

### 1. The Employer option

Private sector employers (and in a recent change, Local Authorities) will be given £60 per week per placement, plus £750 to offset the cost of providing the equivalent of one day per week vocational training. The 'worker' is guaranteed a minimum 'wage' of £60 per week.

### 2. Education option

Designed primarily for people in need of basic education, usually in literacy and numeracy, allows up to twelve months in full time training or education. Participants retain eligibility for Benefits.

### 3. Voluntary sector option

Effectively work experience for a six month period, including one day per week in structured education or training. It is thought the government intends to achieve its target of 50,000 child carers through this option. It is anticipated that the voluntary organisation could receive up to £3200 per placement, with the trainee receiving Benefits plus a £400 payment (equivalent to £15 per week).

### 4. Environmental Task Force

It appears to be aimed at improving employability through community benefit projects, which could also help to meet targets for energy conservation. Delivery will be through private and voluntary sector organisations. Participants will receive Benefits plus a payment of £400 (equivalent to £15 per week).

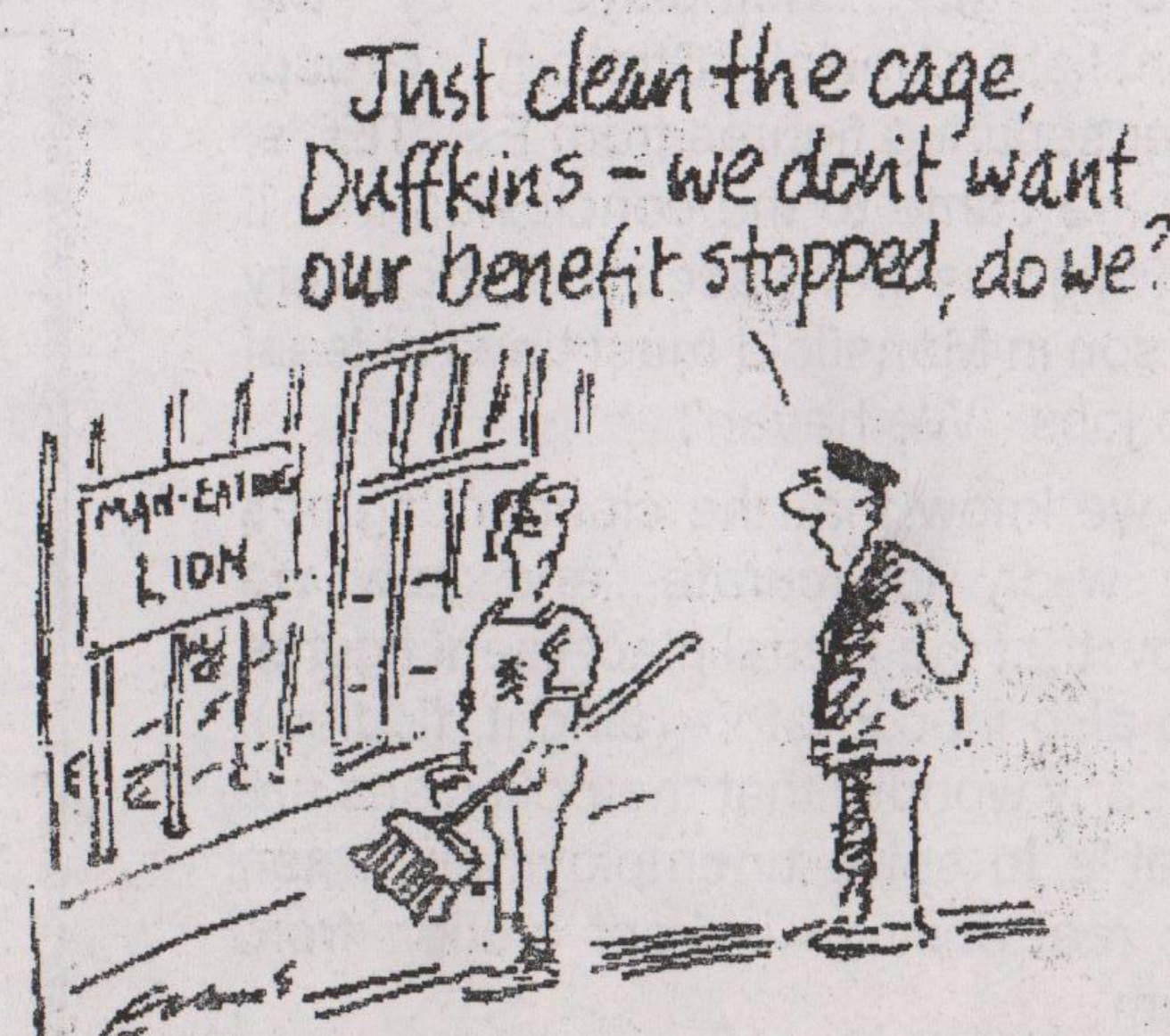
### 5. No fifth option

Refusal to take up a Welfare to Work option offer will result in loss of Benefits for two weeks in the first instance and four weeks in each further instance.

## How do we judge the proposals?

The only broadly agreed criteria are those adopted by the TUC after several years of experience of involvement in training schemes of declining quality. The five criteria are:-

1. Participation to be voluntary
2. Rate for the job to be paid
3. Proper Employment Rights
4. Quality training leading to recognised qualifications
5. Full Trade Union recognition



**New Deal** is clearly not voluntary. Young people will not necessarily have a choice of which option to take. Any refusal will leave them penniless and vulnerable. The resulting concept of involuntary voluntary work is to say the least a strange one. Surely, neither employers nor voluntary groups want to have their work carried out by people who have been effectively conscripted against their will?

An apparent minimum 'wage' of £60 for the employer option, is by a strange coincidence the same figure as the handout to employers, and certainly does not represent the rate for the job for any job we are aware of. Benefits plus £15 for people on other options effectively doing full time work represents an even worse position.

The recent decision to not improve legal rights at work for employees leaves open the possibility for ruthless employers to 'lose' existing staff and take on even cheaper labour under 'New Deal'.

There is insufficient hard information about the quality aspect of the proposed vocational training, but there must be concern about those on six month schemes being expected to complete NVQ Level 2 courses which currently take about twelve months. We have seen no evidence of full Trade Union recognition as part of the package.

## So, what do we do?

We want all young people to have the chance of a decent job at an appropriate rate. We welcomed the government's decision to raise the resources necessary to help move 250,000 young people from Welfare to Work, but we have not fought the Tories' imposition of poor quality training schemes with no jobs at the end in order to abandon another generation of young people to a similar fate simply because there has been a change of government. We will continue to work for the implementation of the TUC criteria, calling for:-

### All options to be voluntary

This involves abandoning the hated sanctions imposed by the JSA scheme. After all, if these schemes are of the high quality claimed then people will be flocking to take them up. To retain the harsh sanctions proposed implies that young jobless people are workshy and responsible for their own unemployment.

### Rate for the Job to be paid

Anything less devalues the work done, and opens the door even wider for unscrupulous employers to create 'New Deal' vacancies by disposing of existing workers employed for less than two years. Paying the rate for the job begins the long process of rebuilding the concept of the dignity of labour.

### Proper Employment Rights

It is vital for both existing workers and 'New Deal' conscripts that they are protected by full employment rights from Day One.

### Quality Training

Qualifications linked to genuine job opportunities should have priority, and an appropriate time for each individual to achieve them must be allowed.

### Full Trade Union Rights

These are essential to enable 'New Deal' participants to enjoy equal status, and to symbolise the unity of interest of employed and unemployed.

## ACTION POINTS

..... for the government .....

- restore the element of real choice
- remove the use of JSA sanctions
- require employers to pay the rate for the job
- legislate for Employment Rights from Day One

..... for the TUC .....

- campaign for the Five Point criteria
- set up the demands for Employment Rights from Day One
- launch recruitment drive amongst New Deal participants
- demand the rate for the job

..... for you .....

- raise your concerns in your own Trade Union
- encourage your MP to make a stand
- voice your views at the Midlands Region TUC event on October 10th
- if employed - make sure your colleagues are fully aware of what is happening
- if unemployed - contact any of the organisations supporting the Jobs Not JSA campaign for information and the chance to action yourself