



yesMinister's end of week review.

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The Week that was

It's been an unusually long week. The weather has been temperamental and totally unpredictable. The Coalition Government have had an equally torrential time with budget 2012 still making the news headlines and the Leveson enquiry poised on the brink of a huge political upheaval.

Matters were made worse when it was announced that we are officially in a double dip – I'm not talking about double dip ice cream – recession. On top of all that Danny Alexander announced plans to set up new spending rules for Whitehall departments. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury told departments that they must abide by a new two-point plan or face penalties each department will also have to pass information to the Treasury on a monthly basis.

Shockingly HSBC is making 2,000 staff redundant despite making £13.8bn profit in 2011... are they serious? On top of that a British Gas call centre in Southampton is set to close with 550 job losses, Aquascutum went into liquidation and cut 115 jobs; US Firm, Computer Sciences Corporation is poised to cut 640 jobs and 60 per cent of black students cannot find full-time employment. What a week!! This is further compounded by the £4,145 in interest students who borrow £9,000 each for three years of study will pay. And there's more gloomy news and more and more.... But the last one that I need to share with you is that the Government has admitted that working families will pay higher tax rates than millionaires because of the reductions in child benefit.

There is some good news; the droughts over – or at least it bloody well should be!!!!

Have a great weekend and thanks for reading

Floyd

Opposition Position

This week saw Labour Party lurch to the left, defending the public sector employee. On Thursday this week Ed Miliband avidly argued against the Government's proposals to introduce regional pay scales for public sector workers. Mr Miliband argued that regional pay would only

further entrench the North South divide and have a detrimental effect on the quality of life on public sector workers outside the south east of England.

Stephen Twigg Shadow Education further came to the defence of teachers in response to figures that the number of teachers in English state schools fell by 10,000, Mr Twigg criticised the Education secretary stating:

“Michael Gove has lambasted teachers as the ‘enemies of promise’ and ‘whingers’. If you insult teachers no wonder they quit.”

Head line of the week

The Daily Telegraph, 27/04/2012 - Page 13

“In need of a job but not if it means going out in the rain”-

A businessman has criticised Britain’s “workshy benefits culture” after seven new recruits failed to turn up on their first day because they did not want to go out in the rain.



This week in Parliament

Monday

Oral questions to the Secretary of State for Work and Pension

Steve Webb has confirmed that the Government will present further details about the single-tier state pension in a White Paper later this Spring. He also announced that the final decision on the detailed implementation of the new policy will be made in the next spending review.

On the issue of the pension’s cliff-edge before and after 2016, Mr Webb assured that people who were contracted out, and would therefore receive state pensions of less than the full amount, that the administration will continue to take account of past contracting out of SERPS after 2016 in order to prevent any cliff-edge.

Mr Webb also confirmed the single state pension will stop contracting out and that people in contracted-out schemes will be contracted back in.

Finally Mr Webb has insisted that the single-tier state pension will encourage people to save for their own pensions. He stated that ***“the level of the single-tier pension will be clear of basic means-testing, and will therefore reward those who have saved rather than penalising them”***.

For more information on this committee please contact [Adam](#)

Thursday

Business Innovation and Skills Select Committee

On Thursday the 26th April, BIS held its sixth evidence session on apprenticeships with David Way, Interim Chief Executive of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and Geoff Russell, Chief Executive of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

Both David Way and Geoff Russell recognised failures in the apprenticeship scheme, but the discussion mainly focused on the witnesses defending the current apprenticeship programme and denying or mitigating the panel’s criticisms.

According to David Way the main achievement of the NAS is the growth of the apprenticeship scheme. However, he expressed concerns on the quality of the apprenticeship programmes and admitted that this issue was an urgent matter to improve confidence.

David Way did not advocated apprenticeships as a solution to all unemployment problems but he believes that an ***“apprenticeship is an***

effective bridge between schools, colleges and the world of work’ to give people a foundation to later succeed in the workplace.

David Way has also revealed that a survey conducted by the NAS has shown that 10% of apprentices weren’t satisfied by the experience they got during their course. It seems that those who were less satisfied are those who had a short-term apprenticeships and felt their employers were forcing them to join an apprenticeship programme.

Finally, David Way has announced the NAS’s plans for the future of the apprenticeship programme. It is expected that the organisation will increase the quality of the apprenticeships with a new way of working (using the ATAs for example) and with the NAS focusing on the 16-24 years old and on new sectors. The NAS will also improve its work on the brand image to convince parents and children that apprenticeships are as good as degree course.

If you would like more information on this Committee please contact [Adam](#)

Early Day Motions launched this week

Name	Date	Primary Sponsor	Number of Signatures as of 27th April 2012	Link
LOCAL UNIVERSAL CREDIT DELIVERY	23.04.2012	David Anderson	16	Here
PENSIONS SAVINGS	25.04.2012	Gregory Campbell	6	Here
UK MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT	26.04.2012	Barry Sheerman	1	Here

Department Announcements this week

Department	Date	Description	Link
BIS	24.04.2012	Loughborough agency director told to clean up her act	Here
BIS	24.04.2012	Student finance independent assessors reappointed	Here
DWP	24.04.12	Latest ESA assessment figures show majority fit to work	Here
BIS	25.04.12	Government support for business access to alternative finance	Here
BIS	25.04.12	Help in hiring your first employee	Here
BIS	25.04.2012	Online tool simplifies hiring demands for first-time employers	Here
BIS	25.04.2012	Trade union membership 2011	Here
BIS	25.04.2012	Common myths when employing someone for the first time	Here
BIS	26.04.12	£70 billion of potential government business published	Here
BIS	26.04.2012	Local growth on agenda for annual LEP conference	Here
DfE	26.04.12	The independent evaluation of the pilot of the linked pair of GCSEs in mathematics (MLP): Second Interim Report - Brief	Here



Consultations

Department	Date	Title	Link
DfE	25.04.2012	Consultation on Revision of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010	Here

Publications

Monday

No skills, training or employment publications were released on Monday

Tuesday

No skills, training or employment publications were released on Tuesday

Wednesday

Organisation	Title of Publication	Area	Link to document
Department of Business Innovation and Skills	Trade Union Membership	UK – Labour Market	Here
Department for Education	School Workforce in England	England Education	Here
Pensions Policy Institute	Retirement income and assets: the implications for retirement income of Government policies to extend working lives	UK – Pensions	Here
Resolution Foundation	Life on a low income	UK – employment, economy	Here
Resolution Foundation	Minimum Wage: Maximum Impact	UK – employment, economy	Here

Thursday

Organisation	Title of Publication	Area	Link to document
MoJ	Reoffending statistics and data	UK – Crime and Justice	Here
ONS	Economic Review April	UK – Economy	Here

Friday

Organisation	Title of Publication	Area	Link to document
SCORE	Mathematics within A-Level science 2010 examinations	UK – Education	Here
Nuffield Foundation	Mathematics in A-Level assessments	UK – Education	Here

Legislation tracker

Bill	Stage	Date	Link to Bill
Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill 2010-12	Ping Pong	25.04.2012	Here

If you have any queries please contact [Adam](#)