



The Week that was

When is a cut not a cut?

It's been an interesting week for mathematicians – in fact it's been an interesting week for anyone who can count to 10. When is a cut not a cut? A cut is a cut when a government department is told to reduce spending and proceeds to make 30,000 staff redundant. A cut however goes into reverse and becomes an expenditure when the 'said' department which has cut 30,000 jobs proceeds to re-appoint those same people as consultants and increases its departmental spend on consultants from £6 million in 2007 to £270 million last year. With '*mental*' – and I use the word advisedly - arithmetic like this, it's hardly surprising that there is so much inefficiency in our public services and it is shocking that even with a policy characterised by some as being '*slash and burn*' we still can't get the fundamental maths right.

It has been another interesting week with claim and counter claim about what is or what isn't happening to the British economy, to the Euro and within the employment and skills sector. Iain Duncan Smith has come out fighting and has challenged former Labour Ministers to open up their sealed papers and reveal whether or not they knew about fraud allegations and wrong doing by welfare to work organisations. DWP has insisted that recent allegations relate to incidents which took place under the previous government. Yippee, the Government has announced a U turn and has headed off a policy which discriminated against disabled young people. The Youth Contract which did not extend to **Work Choice**, now has capacity for more than 1,000 young disabled people.

The weather is great.... don't waste it, have a great weekend

Floyd

Opposition Position

In what was a difficult week for the Government the opposition benches had plenty of opportunity to oppose the Government's agenda. On Wednesday this week official figures revealed that the number of NEETs in the UK had increased on the first quarter by 29,000 compared with the same quarter last year. Shadow Education Minister Karen Buck stated: "***By scrapping EMA and the Future Jobs Fund, and getting rid of face-to-face careers guidance, the Government is taking away support for young people to stay in education and find work at a time when they most need it***".

Commenting on allegations made by former chief auditor at A4e this week, Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary Liam Byrne placed the blame squarely on Iain Duncan Smith. Mr Byrne stated "***A4e is one the Department of Work and Pension's biggest contractors. Iain Duncan Smith signs the cheques. He's got responsibility to know what he's paying for....it has been clear that he has been asleep at the wheel***".

Head line of the week

"Five year-olds need debating lessons"

The Daily Telegraph (24.05.12), Pg.14

Shadow Education Secretary Stephen Twigg has argued that children as young as 5 should be given debating lessons in order to help improve communication abilities of children.