EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO THE

EMPLOYMENT ZONES (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2005

2005 No.1744

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Work and Pensions and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

2. Description

2.1 The Regulations amend the Employment Zones Regulations 2003 (S.I. 2003/2438 as amended by S.I. 2004/1043) ('the 2003 Regulations') which support the scheme for jobseekers allowance claimants whereby claimants who meet certain qualifying conditions are required to participate in an employment zone programme. The scheme operates in seven areas listed in a separate designation authorised by the Minister for Work. Employment Zone programmes are designed to assist jobseekers obtain sustainable employment.

3. Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments

3.1 None.

4. Legislative Background

4.1 The current employment zones programme has operated since October 2003 under the 2003 Regulations. These Regulations make minor amendments to the 2003 Regulations.

5. Extent

5.1 This instrument applies to Great Britain.

6 European Convention on Human Rights

6.1 N/A

7 Policy Background

7.1 Employment Zones were established in 15 areas of Great Britain in April 2000. Employment Zones were located in areas with persistently high levels of long-term unemployment and were established as an alternative method of delivering personalised support to the unemployed. Despite the ongoing fall in the national levels of unemployment, there remain areas where the long-term unemployed find it difficult to make the move into work. Within Employment Zones private and public/private sector advisers work with participants, providing innovative and flexible solutions to assist them to find sustainable employment.

7.2 In 2002, the Chancellor announced in his Pre-Budget Report that the Government would test the effect of introducing several contractors in the six largest Employment Zones from April 2004. In these Zones jobseekers would be allocated to one of several contractors providing an employment zone programme so that the effectiveness of the provision could be evaluated. The Employment Zones (Allocation to Contractors) Pilot Regulations 2005 (S.I. 2005/1125) sets out the provisions applying in these Zones. In the remaining seven zones the programme continues to be operated by a single contractor under provisions set out in the 2003 Regulations. These seven zones are located in Brighton and Hove, Doncaster and Bassetlaw, Heads of the Valleys Caerphilly and Torfaen, North West Wales, Nottingham, Plymouth, Middlesbrough Redcar and Cleveland

7.3 These Regulations amend the 2003 Regulations. The amendments are necessary to include reference to the Employment Zone (Allocation to Contractors) Pilot Regulation 2005 in the 2003 Regulations and to facilitate the operation of the employment zones by excluding public holidays from the calculation of the 28 day maximum period for the first stage of the employment programme; providing that Jobseeker's Allowance claimants aged under 25 who have participated in either an employment zone programme or New Deal for Young People can be directed to participate in the employment zone programme again and by removing the requirement for a claimant to notify the Secretary of State of a change of address.

8 Impact

8.1 A Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument as it has no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies.

8.2 These regulations have no impact on the public sector.

9 Contact

9.1 Richard Jackson at the Department for Work and Pensions Tel: 0114 2677 379 or e-mail: richard.jackson@dwp.gsi.gov.uk can answer any queries regarding the instrument.