

**CLAS CIRCULAR**  
**2008/18 (21 November 2008)**

# AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

## Rural housing

Housing Minister Iain Wright has launched two consultations on affordable housing in rural areas. Under the first, [Shared Ownership and Leasehold Enfranchisement and Designation of 'Protected' Areas](#), rural communities with severe housing shortages could be designated as 'protected areas' to ensure that affordable housing is retained for local families. The new proposals would also enable all affordable housing providers in these protected areas to retain a share in new shared-ownership homes, or have the first option to buy back such properties, ensuring they remain available for future families in the local community.

The second, [Community Land Trust: Making It Happen](#), proposes expanding Community Land Trusts (CLTs) to enable first-time buyers in rural areas to acquire homes by paying for the building, not the land on which it stands.

Coincidentally, the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee has recently published a report, [The Potential of England's Rural Economy](#), suggesting that though rural areas already "punch above their weight" in economic terms, their contribution could be boosted further if more was done to tailor Government help to the diversity of their specific needs.

[Source: *DCLG Press Release* – 8 October 2008: *House of Commons Press Release* – 29 October 2008]

# EMPLOYMENT

## **Employment status: employed or self-employed?**

A worker's employment status, that is whether they are employed or self-employed, is not a matter of choice. Whether someone is employed or self-employed depends upon the terms and conditions of the relevant engagement. The tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs) rules do, however, contain some special rules that apply to certain categories of worker in certain circumstances.

A worker's employment status will determine the charge to tax on income from that employment or self-employment and the class of NICs which are to be paid. It is therefore crucial that both the employer and the worker know the precise status under which the worker has been engaged; and HMRC has produced [updated guidance](#) to the issue of employment vs self-employment.

[Source: *HMRC What's New* – 23 October 2008]

## **Volunteering and benefits**

Following a government commitment in response to the Commission on the Future of Volunteering's report, *Manifesto for Change*, earlier this year, Jobcentre Plus, part of the Department for Work and Pensions, has published its renewed [guidance on volunteering while on benefits](#). It responds to concerns voiced by the third sector that benefit claimants are not always aware of their right to volunteer and can be put off if they think that volunteering will affect eligibility. The guide is now available on the Jobcentre Plus website.

[Source: *Cabinet Office News* – 1 October 2008]