

# Touchbase

## October 2011

### Welcome to your monthly e-zine!

Welcome to the October edition of Touchbase e-zine. In this edition we take a look at the DWP Transformation Programme, set up to implement the review of our corporate centre organisation. Two significant changes took place the beginning of October, one of which is a new organisational structure, where the Department will be led by a single, smaller Executive Team, reporting to our Permanent Secretary, Robert Devereux – see page 2 for further details.

We feature a number of case studies of personal experience of the Work Programme, the biggest single payment-by-results employment programme ever introduced – see page 3.

On page 4 we take a look at the changes to Social Fund products happening in October.

A cross-agency working group has been set up to help inform partner organisations regarding reforms to Disability Living Allowance and the move towards Personal Independence Payment - see page 6 for further information and contact details.

As usual, we have a round up of other news in brief on page 8.

You can register for an e-alert when each edition of Touchbase is published on the [DWP Adviser and intermediaries](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/dwp-adviser-and-intermediaries) website. If you would like to receive an e-alert, please send your details, including name, organisation and email address to [corporate.stakeholders@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.stakeholders@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

We hope you find this e-zine useful, and we value your feedback and suggestions for improvements. Email me at the address below if you have any suggestions for articles in future editions.



Paula Young, Editor



To provide feedback on the e-zine email [paula.young@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:paula.young@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

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Earlier this year, DWP set up a Transformation Programme to implement a full review of its headquarters functions, with the objective of creating a single, integrated Departmental organisation structure that:

- drives reform and helps front line colleagues deliver services better
- has fewer management layers, with clarity about roles and the value they add
- has a smaller senior structure, with clear personal responsibilities
- reduces the size of the corporate centre and achieves efficiency savings, as outlined in the Spending Review 2010
- The first stage of the new organisational structure has been implemented. The Department will be led by a single, smaller Executive Team, led by our Permanent Secretary, Robert Devereux.

Jobcentre Plus and PDCS operations will be managed by the new DWP Chief Executive Operating Officer, Terry Moran, who will also be responsible for externally delivered employment programmes and medical services, and is the Senior Responsible Owner for the Universal Credit Programme.

As part of our transformation, two significant changes took place on 3 October:

- Our two main delivery agencies, Jobcentre Plus and Pension and Disability and Carers Service (PDCS), ceased to have Executive Agency status. Their services continue to be delivered through the same channels and by the same staff, as before, using existing Jobcentre Plus and PDCS brands, but under a single DWP senior management structure. This change will enable us to work more efficiently and flexibly, sharing best working practices and make some savings in senior management costs. There will be no disruption or change to the services we deliver.
- The Department's new Executive Team will include:
  - the single Chief Operating Officer
  - a single Strategy Director General with responsibility for all our policy and strategic functions, covering Work, Welfare & Well-being, and Pensions
  - Director Generals responsible for four specific corporate functions; Human Resources; IT; Finance; Professional Services (including Communications, Analysis, Information and Law).

A new senior level organisation is now fully in place across the Department and details will be available on the DWP website.

“These changes will not affect the way help and support are provided to the public. Services under the brands of Jobcentre Plus, Pension Service, and Disability and Carers Service, will continue to be delivered to jobseekers, benefit claimants and pensioners as before, ahead of the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013.”

We are also improving the home page of the DWP website to make it easier to find information and will supplement the organisation charts with more details about our different policy areas.

We are now finalising the structure to deliver the new organisation below Senior Civil Service level. This process will be completed by the end of the financial year, March 2012.

The status of the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission will also change. It was announced as part of the Public Bodies Bill Review in October 2010, in which the Government proposed to increase the transparency and accountability of all public bodies, that Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission would be included in the Bill. This would abolish the Commission as a non-departmental public body and transfer its function and staff into DWP. A public consultation on this proposal is planned in autumn.

These changes will not affect the way help and support are provided to the public. Services under the brands of Jobcentre Plus, Pension Service, and Disability and Carers Service, will continue to be delivered to jobseekers, benefit claimants and pensioners as before, ahead of the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013. We will continue to deliver our business as usual, but with a clear focus on improving the way we do so.



# Work Programme

## A giant employment dating service

DWP Employment Minister Chris Grayling has visited A4e, the Oxford-based provider of the Government's new Work Programme. The programme was launched in June to help the long-term unemployed claiming Jobseeker's Allowance get back to work.

Staff at A4e help get people back into work by whatever means they think best; whether that includes help with CVs, interview techniques or finding the right career path.

Mr Grayling said he was impressed with what he had heard from jobseekers and described the Work Programme as a "giant employment dating service".

He added: "If you have good links with employers locally it is much easier to match individuals to vacancies.

"A4e is one of 18 Work Programme providers and is one of the pioneers – it's the second largest in the country. A4e can earn £4,000 for getting an adult jobseeker who has been

unemployed for a year back into employment, but they only get paid fully after that person has been in work for 18 months."

Jobseekers aged over 25 are referred to the Work Programme after 12 months unemployment, while those under 25 are referred after nine months.

Paul Dingle, A4e's area leader for Thames Valley, said the firm employed 3,000 staff worldwide, 130 in the Thames Valley area and 18 in the Oxford office.

The £5bn Work Programme was launched by the Government with the aim of supporting two and a half million people over the next five years.

It is the biggest single payment-by-results employment programme ever introduced and replaces much of the previous back-to-work support with a programme built around the needs of individual jobseekers.

Furniture maker Shane Clarke got a new job four hours after visiting a "giant employment dating service" in Oxford. Father-of-two, Shane Clarke, 38, a furniture maker from Bicester, met Employment Minister, Chris Grayling recently to explain how pleased he was. He told the Minister that he had been referred to the programme after being unemployed for more than a year.

He said: "About three weeks ago I came to A4e for my first interview and then I came back yesterday for a second interview about where I would like to work. Four hours later I had a job, and I felt slightly emotional after the interview."

Mum of four Penny Cann, 35, from Charlbury, got a job as a carer in July, two weeks after her first visit to A4e.

She said: "I now work for a private firm which carries out home visits for the elderly in the Witney and Carterton areas. I had been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for a year and advisers at A4e helped me to target the right kind of employer, get my CV up to date and realise my potential."

Mohammed Khalil, 38, has worked as an adviser for A4e for the past seven months. He moved from Sheffield to Rose Hill in Oxford for the job after being unemployed for about eight months.

He said: "Sometimes you have to move to find work. I can relate well to our customers because I have been on both sides of the fence."



For further information about the Work Programme please visit the DWP website [Work Programme](#)

# Information on Post Office rural signing

## Proof of concept

Previously, some Jobcentre Plus claimants, who live in rural areas, maintained their claim by sending their declarations of unemployment and job search evidence to the Jobcentre by post. These customers are called Postal Claimants.

To provide a more active service and to demonstrate our commitment to working with other agencies, Jobcentre Plus, in conjunction with the Post Office, is conducting a Rural Signing Proof of Concept, directing postal claimants to attend their local post office to sign and hand over their declarations of unemployment, and evidence of jobsearch activity.

The trial will assess the feasibility of signing at a local Post Office branch and identify potential benefits, which could include minimised risk of fraud and error through strengthened verification of identity and secure transportation of documentation from the Post Office to Jobcentre Plus.

The trial will take place in parts of the Highland and Islands of Scotland and Essex, and start 19 September for 13 weeks. There are seven Jobcentre Plus offices involved and 26 Post Office branches.

When attending the Post Office branch, claimants will be asked for proof of identity; to sign a declaration of unemployment (ES24PJP) in the presence of a Post Office colleague; and handover their evidence of jobsearch (documentation they currently post to Jobcentre Plus).

Documentation handed to the Post Office will be retained until the end of each working day, at which time it will be sent securely and by guaranteed next day delivery, to the appropriate Jobcentre Plus office for next day processing.

Full evaluation will be carried out once the trial is completed.

# Changes to Social Fund products from October 2011

## DWP review Social Fund products every 6 months in April and October

As part of the October 2011 changes, we will take the opportunity to make some improvements to the layout of the SF300 claim form 'Community Care Grant, or Crisis Loan for items and services in the event of a disaster'.

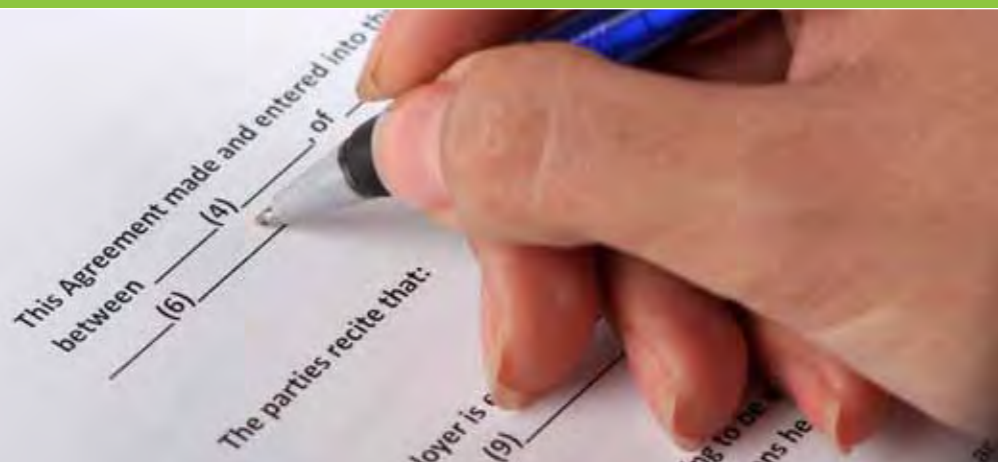
These changes are:

- the colour and font style for the title of the form has been changed
- we have inserted more information to the notes pages about other help which may be available from the Social Fund
- we have inserted a line at the top of the first notes page and page 1 of the form about applying for rent in advance, which advises the claimant to use form SF401R for this type of expense
- several parts of the form have been moved around with additional questions added to make the form flow better, for example:
  - in part 3, a question which asks the claimant if they are in care and likely to claim benefit on release from care

- in part 5, about your children, a box which asks if the child is male or female
- we have made significant changes to the section 'About your crisis', changed the title to 'About your disaster' and provided an explanation of what we consider a disaster.
- In July 2011 minor changes were made to some of the Social Fund Directions which determine eligibility to Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants. These are:
  - the period of time when it is considered that a repeat application for the same item or service has been made has been increased from 28 days to 12 months
  - the Direction which restricts crisis loans to 3 applications in a 12 month rolling period.



If you have any views on future changes to these forms please email Allen Bedford Jobcentre Plus Stakeholder Team [allen.bedford@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:allen.bedford@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk)



# Tackling error in the benefit system

We hear a lot about the efforts to reduce the amount of fraud in the benefit system, but there's also a great deal going on to cut down the levels of error...

...either where officials or computer systems have made mistakes, or where claimants didn't think changes in their circumstances needed to be reported.

DWP has had a particular focus on tackling error since 2007, but over the last 18 months Jobcentre Plus has made a significant effort to get to the bottom of why errors occur and has introduced a series of initiatives to tackle them. These include:

- improvements in the way in which we share information within the Department has allowed us to identify more errors in individual claims and put them right. In 2010/11 we identified almost £22m in overpayments and £9m in underpayments by making better use of information we already hold on claimants;
- enhancements to our IT systems means that some types of incorrect claims are flagged up automatically to enable us to take remedial action more quickly;
- the introduction of Benefit Integrity Centres which focus on conducting telephone reviews of high risk cases.

This has enabled the Department to review those claims where there has been little or no contact with the claimant for some time;

- changes in staff training to improve awareness and understanding of how errors occur and how to put them right;
- introduction of a national Error Reduction team which plays a key role in getting messages to staff about the importance of reducing errors. A series of 'Error Reduction' weeks and a national conference has helped generate many ideas for tackling error.

Jobcentre Plus will continue to make improvements to reduce error, and the next phase of activity will focus on staff training and the introduction of a national checking tier. This new checking function will examine around 44,000 claims each year to identify how and where in the process error began so we can design out the problems for the future.



For more information please contact Andrew Deakins [andrew.deakins@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.deakins@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk)

# Give an Hour

Jobcentre Plus is teaming up with UK online centres, Race Online 2012, the BBC and other partners to help people develop the skills and confidence to make the most of going online.

From 30 October, the Give an Hour campaign will encourage people with web skills to give an hour to inspire and help others to use the internet. It will feature more than 2,000 events across the country, including free taster sessions in UK online centres and other locations. Backed up by TV and radio promotions, Jobcentre Plus will use this campaign to speak to our customers about their internet skills and needs, and find ways to help them go online.

[www.go-on.co.uk](http://www.go-on.co.uk)

The Go on website shows how an adviser or claimant can become a digital champion, register for free courses and source local access centres, or simply find out where they can get more information.

It also gives case studies and 'promise in action' showing all partner organisations in action. A good example is our Jobcentre in Northampton where advisers have been identifying customers with basic IT skills needs and referring them to activities that can help with their job search and career plan.



Will Bolshaw, a Digital Champion from Northampton Jobcentre Plus said: "The local UK online centre is now teaching 50 plus people every week and enhancing their lives. A lot of these customers are signposted by Jobcentre Plus using UK online centre marketing material. One of our customers was signposted to a volunteering vacancy and has since been recruited. A wonderful success."

Further information on our expanding online services can be found on the DWP website.



[Online services for customers \(DWP website\)](#)

# Paying State Pension automatically

From 10 October, we will launch an improved service for people on DWP benefits who are approaching pension age

We will start by writing to people who are on DWP benefits around 4 months before their State Pension age.

We will advise them that they will not need to contact us to get their State Pension. If we do require further information, we will get in touch with them. We will also tell people in receipt of income related benefits that we will contact them about applying for Pension Credit.

People will only need to contact us if they want to defer their State Pension or if they have any communications needs.

Because we already have information about people who are getting certain working age benefits, where possible, we will use their details to award State Pension automatically. This means that we can provide a better service for existing DWP customers.

We will contact people who get the following benefits about State Pension:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Disability Living Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Widows Benefits
- Bereavement Benefits
- Carer's Allowance
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Pension Credit.

In line with the changes, a new version of the **Your State Pension, Your Options, Your Decision** booklet will be sent to those people affected.



For more information contact [Catherine.j.jones@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.j.jones@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or visit the [Directgov website](#).



[Claiming the basic State Pension \(Directgov website\)](#)

# Disability Living Allowance journey to Personal Independence Payment



A cross-agency working group has been set up by Pension, Disability and Carers Service (PDCS) to help inform partner organisations regarding reforms to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and the move towards Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

The DLA Journey to PIP – Cross DWP Network Group, aims to help a variety of partner groups, including public and voluntary sector organisations, to understand the impact that DLA reforms and PIP will have on their customer groups.

Members of the group include the Customer and Partnerships Directorate, the PIP Implementation Programme, local

partnership managers, Operations and Jobcentre Plus.

Gary McDonald, Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement, PIP Programme, said:

“This is an excellent opportunity for PDCS to work collaboratively to provide our partners with practical tools, which they can use to help our customers understand the impact of welfare reform.”

If you have any queries regarding PIP from a partner organisation perspective, please refer this to the group's contact person, Lucie Roberts at [lucie.roberts@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:lucie.roberts@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or on 01253 332191, or your local partnership manager.

# Ordering of DLA and AA claim packs

## A message for partner organisations

Partner organisations who wish to order Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA) claim packs in multiples of 10, can order these through iON. To order these packs, you can either fax your order to iON on 0845 850 0479 or email [ion-pass@xerox.com](mailto:ion-pass@xerox.com).

If you have any questions about ordering the packs, please telephone the iON Contact Centre on 0845 850 0475.

Orders should be fulfilled within 5 working days, and as claim packs are regularly reviewed and updated, we would appreciate partner organisations only retaining one month's worth of stock to help reduce wastage.

There are now separate English and Welsh versions of DLA and AA claim packs available.

### Partner organisations in Wales

Please note, DWP has a responsibility to offer customers in Wales a choice of English and Welsh language claim packs. As you are offering customers forms on behalf of DWP, it would be appreciated if you would ensure you have stocks of claim packs in both languages and offer the customer the option.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact the Infrastructure Team on 01253 337052 or 01253 337499.

**Partner organisations who wish to order DLA, and or AA claim packs for individual customers should contact the DLA/AA Helpline on 0845 7123456.**

# Business in the Community joins forces with Combining to Care (C2C)

To help voluntary organisations in Manchester take a fresh look at how they target business volunteering schemes such as DWP's Community 10,000 scheme, C2C initiated a training workshop on 8 July, called "Developing Active Partnerships with Business".

This encouraged the voluntary sector to think differently about:

- how best to utilise corporate volunteers; and
- how best to approach or attract a business for support.

This was designed and delivered at nil cost by Business in the Community (BITC) with guest speakers from Aviva, British Gas and DWP, utilising a room generously provided by Age Concern.

23 delegates attended on the day and learned how best to approach a private business or organisation.

BITC encouraged all the delegates to think out of the box and approach businesses in



a professional way. For example, you could approach a local accountancy firm with a proposal which may lead to your accounts being completed free each year.

Karen from Care and Repair said it was a "brilliant event" whilst Susan from Arthritis Care said "I enjoyed the day. It helped me to structure my thoughts and I learnt lots."

James from Age Concern said it had given him "a greater realisation of the importance of pitching a volunteering opportunity as a win-win business proposition."

The speakers from Aviva emphasised the importance of researching an organisation's corporate responsibility policy. Any proposition should then be written using this information to enable both the private and voluntary organisation to benefit from their experiences.



For more information e-mail Amanda Barker at [amanda.barker@pensionservice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.barker@pensionservice.gsi.gov.uk)

# Other news in brief...

## **Default Retirement Age changes from 1 October 2011**

1 October 2011, was a milestone in removing the Default Retirement Age (DRA). From this date, employers can no longer force employees to retire just because they reach the arbitrary age of 65. This means that most people will be able to retire at a time which is right for them. Without the DRA employers can only set retirement ages where it can be objectively justified in their particular circumstances - but this is open to challenge at Tribunal. Through its Age Positive initiative, the DWP has published three key publications for employers on the DWP website. More information can be found at:

[Workforce management without a fixed retirement age](#)

[Answers to employer questions on older workers and retirement](#)

[Managing without a fixed retirement age: Good practice case studies](#)

The Business link website also contains further information about employing older workers.

[Employing older workers](#)

## **Changes to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) adult claim packs**

The DLA adult claim packs are being updated in October 2011. Changes have been made to the declaration section. As there are no legislative changes to the October 2011 versions, we will use existing February 2011 stock before supplying the new October 2011 claim packs.

The following claim packs are being updated:

- DLA1A ADULT, DLA1A ADULT LP (large print)
- DLA1A ADULT W (Welsh)
- DLA1A ADULT WLP (Welsh large print)
- DLA1 ADULT, DLA1 ADULT LP (large print)
- DLA1 ADULT W (Welsh)
- DLA1 ADULT WLP (Welsh large print)
- DLA434 ADULT, DLA434 ADULT LP (large print)
- DLA434 ADULT W (Welsh)
- DLA434 ADULT WLP (Welsh large print)

See a further article on page 7 about ordering DLA and AA claim packs.

## **DWP Scottish Annual Forum**

The DWP Scottish Annual Forum will take place in Edinburgh Wednesday 9 November. The Forum is aimed at all advisers, intermediaries and other professionals that work with our customers. It aims to provide information about DWP, to consult on new initiatives, and to hear your feedback about how we are doing. If you have attended previously, you should have automatically received an invitation by now. If you have not attended before, but would like to attend please email us at [corporate.stakeholders@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.stakeholders@dwpgsi.gov.uk). Reports of previous forums are available [DWP Adviser website - Forum Reports](#)

## **Universal Credit policy briefing notes**

We have published a series of short briefing notes, which support the Welfare Reform Bill and offer detail on the shape of Universal Credit. These follow on from notes previously published in this series in May. The notes focus on:

- Additions for longer durations on Universal Credit (updated)
- The payment proposal (updated)
- Treatment of Capital (updated)
- Carers (new)
- Foster carers (new)

The briefing notes can be read in full on the [DWP website](#).

## **Changes to Housing Benefit Shared Accommodation Rate**

The shared accommodation rate (SAR) will be extended to single people aged up to 35 from 1 January 2012. A publicity poster and factsheet have been produced to ensure Housing Benefit claimants affected are made aware of these changes. For more information and the factsheet please visit the [DWP Adviser and Intermediaries](#) website.

Hard copies of the poster are available from [mark.bonnington@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto:mark.bonnington@dwpgsi.gov.uk) if you are able to display them.

## **Employers work to promote greater awareness of disability inclusion**

DWP is continuing to ask employers to consider the inclusiveness of their recruitment practices – so as not to exclude a wide pool of talented disabled jobseekers. DWP and other large employers, including BT and e-on, are promoting a free online tool, [www.clearkit.co.uk](http://www.clearkit.co.uk). Designed by employers for employers, the ‘Clearkit’ combines the latest thinking and employer case studies with relevant and helpful tips and ‘must do’ check lists. This will help dispel the myths that prevent many employers from giving disabled people an opportunity to join their teams.

## **Specialist disability employment programmes - Last chance to take part in the public consultation**

This consultation seeks views on the recommendations in Liz Sayce’s independent report on specialist disability employment programmes ‘Getting in, staying in and getting on’. We particularly welcome response from anyone with experience of, or an interest in, the Department’s employment services for disabled people and people with health conditions. The consultation closes 17 October 2011.

[Specialist disability employment programmes \(DWP website\)](#)