

## DWP Stakeholder Bulletin – March 2013

Welcome to the March 2013 issue of the DWP Stakeholder Bulletin – an e-newsletter to let you know what is happening in the Department for Work and Pensions.

If you have a comment or feedback about this bulletin, please email [corporate.stakeholders@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.stakeholders@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).

If you would like to subscribe to future editions of the DWP Stakeholder Bulletin, please go to our [Stakeholder Bulletin subscription page](#).

### Contents

DWP reform communications toolkit launched .....	1
Benefit cap – National rollout .....	1
Appeals process changes for Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit .....	2
Employing Older Workers – Answering Employer Questions .....	2
Universal Credit Partner toolkit .....	2
HSSF Telephony Network Grant Programme .....	3
Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy for Social Sector Tenants .....	3
Consultations .....	4

### DWP reform communications toolkit launched

DWP has produced a toolkit of communications materials to help tell the DWP Reform Story. It explains the context behind reforms and provides an overview of changes taking place over the next few years.

The toolkit gives the headline information you need across all our policy areas. To support this DWP has produced more detailed packs, such as the [Personal Independence Payment toolkit](#) and the [Universal Credit Partner toolkit](#).

The reform communications toolkit will be updated monthly so it is always accurate.

We would be grateful if you would make your colleagues and stakeholders aware that this resource is now available on the [DWP website](#).

To comment or give feedback on the toolkit, please email the DWP [stakeholder team](#).

### Benefit cap – National rollout

In December it was announced that Bromley, Croydon, Enfield and Haringey local authorities would be the first to start to apply the benefit cap from 15 April

2013. All remaining local authorities have now been advised that they will be implementing the benefit cap from 15 July 2013.

All appropriate households will have been capped, in line with current plans, by the end of September 2013.

The priority for DWP remains to support households into work and towards a stable and sustainable working lifestyle, and to encourage them to adjust their circumstances now to live within average earnings.

Further information about the benefit cap can be found on the [DWP website](#).

### **Appeals process changes for Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit**

Changes to the appeals process will apply to Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit from 8 April 2013 and 29 April 2013 respectively.

These are mandatory reconsideration of disputed decisions prior to appeal, direct lodgement of appeals with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), and a 28-day time limit for DWP to return appeal responses to HMCTS.

Direct lodgement and mandatory reconsideration will be introduced for all other DWP-administered benefits and child maintenance cases from 28 October 2013, and time limits from October 2014. The time limit for appeal responses in child maintenance cases will be 42 days.

For further details please visit the [DWP website](#).

### **Employing Older Workers – Answering Employer Questions**

DWP's updated guidance 'Employing older workers: An employer's guide to today's multi-generational workforce' is now available. It addresses the issues employers have raised in the current economic climate and following the removal of the default retirement age – particularly how to retain the skills of older workers while bringing on younger workers.

The guidance offers solutions tried and tested by employers of various sizes and sectors and focuses on how to get the basics right to the benefit of the business. The guidance is accompanied by over 30 case studies and related research. It can be accessed on the [DWP website](#).

### **Universal Credit Partner toolkit**

Universal Credit is due to start early in some areas of Cheshire and Greater Manchester on 29 April 2013. To help partner and welfare rights organisations to start talking to their customers about Universal Credit, DWP has launched the Universal Credit Partner toolkit on its website.

The toolkit comprises of an introduction to Universal Credit; a detailed customer journey; frequently asked questions; a sample press article; how to apply for access to the Universal Credit visual identity and 12 Universal Credit 'quick guides', giving details on key topics.

The toolkit will be updated regularly to reflect the latest information.

You can find the Universal Credit Partner toolkit on the [DWP website](#).

### **Help and Support for Separated Families (HSSF) Telephony Network Grant Programme**

The HSSF Telephony Network application process will launch at the end of March and will provide telephony support to separated/separating families/couples, with or without children. Organisations within the network will, in addition to their current conversations, sign up for training to promote messages which encourage collaboration between separated parents and couples, diagnose wider support needs and signpost consistently.

Grants will be open to voluntary and community sector organisations, social enterprises and other organisations applying on a 'not for profit' basis. We are inviting bids from organisations that support children, young people, mothers, fathers, and wider families.

Application documents will be available on the [Funding Central website](#) by the end of March 2013.

### **Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy for Social Sector Tenants**

From April 2013 DWP is restricting housing benefit entitlement for working-age tenants in the social rented sector to reflect household size. This will remove one of the key differences between social and private sector housing, by basing entitlement on the needs of the household rather than the property.

This action will help tackle social housing shortages and save an expected £500 million a year.

The Government has allocated an additional £25 million to the Discretionary Housing Payments fund for the removal of the spare room subsidy. This is aimed specifically at helping disabled people living in significantly adapted accommodation. It will remain for local authorities to assess individual circumstances.

Further general information on the removal of the spare room subsidy can be found on the [DWP website](#), which also links to a [Housing bulletin](#) about withdrawing from the Burnip, Trengove and Gorry appeal. The Written Ministerial Statement on Housing Benefit Reform, foster carers and members of the armed forces is available on the [Parliament website](#).

## **Consultations**

All live consultations and the latest published responses are available on the [consultation pages](#) of the DWP website.

The following consultations have been launched since the February bulletin:

[The Transfer of Employment \(Pension Protection\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). Closing date 5 April 2013.

[Child Support \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations 2013](#). Closing date 12 April 2013.

[The Occupational and Personal Pensions Schemes \(Disclosure of Information\) Regulations 2013](#). Closing date 14 April 2013.