

# February 2013

Welcome to the February 2013 issue of the DWP Stakeholder Bulletin.

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## Contents

Personal Independence Payment communication products launch.....	2
Council Tax Benefit abolition .....	2
The Recovery Festival, 12 & 13 March.....	2
Draft Pensions Bill published for pre-legislative scrutiny.....	3
New Employment and Support Allowance (Amendment) Regulations 2012.....	3
The Government response to the independent sickness absence review .....	3
Call for ideas - Extending labour market interventions to in-work claimants .....	4
Mental health awareness sessions for Decision Makers .....	4
Benefit cap to apply in Bromley, Croydon, Enfield and Haringey.....	4
Jobcentre Plus to offer more help for people wanting to work for themselves .....	5
Ministry of Defence announces introduction of Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) .....	5
New Appointment at DWP .....	5
DWP consultations .....	6

## Personal Independence Payment communication products launch

DWP is sending information about PIP to existing DLA claimants as part of the DLA uprating letters. These will be issued between early February and 22 March 2013 and will explain how DWP plans to introduce the new benefit, as well as helping claimants to understand how the changes might affect them. These letters are for information only and claimants do not need to contact DWP.

DWP has developed a PIP toolkit for advisers in support organisations. The toolkit includes a range of material, from a simple Quick Guide to details of the full claims process and copies of PIP claimant letters and forms. There are also suggested articles that can be easily adapted for use in your in-house communications, and a checklist of specific actions that can help your organisation get ready for the introduction of PIP on 8 April 2013. More information and tools will be added to the toolkit over the next few months. The toolkit is available on the [DWP website](#).

We would be grateful if you would make advisers in your organisations aware of the PIP toolkit as a resource for them to use.

## Council Tax Benefit abolition

Council Tax Benefit (CTB) will be abolished and replaced by new, localised, Council Tax Reduction (CTR) schemes from 1 April 2013.

Benefit claim processes will be changed to ensure only DWP benefit data is collected and all customer-facing products will be amended to remove references to CTB and, where appropriate, add signposting to the new localised schemes.

DWP will continue to pass social security data to local authorities to support processing of Housing Benefit (HB) and CTR claims.

## The Recovery Festival, 12 & 13 March

The first Recovery Festival will take place at the QEII Centre, Westminster, London, on 12-13 March 2013. Aimed at large and small employers, and businesses, it will highlight the benefits of hiring people in recovery and showcasing the transferable skills they have acquired through their treatment, rehabilitation and recovery journey.

By attending the Recovery Festival, employers can challenge the assumptions they may have about addiction and employing someone with a history of substance misuse; experience first-hand the talent and ambition of those in recovery and understand how they can help unlock individuals' talent and ambition for mutual benefit.

The Right Honourable Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will deliver a key note speech which will outline the work Government is doing to support those in recovery into employment.

There will be a wide range of speakers, workshops, panel discussions and exhibitions from across the recovery and business sector.

Esther McVey, Minister for Disabled People, will be on the afternoon panel of day two of the festival.

For more information on key speakers and how to attend, please register online at: [www.recoveryfestival.org.uk](http://www.recoveryfestival.org.uk) and follow their twitter feed: <https://twitter.com/RecoveryFest>.

## Draft Pensions Bill published for pre-legislative scrutiny

On 18 January 2013, the Government published a draft Pensions Bill, including proposed legislation to introduce a single-tier state pension.

The Work and Pensions Select Committee are undertaking pre-legislative scrutiny of the single-tier legislation and will report by the beginning of April. [Further information](#) is available on the Work and Pensions Select Committee website.

The draft Bill also contains clauses relating to State Pension age, Bereavement Benefit reform and a number of private pensions measures.

The Government intends to introduce the Bill as soon as parliamentary time allows.

More information about the [draft Pensions Bill](#) and the measures contained in it can be found on the DWP website.

## New Employment and Support Allowance (Amendment) Regulations 2012

On 28 January 2013, changes were introduced to how people awaiting, receiving or recovering from cancer treatment are assessed for Employment and Support Allowance. The changes, developed following extensive work with Macmillan, the Royal College of Radiologists and others, will improve the way we assess cancer patients by expanding the existing categories of cancer treatments under which someone may be treated as having Limited Capability for Work Related Activity. This simpler process will also mean that many more benefit decisions for those receiving treatment for cancer will be assessed on the supporting medical evidence without the need for a face-to-face assessment.

The regulations are available on the [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk) website.

## The Government response to the independent sickness absence review

In November 2011, the Government welcomed an independent review of sickness absence by Dame Carol Black and David Frost CBE.

The Government response, published in January 2013, outlines a range of measures that directly support people to return to and remain in work.

The new approach addresses concerns about the current sickness absence system, and introduces a health and work assessment and advisory service which will make occupational health expertise more widely available to those who need it most, enabling individuals, employers and healthcare professionals to meet their responsibilities in a system that offers better value for money for taxpayers.

The full response can be accessed on the [DWP website](#).

## Call for ideas - Extending labour market interventions to in-work claimants

Universal Credit will ensure that work always pays and that as people work more they are able to retain more of their increased earnings.

For the first time it will be possible for DWP to work with individuals to help keep them in work and, where appropriate, support and encourage them to increase their earnings and move towards self-sufficiency.

We have just launched a [call for ideas](#) on our Department for Work and Pensions consultation website which invites your ideas to help shape DWP thinking. This will run until **25 March 2013**. For further information contact [UC.NEWAPPROACHES@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK](mailto:UC.NEWAPPROACHES@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK).

## Mental health awareness sessions for Decision Makers

One third of people going through the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) have a mental health condition.

From February 2013 DWP are utilising the expertise in mental, intellectual and cognitive disabilities of the Atos Healthcare Mental Health Champions to deliver awareness sessions to all DWP WCA Employment Support Allowance (ESA) Decision Makers who are responsible for making the final determination on ESA Claims.

The sessions will build on the understanding these Decision Makers already have of how mental health conditions affect claimants' day-to-day activity, improve the standard of decision making and provide better support to these claimants.

For further information contact the WCA Review Project at [WCA.ReviewProject@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:WCA.ReviewProject@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).

## Benefit cap to apply in Bromley, Croydon, Enfield and Haringey

The benefit cap will apply from 15 April 2013 in four London local authority areas: Bromley, Croydon, Enfield and Haringey. It will be implemented in all other local authorities during summer 2013.

Between 6 and 8 February 2013, DWP sent out approximately 20,000 letters to all those potentially affected from 15 April and to newly identified cases, affected from the summer, which we had not written to previously.

All letters will provide information about available employment support, the benefit cap helpline and further options available to claimants to help mitigate the cap's impact.

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

## Jobcentre Plus to offer more help for people wanting to work for themselves

From 18 February, lone parents claiming Income Support will be able to volunteer for the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA). This provides practical and financial help to get people off benefits and into self-employment.

NEA is also being extended to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants in the Work Related Activity Group who are receiving support from Jobcentre Plus.

Disabled people enrolled in the NEA can now receive additional support through Access to Work to help pay for necessary specialised equipment, support workers and travel costs to get their business started.

More information on starting your own business is available at [GOV.UK](#), as is a guide to [Access to Work](#). There is also more information about the NEA on the [DWP website](#).

## Ministry of Defence announces introduction of Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)

The Ministry of Defence (MoD), in conjunction with DWP, have announced the introduction of a new benefit to provide additional financial support for seriously injured service or ex-service personnel, to cover the extra costs they may have due to their injuries.

This new benefit will be called the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) and is being introduced from 8 April 2013.

This is a cross Government initiative with MoD's Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) responsible for deciding entitlement to AFIP, while DWP is responsible for payment and ongoing maintenance of AFIP claims.

More information for claimants and customer representative groups is available on the [Veterans-UK website](#).

## New Appointment at DWP

The Department has made a permanent appointment to the post of Contracted Customer Services Director following Alan Cave's departure in November.

Simon Tse will be joining the team on April 2 from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency where he is currently Chief Executive. Simon brings a range of experience to the role from both the public and private sector, latterly with Virgin Media as Business UK, Board Director. Simon said:

"I am really looking forward to starting my new role. Helping get people into work and transforming their lives is one of the most important things the Government can do.

“Schemes run by the Department are helping job seekers into work and ensuring better value for taxpayers and I want to ensure we build on the progress that has already been made.”

## DWP 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 January bulletin:

[Pensions and Growth Call for evidence: Whether to introduce a new statutory objective for the Pensions Regulator](#). Closing date 21 February 2013.

[Pensions and Growth Call for evidence: Whether to smooth assets and liabilities in scheme funding valuations](#). Closing date 7 March 2013.

[Abolition of contracting out – consultation on a statutory override for Protected Persons Regulations](#). Closing date 14 March 2013.

[Extending labour market interventions to in-work claimants – call for ideas](#). Closing date 25 March 2013.

[Statistics on people and households claiming Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment and other benefits: Plans for 2013-2017](#). Closing date 24 April 2013.