

DWP Stakeholder Bulletin – April 2013

Welcome to the April 2013 issue of the DWP Stakeholder Bulletin – a 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

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Personal Independence Payment (PIP) introduced on 8 April 2013

New claims for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) are now being taken across the north of England.

The DWP PIP toolkit for support organisations has been updated to support the introduction of PIP. It includes details of which postcodes are included in the PIP controlled start from 8 April – see the “Assessment process and Provider” fact sheet in the [PIP toolkit](#).

The toolkit also contains fact sheets about how to claim PIP and completing the “how your disability affects you” form, examples of letters claimants may receive in connection with PIP claims and information organisations can use in their own PIP communications.

The PIP toolkit is available on the [DWP website](#).

Changes to Loss of Benefit Penalties

DWP and HMRC have made changes to legislation to impose tougher penalties on people who commit benefit fraud.

These changes will ensure that we are tougher on those who commit benefit fraud and demonstrate that persistent offending will not be tolerated.

For offences wholly committed on or after 1 April 2013, there will be a Loss of Benefit penalty for a period of 13 weeks, 26 weeks or 3 years dependent on

the number of benefit fraud offences committed within a specified period where the latest offence results in a conviction.

An immediate 3 year Loss of Benefit penalty for serious organised or identity benefit fraud cases wholly committed on or after 1 April 2013 has also been introduced.

More information is available on the [DWP website](#).

Jobseeker's Allowance – claiming via the online service

From 5 April 2013, all claimants wishing to make a new or repeat Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claim by telephone will be assessed for their eligibility to claim online and, where appropriate, directed to the JSA online channel. This is in line with the Government's ambition for our services to be digital by default and will be a key step in changing the culture for DWP's customers.

Telephony agents will offer support and direction to eligible claimants, assisting them in finding online access in their local area. This may include:

- using the internet of family or friends
- directing claimants to local free internet with 3rd party providers, or
- booking an appointment to use an Internet Access Device at a claimant's local Jobcentre where necessary.

JSA claimants categorised as vulnerable, or those ineligible to claim online, will still be able to make their claim over the telephone.

Further information on the JSA online service can be found on the [DWP website](#).

Appeals process changes introduced

Changes to DWP's appeals process are being introduced this month, as part of the design of the new benefits Personal Independence Payment (PIP), which is being rolled out in stages from 8 April 2013, and Universal Credit, which is being rolled out in some areas from 29 April 2013.

The changes mean that PIP and Universal Credit claimants who dispute a decision must ask DWP for a mandatory reconsideration before they can appeal against it. They must lodge any appeal directly with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service, and DWP will be subject to a 28-day time limit to return an appeal response.

Further details are available on the [DWP website](#).

Update: the new Health and Work Assessment and Advisory Service

It was announced in the 2013 Budget that tax relief will be available on health related interventions recommended by the new health and work assessment and advisory service.

Employers will receive tax relief on expenditure of up to £500 on health-related interventions to help an employee return to work after sickness.

The Government will consult on the implementation of tax relief later this year, ahead of the introduction of the service in 2014.

The Statutory Sick Pay Percentage Threshold Scheme will be abolished in April 2014 to provide funding for the health and work assessment and advisory service.

The [Government response to the sickness absence review](#) and more information on [tax relief for employers](#) can be found on GOV.UK.

DWP consultations

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

The following consultations have been launched since the March Bulletin:

[Technical changes to automatic enrolment – consultation on draft regulations and other proposed changes](#). Closing date 7 May 2013.