

## DWP Stakeholder Bulletin – November 2013

Welcome to the November 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 the [Strategic Engagement and Partnerships team](#).

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

### Contents

<b>Housing Benefit and Universal Credit</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Universal Credit partner toolkit</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Updated welfare reform communications toolkit</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Independent review of sanctions</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Appeals Reform implemented</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Business is GREAT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Disability Confident</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Fire Kills</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>DWP consultations</b> .....	<b>3</b>

### Housing Benefit and Universal Credit

The Housing Benefit and Universal Credit (Size Criteria) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 No. 2828 has been [published](#).

New legislation is being introduced to allow for an extra bedroom for a disabled child who would normally be expected to share a bedroom under the size criteria rules, but is not reasonably able to do so due to severe disability. The changes come into force on 4 December 2013. [Guidance](#) is available to provide effective support for advisers and decision makers in administering both Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

### Universal Credit partner toolkit

The [Universal Credit partner toolkit](#) includes a range of materials to help DWP's partner organisations understand the changes and explain them to their customers. It has been updated to include a [new, easy to use guide](#), highlighting the information people will need when making their online claim. We hope this will result in a smoother claimant experience, with people less likely to be timed out of their claim. Other products have been updated and redesigned following feedback from stakeholders. To share your thoughts on the toolkit, contact us [here](#).

### **Updated welfare reform communications toolkit**

The welfare reform communications toolkit has been updated and is available on [GOV.UK](#). The toolkit helps explain why and how DWP is changing the welfare system. If you have any questions about the toolkit, please contact the [Strategic Engagement and Partnership team](#).

### **Independent review of sanctions**

Matthew Oakley, Head of Economic Analysis at Which?, is leading an independent review of benefit sanctions for the Secretary of State. The review will look at Job Seekers Allowance sanctions for mandatory schemes such as the work programme, but specifically, sanctions validated by the Jobseekers (Back to Work Schemes) Act 2013. To inform the review, Matthew is collecting evidence about the whole sanctions process; including sanction decisions, appeals and hardship applications. Collecting information from benefit claimants and representatives is vital to this review. Matthew launched a [call for information](#) on 11 November 2013 and would like all interested bodies to contribute by 10 January 2014.

### **Appeals Reform implemented**

Mandatory Reconsideration, Direct Lodgement of appeals with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) and Time Limits to return appeal responses were implemented for all DWP benefits and Child Maintenance cases on 28 October 2013. These changes are designed to ensure that more DWP decisions that people disagree with are resolved without the need for an appeal to HMCTS.

The new process will apply to any decision dated on or after 28 October 2013. As the existing process will continue for the next six to eight weeks, it is important for you to ask your customers which benefit they wish to appeal against and the date of notification of the decision to determine which process to follow.

### **Business is GREAT**

The [GREAT Business](#) campaign launched on 6 November in England to help small firms grow their businesses by encouraging them to [plan](#), [export](#), [lead](#) and [nurture](#) - key drivers of economic growth. In addition to practical help from across government, the website highlights examples of inspirational businesses. Government is committed to making the UK a great place to start and grow a business. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills along with DWP and other departments, are working together to make it easier to find the right help, financial advice and support for mentoring.

### **Disability Confident**

Following the success of the landmark disability employment conference and launch of the Disability Confident campaign in July, the department is continuing to work with employers to remove barriers and support disabled people into employment in order to help them fulfil their potential. Watch the [conference highlights](#) video to hear speakers explain why it's important for employers to support the campaign. A series of Disability Confident regional

events started with Birmingham on 21 November; there will be further events in the new year. [Contact us](#) to get involved.

### **Fire Kills**

[The Fire Kills](#) campaign is run by the Department for Communities and Local Government in partnership with England's fire and rescue services. In the past year, 197 people died in fires in the home and more than half of those were aged 65 and over. Please spread the message about testing the smoke alarm of somebody who may need help testing theirs.

### **DWP consultations**

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