

DWP Stakeholder Bulletin – April 2014

Welcome to the April 2014 issue of the DWP Stakeholder Bulletin.

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Universal Credit goes live in Shotton

New jobseekers in Shotton began claiming Universal Credit from 7 April 2014. Shotton is the 10th site to accept Universal Credit claims and the first in Wales.

Claimants will also be required to sign the new Claimant Commitment, setting out what they must do in order to receive state support. They will also have access to support delivered by local authorities and third sector organisations to help them budget their money, get online and manage their claim online.

Universal Credit is also up and running in Greater Manchester and the Cheshire area, along with Hammersmith, Inverness, Rugby, Bath and Harrogate.

New Universal Credit video

A new video has also been published to help explain Universal Credit to claimants. It is available on the [UC Partner Toolkit](#) on GOV.UK.

The video has been developed based on feedback from stakeholders and partners requesting content that explains Universal Credit simply and clearly. We hope that this video will help do this.

If you would like to use this video please link to it on your website. You can also embed the video on your site or blog. Alternatively, you can tweet it using #universalcredit or share it on your Facebook page.

Social Justice Month

Eight government departments are running a joint campaign called 'April is Social Justice Month'. Partnership is often crucial to ensuring that support services help to turn lives around. This campaign looks at different examples of how collaboration between central and local government, Voluntary Community Services and the private sector can make a real difference.

Find out more from the newly launched [Public Service Transformation Network](#) who are hosting [Social Justice Month](#) articles, blogs and personal stories which take a look inside government thinking. You can follow Social Justice Month on twitter [@socjusticegov](#), use [#SJmonth2014](#) and sign up to the pledge page at [Thunderclap](#).

Health and Work Service

The Statutory Sick Pay Percentage Threshold Scheme (PTS) ended at the close of the 2013/14 tax year. The scheme was designed to compensate employers for part of the costs of staff absences. There's more information at [GOV.UK](#) about the closure and the deadline for outstanding claims.

A new [Health and Work Service](#) will be introduced at the end of 2014 using savings released from the PTS scheme. The new service will offer free Occupational Health advice to help employers manage sickness absence better and help employees back to work more quickly. We will provide more information about the service over the coming months.

Mesothelioma compensation packages

The Mesothelioma Act was passed in January 2014 and allowed for a new package of support – funded by insurance firms – to pay more than 800 eligible people in 2014 and 300 every year after that until 2024.

Victims of the fatal asbestos-induced cancer mesothelioma who cannot trace a liable employer or an employers' liability insurer are now able to apply for compensation packages worth an average of £123,000 as part of a £380 million package. Successful applicants will also receive £7,000 towards legal expenses.

The claims handling company, Gallagher Bassett, has been appointed to run the compensation scheme. For more information and to apply to the scheme click [here](#).

New measures for jobseekers

From 28 April 2014, new conditionality measures will be introduced for pre-Work Programme Jobseeker's Allowance claimants and, from July, for those Universal Credit claimants who are subject to intensive work search requirements.

The measures increase requirements placed on jobseekers in exchange for benefits and are designed to help claimants enter employment at the earliest opportunity. The measures are:

- Quarterly Work Search Interviews - to review work search progress

- In England only, the English Language Requirement - for claimants with English speaking and listening skills below Entry Level 2

The following will be phased in between 28 April and October 2014

- Day One Conditionality - to demonstrate positive job seeking behaviours from day one
- Weekly Work Search Reviews – for those who need extra support

See April's [Touchbase](#) for more information.

Increasing Lone Parent Conditionality from 28 April 2014

For lone parents who are entitled to Income Support solely on the basis of being a lone parent with a youngest child aged at least one, the frequency and duration of work-focused interviews will be flexible and will be determined by advisers, to enable more tailored support to be provided.

Work-Related Activity (WRA) is being introduced for certain lone parents and responsible carers with a youngest child aged three or four and this will be mandatory. Activities will be flexible, tailored to the individual, and must be reasonable, taking into account the parent's circumstances. WRA may not be used to require the claimant to apply for or take up work.

See April's [Touchbase](#) for more information