



Department
for Work &
Pensions

DWP Employer News - February 2015

Supporting Young People

Esther McVey, Minister for Employment, sets out 5 things that employers can do to give young people greater opportunities and add value to their business.

- 1. Become a mentor as part of our [New Enterprise Allowance](#) scheme.** Through this scheme we offer start-up funding and access to young entrepreneurs who want to be their own boss, and turn their idea into an enterprise. Those who've made it in the business world know just how important it is to get the right advice at the right time - and you can help young entrepreneurs make it too.
- 2. Offer a [Work Experience placement](#) or set up a skills academy with us.** We run Sector Based Skills Academies, which are local employer-led skills academies that offer training to local unemployed candidates who are then guaranteed a job interview at the end.
- 3. [Advertise your vacancies](#) with Jobcentre Plus.** Whether you're a large national organisation or a small local business, our expert recruiters in Jobcentre Plus will work with you to identify and train up the right person for your business. Which will also give an unemployed person the security of a regular wage.
- 4. Join in our [#GetBritainWorking](#) social media campaigns with your job tips and careers advice.** Our aim is to support more people into the jobs and careers they want -so if you've hired or fired and have advice for young people, please share it on online using the hashtag [#GetBritainWorking](#).
- 5. Share your story with us.** Tell us about starting up your own business, or if you've been unemployed and turned your life around and you think you can help young people - get in touch with [DWP Press Office](#). We'd love to hear your story and find a way to inspire the vital confidence young people need for a successful job search.

You can read Esther's [full blog online at LinkedIn](#).

Broadband Connection Vouchers

Broadband Connection Vouchers are available to upgrade your business's broadband.

[Find out now](#) if you are eligible for up to £3,000 to cover the installation costs of upgrading to a faster and more reliable connection for your business. You could get a fibre optic, cable or wireless broadband connection among other options. Most businesses pay nothing but VAT and their standard monthly charges.

Thousands of businesses in the 22 Super Connected Cities Programme are already benefitting from the scheme.

By upgrading, you too could:

- Do things faster - increase your business's productivity,
- Improve customer service, and
- Access new markets using video conferencing.

For further information, please visit the [Connections Vouchers](#) website.

From April 2015, the scheme will be active in more cities across the UK. So, if you are not presently eligible, don't forget to check again in April to see if you can apply for a Connection Voucher.

Half price advice for your business

Get half price strategic advice about finance, recruitment, management, marketing or technology for your business. The Growth Vouchers scheme was recently extended to smaller employers, and is due to close on 31 March 2015, although businesses that have applied will still be able to use their vouchers for up to 12 weeks afterwards.

Apply for [Growth Vouchers](#) and find out more.

There is a range of other support available for businesses, including advice, access to financial support and extra help. Just visit [Business is GREAT Britain](#) to see what's available.

Fit for Work Advice Service

The free Fit for Work advice service is now live, providing free and impartial advice to anyone requiring work-related health advice, including employees, employers and GPs. It should be particularly beneficial to small and medium-sized enterprises that might not have had access to occupational health advice. [Visit Fit for Work](#) to find out what's available and how to get in touch.

Fit for Work will soon offer a referral service where employees can get tailored advice to help them return to work as soon as possible. This service is being tested in Sheffield before being rolled out across the UK later this year. Employees in the pilot area may receive a Return to Work Plan from an employee who has been referred as part of the testing phase. The Return to Work Plan will provide recommendations and also provide evidence of sickness for pay purposes - this will replace the need for a fit note.

Fit for Work intends to complement, not replace, existing occupational health provision. There will be a phased roll-out before Fit for Work goes nationwide. You can find [guidance about Fit for Work online](#). You can also [sign up for email updates](#).

Apprenticeships Get In. Go Far

The second phase of the Apprenticeships Get In. Go Far campaign is now underway and will run until the end March 2015.

The campaign is targeted at young people, parents and influencers, and aims to inspire young people to consider an apprenticeship as an equal choice to A-levels and university, with the added benefit of earning while they learn.

For employers, hiring an apprentice helps businesses to grow their own talent by developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce. 96% of employers who take on an apprentice report benefits to their business.

Apprenticeships will be promoted through [TV adverts](#), partnerships with local radio and press advertising. A [new Apprenticeships hub](#) will provide helpful advice for those considering an apprenticeship - if you offer apprenticeships you might want to signpost to this page from your website or recruitment adverts.

You can find out more about offering an apprenticeship, and the way it can help your business, at [take on an apprentice](#).

Shared Parental Leave: Are you prepared?

New regulations on Shared Parental Leave are coming into effect, allowing parents the option to share the mother's maternity leave. The new rules apply to couples with babies due or children matched or placed for adoption on or after **5 April 2015**.

Under the new rules, mother's will still take at least two weeks of maternity leave immediately after birth, but after that working couples have the opportunity to share up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay.

Information about how this will affect employees and employers is available at [Shared Parental Leave](#).

Universal Credit National Rollout

Universal Credit is a radical new benefit that reduces poverty by making work pay. It combines six benefits into one and improves incentives to work. The new service is already available in nearly 100 jobcentres across England, Wales and Scotland and will [rollout nationally](#) from February 2015.

It is paid monthly for both people who are in work on a low income, or unemployed.

Universal Credit ends the 16 hours a week rule that may have previously led people to restrict the hours they work to avoid losing their benefit. This means Universal Credit can help your business for example, through a more flexible workforce.

For more information on how Universal Credit benefits employers, please read our [frequently asked questions](#).

Automatic Enrolment: Look out for a letter from The Pensions Regulator

The Pensions Regulator will be writing to all small employers over the coming months to ensure they know when their workplace pension duties start. If you get this letter, please open it. It will provide you with key information such as when the law will start to apply to you (known as your 'staging' date).

It also asks you to nominate a contact to receive regular, useful and relevant information from the regulator in the run up to the date your duties come into force.

Once you know your staging date, you can use the [planning tool](#) on The Pensions Regulator's website that will help you to identify what you need to do to be ready for automatic enrolment.

Pension Schemes

The introduction of the new State Pension on **6 April 2016** means that contracting out will end. Employers who operate a contracted out pension scheme need to be aware of the changes. A [State Pension toolkit](#) is available online.

The December issue of the [HMRC Employer Bulletin](#) has an article about changes in NIC rates and the removal of the use of a temporary Scheme Contracted-out Number (SCON) on the Full Payment Submissions (FPS). [HMRC Countdown Bulletins](#) also have information about these changes.

Pension Statements extended to those 55 or over

The state pension statement service has been extended to include people aged 55 and over. Statements give individuals an estimate of how much they may get under the new State Pension based on their current National Insurance record. Until now the scheme was only open to people over the age of 60. Eligible people can [download an application form](#) and send to the address given or call the Future Pension Centre on 0345 3000 168. To find out more, watch the case study on [Pension Tube](#).

ACAS - New Discipline and Grievance code of practice

ACAS has published a revised Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance, which clarifies the rules around who can accompany workers to a grievance or disciplinary hearing. This follows an Employment Appeal Tribunal ruling and consultation exercise.

For more information, please see [Acas online](#).

Help from Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus offers a range of recruitment services that can help you as an employer. You could get:

- . Recruitment advice and support, including the Universal Jobmatch vacancy system
- . Help setting up work trials to give you the opportunity to try out potential recruits
- . Help with offering work experience placements or apprenticeships

You can find out more about [help for employers](#) and [advertise your vacancies](#) online.

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