



Touchbase

August 2013

Welcome to the August Touchbase



Sharrion Llewellyn, Editor

This month we report on two initiatives that have been designed to help improve the long-term employment outcomes for disabled people.

On 18 July, DWP hosted the first Disability Employment Conference which opened with a keynote speech from Prime Minister, David Cameron.

The conference also saw the launch of the Disability Confident campaign which aims to inspire employers to make it their business to recognise the talents and skills disabled people bring to the workforce.

Both the conference and the launch of the campaign were highly successful and have been well received by employers and other key stakeholders.

We also report on the changes to Access to Work to extend it to disabled people on traineeships, supported internships, work trials and work academies. This will help to ensure that more young disabled people have access to the support they need to get their careers on track.

Other reports this month includes information on the completion of the Universal Credit Pathfinder roll out in Greater Manchester and details about the changes to the disputes and appeals process.

You can also find out about Older People's Day, Full of Life, on 1 October and the Social Justice Conference and award ceremony on 30 October.

You and your colleagues can register for an e-alert, which you will receive when [Touchbase](#) is published, on the DWP Advisers and intermediaries website. Visit our [Touchbase subscriptions page](#) to register.



To provide feedback on [Touchbase](#) email corporate.stakeholders@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

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Disability Confident campaign launched

The Prime Minister David Cameron says that employers need to be given the confidence to employ disabled people.

Mr Cameron was speaking at DWP's first national Disability Employment Conference on 18 July which was attended by more than 300 businesses.

The Disability Confident campaign aims to encourage employers to be positive about the skills that disabled people bring to business and to remove barriers to recruiting and retaining disabled employees.

In turn, the Disability Confident campaign aims to support businesses to become more confident when recruiting and retaining disabled employees.

The Prime Minister said: "We need to break the myth about the complexities of employing disabled people, or to put it more simply – to give employers confidence. That is why we are launching the Disability Confident campaign"

Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Dr Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Business by Innovation and Skills, also joined employers to talk about the Government's commitment to support disabled people to raise and realise their career aspirations.

The audience of around 300 employers, included FTSE 100 companies, small businesses and disabled entrepreneurs.

Another 100 employers joined the conference via video link-ups from regional locations including Aberdeen, Birmingham and Cardiff and many more watched the event live online.

They heard what the government is doing to support disabled people and employers. They also heard from employers such as Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou who talked about his disabled entrepreneurs award and others who talked about their journey to becoming disability confident and from talented disabled entrepreneurs.

To help support employers become disability confident the government has launched a new Employer Portal. The portal brings together a range of guidance on employing disabled people and people with health conditions.

In addition, as part of the Disability Confident campaign, the government will be:

- Hosting a series of regional business breakfasts on proposals for a dedicated employer service.
- Supporting the roll out of business-led commitments to hire more disabled people.
- Raising employers' awareness of the new Employer Portal and of current government initiatives, such as Access to Work, that help employers to hire and keep disabled people.

Prime Minister David Cameron gives the keynote speech at the Disability Employment Conference July 13



Drive to get more disabled people into mainstream jobs



Esther McVey, Minister for Disabled People

Access to Work support has been extended to disabled people on traineeships, supported internships, work trials and in work academies.

The changes to Access to Work, part of the government's specialist disability employment scheme, will help disabled people to get more support to gain the skills and experience they need to get a job.

The Access to Work scheme already provides funding towards the extra costs disabled people face in work, such as travel costs, specially adapted equipment or support workers.

Minister for Disabled People Esther McVey said: "Young disabled people tell me how difficult it can be to get a job without experience – and they want the same choice of training opportunities as everyone else to help them into work.

"We're opening up Access to Work to do just that – so that more young disabled people can get a foothold in the jobs market, get their careers on track and achieve their full potential."

Disabled people will now be able to use Access to Work support for a number of programmes:

- Supported internships – this is a Department for Education (DfE) programme for young people who have complex learning difficulties or disabilities. Internships provide a structured learning programme with an

employer that is tailored to meet the individual needs of young people

- Traineeships – this is a new programme being offered by the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and DfE to support young people to develop the skills they need to secure employment, this includes apprenticeships. Places will begin to be available from August 2013
- Sector-based work academies – these offer pre-employment training and work placements in growth industries with a guaranteed job interview at the end of the placement
- Self-Made Work Trials - young disabled people will be able to set up their own work trial with a local employer if there is a realistic prospect that they will be offered a job at the end of it.

Work Experience placements offer young people a chance to experience the world of work and also helps to build their CVs and job skills. You can find out more about the changes from the Written Ministerial Statement, press release or the Access to Work site on Gov.UK



[Written Ministerial Statement on Access to Work](#)
[Access to Work press release](#)
[GOV.UK - Access to Work](#)

Stakeholder support for Disability Employment Conference and Disability Confident campaign

DWP worked with partners from private and voluntary organisations to plan and provide content for the national Disability Employment Conference.

In the lead up to the event DWP also worked with partners to publish a number of short films about disability employment on our [Disability Confident You Tube channel](#).

Our partners include; Leonard Cheshire Disability, Business Disability Forum, Channel 4, Barclays, dePoel, English Federation of Disability Sports, Media Trust, Reed smith and KPMG.

Partners also supported communications for the conference. They used their owned channels and networks to increase communications reach and impact over social media. As a result, on the day of the conference, the hashtag #disabilityconfident trended number one on Twitter in the UK and delivered a cumulative reach of over 13.5 million.

A number of stakeholders – Whizz-Kidz, Clear Company, Pluss, Council of Disabled People, Action for Blind People and Essex Coalition of Disabled People – also supported the conference and promoted the Disability Confident campaign through twitter, sharing links for the new Employer Portal, and publishing news stories and blogs on their websites.

This is what some of our partners had to say about the need to employ people with disabilities:

Clare Pelham, Chief Executive of Leonard Cheshire Disability said: 'We know that our best companies value talent. We also know there are tremendously talented disabled people searching for work and they could be our country's future leaders or entrepreneurs if they are given the chance.'

Ashok Vaswani, Chief Executive of Barclays Retail and Business Banking said: "We need to constantly challenge and change both the way we think and how we do business. We must recognise that being disability confident isn't a problem to be overcome: it's an opportunity not to be missed."

And Matthew Sanders, CEO of de Poel and Placeability, said: "To address disabled people's barriers to work we need to work harder to educate employers. Employing a disabled person shouldn't be thought of along the lines of ticking a CSR box. Creating greater inclusion and equality in the workforce is a win win for all involved."

Please support the campaign; share the 'Disability Confident' videos on your social network sites and take a look at the [Employer Portal](#) and encourage your employer contacts to use the information and guidance it contains.



Universal Credit Pathfinder roll-out completed

The roll out of the Universal Credit Pathfinder was successfully completed on 29 July when Warrington and Oldham Jobcentres began accepting claims.

Ashton-under-Lyne and Wigan have already been taking new claims to Universal Credit with the majority of them being made online.

All the Pathfinder sites have been using the new Claimant Commitment and have been reviewing the progress of the activities claimants have signed up to. The Jobcentres are all being supported by the Universal Credit Service Centres in Bolton and Glasgow.

DWP is committed to rolling out Universal Credit in a careful and controlled way. The plan is to start small, to test it, take on board any lessons learnt and to refine it if necessary before rolling it out in six new areas across England, Scotland and Wales from October 2013 and full migration by 2017.

People with queries about Universal Credit should be directed to Gov.UK/UniversalCredit, which has been updated. The [Universal Credit partner toolkit](#) has also been refreshed, and further products will be added in the coming weeks to help partner organisations explain Universal Credit to their customers.

More information is also available at Gov.UK/UniversalCredit



More information is also available at GOV.UK/universal-credit



Changes to the disputes and appeals process

Customers are being encouraged to include all the relevant evidence they have to support their claim when they first make an application for benefit.

The focus on early evidence provision is part of the changes that DWP is making to the disputes and appeals process. The aim is to ensure that more cases are resolved at the earliest opportunity within DWP so that there are fewer unnecessary appeals to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS).

The Department believes that one of the reasons why many cases go to appeal is that customers do not always disclose all the information they have about their circumstances when they first submit an application. This means that decision makers do not have all the information they need to make an informed decision on whether to award a benefit.

Customers are now being encouraged to help ensure that the decision DWP makes about their case is "right first time". Also, if a customer finds they have overlooked any relevant evidence they are being asked to send it to DWP as soon as possible, rather than waiting for an appeal hearing before they present it.

It is important for customers to send any extra evidence to the decision maker for consideration as soon as possible as the decision maker may be able to revise a decision fully in the customer's favour, without the customer having to

go through a time-consuming appeals process.

From 28 October 2013, if they do not agree with a decision, all customers will need to ask DWP to reconsider it, before they will be able to make an appeal to HMCTS. This is called the 'mandatory reconsideration' stage.

During a mandatory reconsideration, customers will be able to talk through a disputed decision with the decision maker and to provide any extra evidence which might help their case.

Following the mandatory reconsideration, even if the decision maker cannot change a decision wholly in the customer's favour, they may be able to make a partial change and a new decision. Any money due to the customer as a result would be paid as soon as possible.

The customer will still have the right to appeal against this new decision.



DWP can still change a decision, even after an appeal has been lodged, providing the customer supplies new and relevant evidence. More information is available on the [DWP corporate website](#).

Social Justice Conference and award ceremony

DWP and GovKnow will be holding a second Social Justice conference on 30 October 2013 at Westminster Hall.

This will be a high profile, informative and wide ranging event that will provide a practical understanding of the Governments Social Justice strategy. It will also be an opportunity to network with others from across the country who have also been charged with bringing the strategy to life.

You can view the agenda on the [Conference Website](#).

This year the conference will conclude with an awards ceremony for the Social Justice Awards that have been funded by our sponsors.

Nominations are open to everyone working in the Social Justice area. Winners will be chosen from a shortlist of nominees in three categories:

- Small and Medium sized Employers award for delivering Social Justice
- The Big Lottery Fund Community Award for turning lives around
- The Social Justice Champion award.



For more information on the criteria and how to nominate yourself or someone else for a Social Justice award, please visit: [Social Justice Awards](#).



“This will be a high profile, informative and wide ranging event that will provide a practical understanding of the Governments Social Justice strategy.”

UK Older People's Day

Organisations throughout the country are being urged to help celebrate UK Older People's Day on 1 October by holding or attending events.

Older People's Day, which uses the Full of Life banner, is in its seventh year and is an opportunity to celebrate the contribution that older people make to our society, such as volunteering, as well as to the economy.

The aim is for everyone in government and in other supporting groups, as well as from all generations, to join together as part of Full of Life, not only to have a great day, but also to help tackle negative attitudes and any outdated stereotyping of older people.

An interactive website www.olderpeoplesday.co.uk has been set up to allow you to play a role in the activities that are featured, provide information about what you are planning to do and to give and receive feedback.

Some of the information and features you can find on Full of Life website includes:

- Free resources and branding to help you plan and promote your event
- A news section with the opportunity for you to post and showcase your events and stories
- Regular updates about what is going on around the UK
- An easy and quick way to advertise your activities using your own brochures, posters or links to your own website
- The facility to add your comments on the site.

Full of Life events and activities take place throughout the year, culminating with the main celebrations on and around 1 October 2013.

Please support us in making 2013 the biggest, most celebrated older people's day by planning and sharing some fantastic and inspiring events in your local community.



If you have any queries please contact us at dwp.fulloflife@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

If you wish to liaise with your local contact for the DWP National Partnership you can find them by following the relevant link:

[Central England](#)

[London and the Home Counties](#)

[North East](#)

[North West](#)

[Scotland](#)

[Southern England](#)

[Wales](#)

Have your say on the free movement of people within the European Union

DWP and the Home Office are seeking evidence from stakeholders on how the people they represent are affected by the Free Movement of Persons within the European Union (EU).

The Free Movement of Persons within the EU is one of the 'Four Freedoms' of the single market.

The EU's competence or power to act to enable the Free Movement of Persons within the EU Free can have wide-ranging implications for the economy, labour market and access to employment, social and cultural issues, social security and the provision of public services.

The call to evidence is being carried out because the rights to free movement enjoyed by British and other EU citizens living in or visiting other Member States and by EU nationals who come to the UK, are an important part of the debate on the future of Europe.

The evidence we receive will be used to inform our reports to ensure that we can make a constructive and serious contribution to the wider European debate on how to modernise, reform and improve the EU.

The [Call for Evidence](#) closes on 5 August, so you will need to submit your evidence as soon as possible.

The report will be published late in 2013 and is part of a cross-Government review of the nature of the UK's relationship with the EU.

You can find out more information about report and the review at [Review-of-the-Balance-of-Competences](#)



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Farewell to cheque payments

DWP made its final cheque payments to benefit and pension customers on 19 July.

The end of cheque payments is the final stage in the Department's strategy towards 100 per cent electronic payments.

Cheques are vulnerable to fraud and abuse and can get lost or delayed in the post. Direct payment into a bank, building society, credit union, or Post Office card account is safer, more reliable and gives people more choice about where they can collect their money.

Simple Payment was launched nationally in October 2012 for those people who are unable to operate an account of any kind.

Money can be collected from any PayPoint outlet displaying the Simple Payment sign. Customers will need to take along their Simple Payment card, proof of ID

and a memorable date, which is initially set as the customer's date of birth. More information about different forms of ID can be found on the [Simple Payment](#) website.

Simple Payment has been designed to allow flexibility for carers who collect payments on someone's behalf. The service is more secure than cheques and can be used by regular or casual carers, professionals such as home helps and health workers or trusted family and friends.

All claimants and pensioners who were previously using cheque payments have now been moved onto alternative payment methods, including where appropriate, Simple Payment.

“Simple Payment has been designed to allow flexibility for carers who collect payments on someone's behalf. The service is more secure than cheques and can be used by regular or casual carers, professionals ”