

Touchbase

January 2013

Welcome to your monthly e-zine



Welcome to January's Touchbase. It will be a year of many changes for DWP. One of which is the introduction of Personal Independence Payment from April. We explain the implementation timetable, assessment process and have an update on the use of Disability Living Allowance claim forms.

Universal Jobmatch was launched in November 2012, and we look at its early success.

In December 2012, DWP announced a number of projects to encourage positive attitudes towards disabled people in the UK. A new Disability Action Alliance and work to build on the success of the 2012 Paralympic Games will all help to make a difference.

DWP's Carer's Allowance Unit recently held an open day to tell groups representing carers about its work and hopes to hold more of these days in future.

I hope you find Touchbase useful, whether you are a regular reader or it is your first time. 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

In this issue

Personal Independence Payment

An update on implementation



Universal Jobmatch

How the new service is helping Jobseekers and employers



International Day of Disabled People

New projects aim to encourage positive attitudes towards disabled people



Carer's Allowance Unit Open Day

Carer's groups attended an event in Preston



Other news in brief

A round-up of other news



Personal Independence Payment

An update on implementation

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) will be introduced from 8 April 2013 and will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged 16 to 64. It is a key part of the Government's Welfare Reform agenda.

Ministers have decided to complete the reassessment of the bulk of DLA claimants, aged 16 to 64, over a longer period than previously planned. This will allow DWP to learn from the early introduction of PIP and consider the findings of the first independent review of the PIP assessment, which is due by the end of 2014.

PIP timetable

The new timetable is as follows:

**8 April
2013**

New claims to PIP will be taken from areas in the North West and North East of England. The postcodes affected are BL, CA, CH (except CH5, CH6, CH7 and CH8), CW, DH, DL (except DL6, DL7, DL8, DL9, DL10 and DL11), FY, L, LA (except LA2 7, LA2 8, LA6 2 and LA6 3), M, NE, PR, SR, TS (except TS9), WA and WN.

**June
2013**

National roll out of new claims starts.

**October
2013**

Reassessment for PIP begins for DLA claimants reporting a change in their condition, those reaching the end of fixed-period DLA awards and young people turning 16.

**October
2015**

Reassessment of the remaining DLA claimants starts.

PIP communications

DWP will be including information about PIP in DLA uprating letters that will be sent to all DLA claimants between the end of January and the end of February 2013. The letters will help claimants understand what PIP is, how DWP plans to introduce the new benefit and how the changes will affect them.

Advisers and support organisations need to be aware when the letters have been issued, as claimants may contact them. [Information products and presentations](#) are available on the DWP website to help advisers deal with claimant enquiries.

Changes to the assessment criteria and detailed design

On 13 December 2012, the Government published its responses to the recent PIP consultations on the assessment criteria and the detailed design.

Following feedback to the consultation, a series of changes have been made to the assessment criteria which will help to better reflect individual needs and focus support on the people who need it most.

Changes have also been made to some of the benefit rules, including extending the temporary absences abroad from 4 to 13 weeks before benefit is affected.

The [PIP assessment thresholds and consultation response](#), and the [consultation response on the detailed design for PIP](#), are on the DWP website.

PIP assessments

Most PIP claimants will be invited to attend a face-to-face consultation as part of the assessment process. This differs from the current DLA process. The consultation will focus on how a person's condition affects their ability to live an independent life, by looking at their ability to carry out a range of key, everyday activities.

The assessments will be delivered in a consistent way. Providers will deliver to the same, high standards and be carefully monitored, to ensure the quality and consistency of assessments.

Atos will be working in partnership with the NHS, private hospitals and national networks of locally-based health professionals, such as physiotherapists, using their premises and staff to undertake face-to-face consultations.

Capita expect that a large number of consultations will be in claimants' own homes. Their approach allows claimants to choose their preferred method of contact and select their appointment time.

Both providers aim to employ a significant proportion of staff who have disabilities or long-term health conditions themselves.


Update on DLA claim forms

DWP is keen to reduce confusion and the impact on claimants as it moves towards the introduction of PIP, by making sure that the correct forms are used at the right time.

From 21 January 2013, partner organisations will no longer be able to place bulk orders for the printed DLA1A Adult range of claim packs. This includes the standard, large print, Welsh and Welsh large print versions. Existing stocks can continue to be used for now and DLA Child forms aren't affected.

DLA claim forms for a named individual can be requested by calling the helpline on 08457 123456. This will help register an initial date of claim, and ensure that the appropriate advice is given.

DWP will write in March to those people who have previously ordered forms, to explain when to stop using DLA claim forms.

 **Further information about [Personal Independence Payment](#) is on the [GOV.UK website](#).**

“Ministers have decided to complete the reassessment of the bulk of DLA claimants, aged 16 to 64, over a longer period than previously planned.”

Universal Jobmatch

How the new service is helping Jobseekers and employers



Universal Jobmatch is DWP's new online job posting and matching service for companies and Jobseekers. It is an important part of the Government's plan for providing easy, online access to government services. The service will make it easier and quicker for claimants to search for jobs and get back to work.

Universal Jobmatch modernises and streamlines DWP's existing services for companies. Claimants will be actively matched to jobs, where previously they could only search for jobs. By simplifying their jobsearch, claimants will get more targeted support from DWP advisers, such as coaching in CV writing.

What has happened so far

Over 330,000 company records have been transferred to Universal Jobmatch, and it currently holds over 220,000 vacancies.

In the first three weeks of running the service:

- Over 460,000 jobseekers have created a Universal Jobmatch account
- Over 39,000 new employers, who were not part of the original transfer, have created an account
- On an average working day, over five million job searches are carried out.

An Employer Adviser in Wales had a Universal Jobmatch success in the first week of the new service going live. After contacting a local company to check the details of a new job, the adviser discovered that the company had posted the job on Thursday evening. By Friday morning the company had already received a number of application and said that they had found the new service much faster. The company carried out interviews on Friday afternoon and the successful Jobseeker started work on Monday 26 November.



More information about [Universal Jobmatch](#) is on the [DWP website](#).

DWP marks International Day of Disabled People

New projects aim to encourage positive attitudes towards disabled people

To mark the International Day of Disabled People on 3 December 2012, DWP announced several projects aimed at encouraging positive attitudes towards disabled people in the UK.

Role models – inspire a generation

This campaign aims to inspire young disabled people to fulfil their potential and achieve their aspirations.

As part of this, Esther McVey, the Minister for Disabled People, has supported a group of young disabled people to work together to identify a range of inspiring role models. The young people were nominated by organisations such as: the National Children's Bureau, Whizz-Kids, Apasenth, Essex Unite, Include Me Too and Disability Rights UK.

The young people interviewed their chosen role models. A series of short, subtitled video clips have been produced in which the role models talk about their aspirations and achievements and any barriers they have had to overcome.

The first clips are now on [YouTube](#), with more to be added. They have been a success, with hundreds of views so far. Also, the Twitter hashtag #rolemodelinspire has reached over 10,000 accounts.

Please share the videos on your social network sites to help spread the word about the campaign.

Disability Action Alliance

This new group has been set up to take practical action to improve the lives of disabled people. Disability Rights UK arranged an initial meeting with a cross-section of public, private and third sectors organisations, including disabled people's organisations.

Organisations are welcome to join the group and get involved in this work. To find out more about the alliance, email the [Office for Disability Issues](#).

Paralympic Legacy Advisory Group

Building on the huge success of the London 2012 Paralympic Games, Esther McVey is to co-chair this new group. It will advise the Cabinet Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Committee to help ensure that there are positive outcomes for disabled people embedded in the legacy programme.

“The new Disability Action Alliance is a promising initiative which could make an important contribution.”

Justin King, Chief Executive, Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd.



For more information about the role models campaign, email [Alex Kempner](#) at DWP.

Carer's Allowance Unit Open Day

Carer's groups attended an event in Preston

Representatives from over 20 carers groups, such as [Gurkha Welfare](#), [Carers UK](#) and the [Myasthenia Gravis Association](#), recently attended an open day at the Carer's Allowance Unit in Preston.

The invited guests saw presentations about how the unit is currently performing, its revamped Continuous Improvement scheme and the introduction of [Carer's Credit](#). They also found out more about the enhancements currently being made to the Carer's Allowance e-service, which will allow customers to claim the benefit more easily.

Visitors also saw how the contact centre works, and staff from the unit were on hand to answer questions.

Evidence from the day proved to be useful when the Carer's Allowance Unit had a successful [Customer Service Excellence](#) assessment by G4S.

The unit hopes to host similar events in the future. It will continue consulting about the improved e-service with its open day partners.

“Visitors also saw how the contact centre works, and staff from the unit were on hand to answer questions.”

Other news in brief...

Right to Control pilot extension

The testing of Right to Control has been extended to December 2013. Disabled adults [living in participating local authority areas](#) now have an extra 12 months to exercise their legal right to choice and control. They can decide how money is spent, or how certain services are delivered, to support them as they go about their daily lives.

The 12-month extension gives DWP more time to gather information on what effect having this right has had on disabled people and the public agencies that are delivering the pilot.

Sorting out separation web app

On 29 November 2012, the Child Maintenance options '[Sorting out separation](#)' web app went live. It is the first part of the Government's Help and Support for Separated Families Programme, and is the online hub explained in the [Ministry of Justice's Family Justice Review](#).

The web app includes a personalised action planner, to help separated people work out what support they need and signpost them to relevant organisations that can help. It covers subjects such as:

- How to avoid separation
- Coping with the emotional impact of breaking up
- Accessing legal and housing support
- Arranging child maintenance.

The web app is designed to be hosted on existing websites that parents already use, such as [National Family Mediation](#) and [4children](#). Please follow these [instructions](#) if you would like to host the Sorting out separation web app on your website.

Support for mortgage interest temporary measures extended

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the 2012 Autumn Statement on 5 December, that the Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) temporary measures of a shorter 13-week waiting period, and a higher £200,000 capital limit, will be extended until the end of March 2015. The measures were originally introduced in January 2009.

The extension will continue to protect working-age claimants against repossession by providing SMI sooner and up to a higher capital limit. It should allow lenders to find alternative solutions to taking repossession action.

This will provide additional assistance to around 80,000 new claimants a year, who may otherwise be at risk of repossession or a build up of arrears.

The full details are in the [Autumn Statement](#) on the Treasury website.

Future of the Independent Living Fund

A public consultation was recently held on the future of the Independent Living Fund (ILF). It asked for views on the proposal to close the ILF in 2015 and transfer funding to local authorities and the devolved administrations. It also looked at how the transfer of funding and responsibilities to local authorities could be managed in a way to ensure continuity of care and support for existing fund users.

The Government has now considered all the comments received and their [response to the ILF consultation](#) is on the DWP website.

