

# NEWSouthern England Group

jobcentreplus

Department for  
Work and Pensions

## Update 3 - July 2011

### Contents

*To open links contained in this newsletter right click on the link and "open hyperlink"*

#### Welfare Reform Update

- Welfare Reform Bill
- Incapacity Benefits Reassessment

#### Get Britain Working Update

- Work Programme
- Work Experience
- Innovation Fund
- Flexible Support Fund

#### Other News in Brief

- Passported benefits consultation
- Sayce review recommendations
- Worklessness Co- Design report
- Online enhancements

### Welcome to the third edition of NEWS.

I am really delighted with the positive feedback received from some of our external stakeholders about this newsletter.

Many have said how useful they find the updates, so I will be capitalising on this in the near future by asking you to complete a questionnaire so that I can gather your views and seek to continuously improve the newsletter to meet your needs.

In this edition you will find information about the introduction of The Work Programme; DWP's commitment to host Work Experience Placements and details of an evaluation of the Incapacity Benefit Reassessment trail.

On 30 June 2011, DWP invited eligible organisations on the framework for the Provision of Employment Related Support Services (ERSS) to tender for European Social Fund (ESF) 2011–13 provision. This tender is limited to organisations on the ERSS Framework in England only and is for Support for Families with Multiple Problems. Details can be found by following this link [European Social Fund - DWP](#). I will cover this in more detail in the next edition.

As ever I hope you find this newsletter helpful and please continue to send me your comments and suggestions for future editions.

**Lynda Jones**  
Southern England Group Senior Partnerships Manager

# Welfare Reform Update

The **Welfare Reform Bill** reached a key milestone in Parliament on 15 June 2011, receiving its Third Reading in the House of Commons and has now passed to the House of Lords for further reading and debate.

The overall legislative process is expected to be completed by the end of 2011, with the Bill then receiving Royal Assent and becoming law.

Once it becomes law, the Bill will provide the legislation needed to overhaul the existing welfare system. This includes the introduction of **Universal Credit**, creating a simpler, integrated benefit for people both in and out of work and **Personal Independence Payment**, which will replace Disability Living Allowance for working age individuals.

The Government will also legislate for changes to Housing Benefit and to Child Maintenance arrangements. **Carer's Allowance will not form part of the Bill.**

Other issues covered by the Bill, include:

- The introduction of a more effective sanctions process for benefit claimants.
- New powers to deal with fraud and error.
- Improved data sharing with those providing welfare services in local authorities.
- A household cap on benefit.
- Time limits for Employment and Support Allowance.
- Reforms to the Social Fund.

## Incapacity Benefits (IB) Reassessment

An independent research company IFF Research was commissioned by DWP to evaluate the reassessment trial, which began in October 2010 in Aberdeen and Burnley .

The final report was published on 1 June 2011 and presents findings from qualitative research exploring customer and staff experiences during the trial.

The report found that both Jobcentre Plus staff and customers reacted positively to initial communications explaining the reassessment process . However, customers reactions to the Work Capability Assessment and phone calls telling them they had been judged "fit for work" were mixed.

## What is in the Welfare Reform Bill ?

Information on what is included in the Welfare Bill can be found via the following link: [Welfare Reform Bill](#)

## Where can I find out more about Universal Credit ?

For the latest briefing notes go to the following link.

[Universal Credit briefing notes DWP](#)

You can read the full report and the recommendations made :

[IB Reassessment Report](#)

# Welfare Reform Update continued

## Incapacity Benefit Reassessment continued:

Many changes to the reassessment process that were recommended by the research team have already been made.

These include :

- Ensuring decision making is done in a consistent way.
- Making it clearer to customers in the Work Related Activity Group that they are expected to “ move towards work “ rather than required to get a job straight away.
- Giving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) decision makers the flexibility to call customers back at a different time if they think customers are not ready to discuss what happens next when they are telling people they cannot claim ESA.

# Get Britain Working Update

**Get Britain Working** includes a number of measures to support Jobcentre Plus customers, including the Work Programme.

## The Work Programme

Work Programme Providers within the Southern England Group have started delivering the Work Programme and have already received over **10,000** referrals.

Employment Minister Chris Grayling met with some of the first Jobcentre Plus customers to start on the Work Programme.

Discussing the Work Programme he said : “ *Customers will join the Programme for up to two years, so providers will have a real chance to address the most serious disadvantages some of our customers face in the labour market .Once customers have found a job ,we will pay providers to help them keep it for up to 18 months for mainstream jobseekers, and up to 27 months for an Employment and Support Allowance customer moving from incapacity benefits. We are investing in outcomes that last. I am confident we have given the Work Programme every chance of making a real difference to long term worklessness “*

## How will the reassessment affect Customers?

For the latest information about IB reassessment as well as the latest stakeholders information pack go to

[Incapacity Benefit – reassessing claims - DWP](#)

The following providers will be delivering the Work Programme in the Southern Group :

A4E  
Maximus  
Avanta  
G4S  
Prospects  
Working Links  
JHP  
Rehab - Jobfit

# Get Britain Working

## Update continued

### Work Programme Access Points

Benefit	Access Point
Jobseeker's Allowance 18-24	9 months
Jobseeker's Allowance 25+	12 months
Jobseeker's Allowance NEET; Repeaters; ex-Incapacity Benefit	3 months
Jobseeker's Allowance severely disadvantaged	Optional from 3 months
New Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) Work Related Activity Group claimants	When expected to be fit for work in 3 months, or optional at any time if youngest child under 5 or full time carer
All other new Employment and Support Allowance claimants	Optional from Work Capability Assessment outcome
Income Support claimants	Optional from benefit entitlement (England only)
Incapacity Benefits claimants	Optional at any time (England only)
Pension Credit claimants	Optional from 12 months claiming benefits (or from entitlement with health condition)

**The Work Programme is based on the needs of individuals, rather than the benefit they claim and will supplement the support provided by Jobcentre Plus Advisory Service Teams.**

# Get Britain Working

## Update continued

### Work Experience

Work Experience is one of the additional support measures that Jobcentre Plus can use to help individuals (aged 18-24) into work prior to them becoming eligible for referral to the Work Programme.

DWP have announced a commitment to host 3,000 Work Experience placements within the Department by the end of March 2013. This is nearly two thirds of the cross- Departmental pledge.

Each Work Experience placement increases the employment chances for young people, by providing them with recent work and life experiences and a reference. Self confidence is a major barrier to getting work. DWP hope that people participating in the Work Experience initiative will grow in confidence.

### DWP Innovation Fund

On 12 May 2011, Ministers announced a series of measures to help address youth unemployment. These included a new 'Innovation Fund' which will help us to test new delivery models to support our most disadvantaged customers.

In simple terms, delivery organisations will partner with financial backers to develop a proposal. The proposal will be submitted to DWP for consideration and, if selected, the financiers will cover all the delivery costs and DWP will pay the financiers an agreed amount at the point the specified outcomes are achieved.

£30 million over three years will be available under the Innovation Fund to pilot new delivery models. All of the Innovation Fund pilots will be fully evaluated to assess the potential for wider usage.

The **Innovation Fund Initial Application Form** is now available on DWP website along with the prospectus which provides some introductory information and background on the Innovation Fund.

Any queries should be directed to the following dedicated email address - [innovation.fund@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:innovation.fund@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).

You can access the initial application form and view the prospectus on the DWP website:  
[Innovation Fund](#)

# Get Britain Working continued

## Flexible Support Fund

The fund, which came into operation in April 2011, gives **Jobcentre Plus District Managers** more flexibility to help customers back to work. This enables Jobcentre Plus Advisers to tailor support and help for individual customers when they need it.

The aim of the fund is to supplement other resources available under the JCP Offer (i.e. before they are referred to the Work Programme) and is intended to help maximise performance and support ministerial priorities. The fund is made up of three parts:

- A fully flexible element.
- The Support Contract.
- A ring fenced amount specifically for Lone Parents, Partners, Carers, Employment and Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit claimants.

Both the flexible and ring fenced elements can be used to provide a range of support tailored to individual needs including local training provision or job search.

**The fund can also be used to support partnership working** and allows District Managers additional scope to influence local priorities and engage with partners in a practical way. This will be delivered through a process of **Grant Funding**.

We will shortly be placing some information on the DWP Internet site to alert partners that District Managers have the scope to support partnerships through grant funding.

## Other News in Brief

### Passported benefits consultation

An independent review into the provision of passported benefits under Universal Credit has been launched – and your views are needed.

Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, has commissioned the Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) to carry out the review.

For the purposes of the review, passported benefits are defined as those benefits to which working age claimants of some DWP or HMRC means-tested benefits are automatically entitled, for example free school meals, free prescriptions and free dental treatment.

The consultation was launched on 16 June and will run until **22 July 2011**. The committee will prepare an interim report in September 2011 and a report of its findings in January 2012.

District Managers will continue to engage with local public and voluntary organisations, particularly where this joins up collective efforts and stimulates solutions for improving employment and skills.

District Managers will have some scope to support local partnership working to improve employment outcomes or prospects of future employment, for communities and individuals facing the most complex and intractable barriers to work. Managers will prioritise the use of resources, including supporting any appropriate partnership work, in line with local needs.

If you wish to take part in the consultation please visit the link below:

[Consultation page on the SSAC website](#)

# Other News in Brief continued

## Sayce Review recommendations

An independent review , which was led by RADAR Chief Executive, Liz Sayce is recommending that Government support for Employment Services for Disabled People should be focused on individuals and not institutions. This will allow disabled people access to a range of jobs, across a variety of sectors.

Ministers intend to consult on some of the Sayce review recommendations before making any decisions.

To read the full report and find out more visit :  
[Specialist Disability Employment Support intranet page](#)

## Working together to tackle unemployment

The recent Worklessness Co-Design report shows how DWP and its partners are working together to help people into work.

Five Local Authority areas : Birmingham, Bradford, Lewisham, South Tyneside and **Swindon** have worked with DWP and Jobcentre Plus to put in place tailored local programmes to help people find and stay in work.

In Swindon, Plan 500 has been established to help create 500 new work-related opportunities for young people, aged 16 to 24 years. Businesses can offer apprenticeships, mentoring or work experience to young people through this scheme.

For further information see : [DWP internet site](#)

## Online enhancements

Enhancements to the **Benefits Adviser on Directgov** means that customers have more information about their benefit entitlements.

The service provides customers with information about 28 different benefits, pensions and credits. It gives customers the option of entering “what if “ scenarios, so that they can see how starting work or increasing their hours would affect their benefits.

The latest changes should make the system more user friendly, accurate and up to date.

You can find more information on the [Benefits Adviser site](#).

## Useful websites

Right click on link and select “open hyperlink”

Direct Gov contains information about all Jobcentre Plus services and future changes.

The DWP website contains general information about the Government’s Welfare Reform Agenda.

[Direct Gov website](#)

[DWP Adviser](#)

[Welfare Reform Bill 2011 - DWP](#)

The DWP monthly electronic newsletter Touch Base e-zine is available – to access right click on the link below and select open hyperlink

[Keeping in Touch](#)

### Tell us what you think

If you have any comments regarding this update or indeed would like to raise any issues please contact:

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