



# Touchbase

## November 2012

### Welcome to your monthly e-zine



**Graham Millward, Editor**

Welcome to November's Touchbase. Our recent survey showed that readers are very happy with the publication, 90 per cent saying they are satisfied with the information they get, and almost everyone who responded said that they get the right level of detail for their needs.

You will notice a few design changes to Touchbase over the coming months and we will be widening the range of topics covered. As ever, if you have a suggestion for a topic, please get in touch.

This month, Universal Jobmatch launches and we explain how jobseekers and companies can benefit from using the service. We also look at how the Tell Us Once service is expanding and helping more people in difficult times.

Change is the theme as a new sanctions regime

for Employment and Support Allowance is about to be introduced, Industrial Injuries Benefits are being revised and Simple Payment is replacing cheque payments.

There is a preview of Carers Rights Day, which takes place at the end of the month, and we look at how GOV.UK's launch gives people a new way to access Government services.

I hope you find Touchbase useful, whether you are a regular reader or this 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](mailto:corporate.stakeholders@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

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# Simple Payment

## Cheque payments are being replaced



Simple Payment was launched nationally on 8 October 2012 for new claimants and pensioners. It is designed for people who cannot use bank, building society, credit union or Post Office card accounts.

DWP is writing to people who are currently paid by cheque. When it is their turn to make the switch, they will receive a letter introducing Simple Payment, including the details of two PayPoint outlets close to where they live that offer the Simple Payment service. The letter will be followed by a welcome pack that has all the information people need to start

getting their money by Simple Payment, including their Simple Payment card. The letters also tell people what to do if they need extra help and support, or want to be paid direct into an account or Post Office card account. The phased migration of existing customers currently paid by cheque started on 8 October and finishes in March 2013.

Before national roll out of Simple Payment, DWP ran a pilot involving a small number of people living in Stockton in the North East of England, and Newry in Northern Ireland, to make sure the service was working as it should. This involved people who were making a new claim for a benefit or pension and existing cheque users.



**More information about Simple Payment is on the GOV.UK website. You can give feedback about Simple Payment by sending an email.**

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# Universal Jobmatch

## How companies and jobseekers will use the new service

Universal Jobmatch, DWP's new, free, online job posting and matching service, launches on 19 November 2012.

The new service replaces the current vacancy management services for companies, Employer Direct and Employer Direct Online. It also replaces the Jobcentre Plus jobs and skills search facility for jobseekers. New technology will help to speed up the recruitment process for companies and jobseekers by automatically matching jobseekers' CVs and skills to jobs posted online.

The new, streamlined service will be available through the new GOV.UK website for companies and people looking for work.

### What does this mean for companies?

Companies who want to post a job will access Universal Jobmatch through GOV.UK. They will be prompted to register for a Government Gateway account if they do not already have one. Companies who are already registered with Employer Direct and Employer Direct Online will have their accounts automatically migrated to Universal Jobmatch.

When logged into Universal Jobmatch, companies will be able to:

- Self serve and post their jobs online
- Receive a list of suitable jobseekers ranked by best match first
- Invite jobseekers to apply for jobs online



- Post a number of jobs in one go.

### What does this mean for jobseekers?

Jobseekers will use Universal Jobmatch to search for jobs through GOV.UK. They will be prompted to register for a Government Gateway account if they do not already have one. Once registered they will be given a user ID. Jobseekers will also need their own email address. Jobseekers living in the same household cannot use the same email address.

When logged into Universal Jobmatch, jobseekers will be able to:

- Upload or build a new CV
- Be automatically matched to suitable jobs
- Receive email alerts about new jobs posted.



**A frequently asked questions document about Universal Jobmatch is available on the DWP website.**

# Mandating claimants to the Work Programme

## Help for Employment and Support Allowance claimants

DWP launched the Work Programme in June 2011. It is the biggest single payment-by-results employment programme in Britain, and will eventually provide personalised support to 3.3 million claimants.

In the year to March 2012, the number of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants mandated to the Work Programme was significantly lower than expected. As a result, DWP is concerned that not enough claimants are getting the support they need. Additionally, providers have raised concerns about how their business models and supply chains are being affected by the low number of participants. Therefore, the Department is increasing the number of ESA claimants who can access the Work Programme by making referral mandatory for specific income-related ESA claimants in the Work Related Activity Group.

### The changes are being introduced in three phases:

**Phase 1** - From 10 September 2012, DWP started to mandate ESA claimants that it thinks should have another Work Capability Assessment in three or six months time, and who previously received support from Pathways to Work, to the Work Programme.

**Phase 2** - From mid-November 2012, and subject to agreement with existing Work Programme providers, DWP is working towards mandating all ESA claimants that it thinks should have another Work Capability Assessment in 12 months, to the Work Programme.

**Phase 3** - In December 2012, the Department hopes to start a pilot which will test how ESA claimants, that it thinks should have another Work Capability Assessment in 18 or 24 months, can be supported by the Work Programme.

DWP is confident that Work Programme providers and their sub-contractors, including charities and voluntary groups that work specifically with people with health issues and those who need specialist help, will be able to provide the positive and intensive help. This is what claimants with longer-term health conditions need, to help prepare them for a return to work.



**More information about [Employment and Support Allowance](#) is on the [DWP website](#).**

# Employment and Support Allowance new sanctions regime

## Changes are due to be introduced from December 2012

As part of the rules set out in the Welfare Reform Act 2012, DWP is introducing a revised sanctions regime as well as making more money available through hardship funds, for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants who are in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG). It is intended that these changes will be introduced from early December 2012.

Four weeks before the changes, DWP will send letters to all ESA (WRAG) claimants who could potentially be affected by the changes. The letters will include details of a helpline they can use if they need more information about the changes.

Helpline staff will provide claimants with general information about the changes and about what support they can get. They will not have access to claimants' benefit information.

The helpline will be available on weekdays between 8am and 6pm, and will be open from 15 November to 21 December 2012. The helpline number is 0845 602 3024, or textphone 0845 608 8551.

### New sanctions regime

The new sanctions regime will pave the way for the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013.

This regime will strengthen, and make clear to claimants, the link between them receiving benefit and the requirement to do everything reasonable to find or prepare for work.

ESA claimants may be sanctioned if they do not:

- Attend or take part in a Work Focused Interview
- Carry out prescribed work-related activity.

Claimants who fail to carry out these activities could lose the Personal Allowance component of their ESA until they comply with requirements, followed by a fixed period sanction of one, two or four weeks. The ESA Work Related Activity component will be unaffected during the sanction.

### Hardship Reforms

The Government is committed to protecting vulnerable people and their dependants. DWP intends to introduce access to hardship provision. ESA claimants will be able to apply for hardship payments from day one of a sanction that is imposed under the new regime.



**Information about the [Employment and Support Allowance sanctions regime](#) is on the [DWP website](#).**





# Tell Us Once

## Making it easier to report births and deaths

Tell Us Once is a service that helps people who need to register a birth or death. Using the service, they can, through one interview, tell up to 28 government services about the change of circumstances.

Tell Us Once is currently offered by around 82 per cent of local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales.

The service makes the process simpler, as:

- People receive faster, cheaper and easier access to government services
- Organisations do not have to deal with as many contacts from people reporting changes.

The service is offered through face-to-face appointments for birth and death

registration, and telephone and online services for registering a death.

Birmingham City Council joined the service on 4 October 2012. They launched it by offering people the opportunity to use the online and telephone service. When Birmingham Registration Service has more resources in place, they will offer the face-to-face service. The Council's participation will make Tell Us Once available to an extra 10,000 bereaved families each year. The Council has predicted that around 70 per cent of people who need to report a death will choose to use the service. This will save considerable time and money for bereaved families and the Council.



**For more information, send an email to [DWP Tell Us Once Communications](#)**



# DWP Enquiry Service

## The final national roll-out stage has started for the service

The DWP Enquiry Service, which forms part of the Department's Digitalisation Programme, has started the second and final stage of its national roll out.

This follows the successful completion of Stage One, which delivered an improved service to many DWP customers. Five contact centres and eight benefit centres were involved.

Stage Two covers all remaining DWP contact centres and benefit centres, and is due for completion during July 2013.

The DWP Enquiry Service provides a flexible and secure service for people and aims to answer the vast majority of multi-benefit queries, across seven named benefits, in one contact.

The benefits covered by the service are:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit.

The improved service is possible as DWP's telephony agents can use a single screen to view a person's details for all the benefits at the same time.

The service also offers telephony identity verification. This gives callers a secure way of verifying their identity at the start of the call using the telephone handset. It also protects their personal details from bogus callers. It prepares the way for managing contact between DWP staff and customers ahead of the introduction of new digital services.

During the roll out, customer and staff feedback has been taken into account, leading to improvements in the service's performance. This includes automatically updating changes notified during the call that involve a person's address or method of payment details.

Overall, the DWP Enquiry Service will help callers as:

- Straightforward queries will be dealt with more efficiently
- More time can be spent on complex queries
- They will no longer have to contact different parts of DWP to get answers to queries that relate to one person, or to advise straightforward changes to their personal details.

# Industrial Injuries Benefits changes

## Making the benefits easier to understand

DWP is making small changes to the Industrial Injuries Scheme from 5 December 2012. The changes will make it easier for people to understand, and for the Department to administer, the benefits. No one will lose out financially from the changes, which have been made possible by the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

### Scheme closures

Two old schemes that deal with industrial accidents or disease exposures before 1948 will be closed and people will be transferred to the main Industrial Injuries Scheme. The schemes that are closing are:

- The Pneumoconiosis, Byssinosis and Miscellaneous Diseases Benefit Scheme
- The Workmen's Compensation (Supplementation) Scheme.

DWP will start to send letters to the people affected by the change from mid-November.

### Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

DWP is removing the lower rate of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) paid to people under the age of 18, so that everyone with the same level of disability will receive the same rate of benefit.

Most industrial accident questions are answered when a benefit is claimed. It is also currently possible to ask for a decision that an industrial accident has occurred, without making a claim for IIDB at the same time. However, this will no longer be possible after 5 December 2012. Nobody will lose out, as people will still be able to claim IIDB when the need arises.

### Industrial Death Benefit

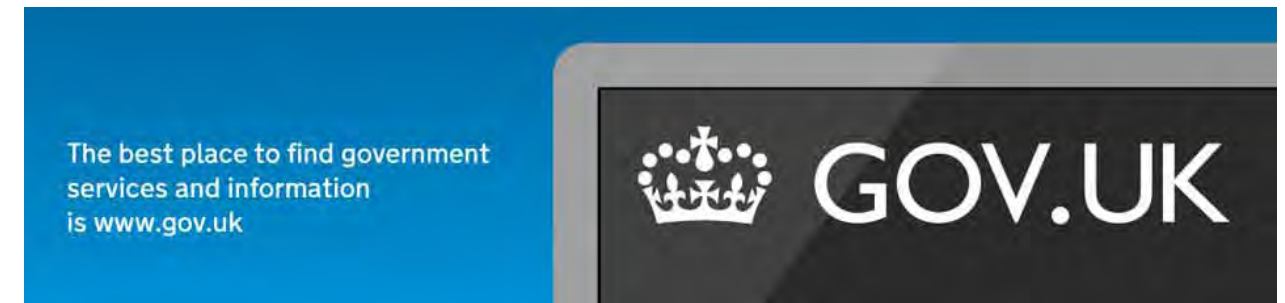
Industrial Death Benefit was abolished in 1988 for any deaths occurring after 1988. DWP will no longer accept new claims. No claims have been made for many years and any widows or widowers still getting payments will continue to receive them.

### Analogous Industrial Injuries Scheme

The final change is to transfer trainees receiving benefit under the Analogous Industrial Injuries Scheme, into the main Industrial Injuries Scheme at the end of March 2013. More details will be in a future edition of Touchbase.

# GOV.UK launched

## New website replaces Directgov and Businesslink sites



A new website, GOV.UK, went live on 17 October 2012. The new site has been developed following a review of the Government's digital services, led by Martha Lane-Fox, the UK Digital Champion.

GOV.UK replaces the Directgov and Businesslink websites. These sites have been switched off, but links that people have saved or bookmarked for those sites will continue to work. In most cases, people will be taken straight to the relevant information on GOV.UK.

The change has been made following recommendations that there should be a single Government website, because current sites look different and some people find them difficult to navigate.

GOV.UK contains information and tools that relate to UK-wide legislation. In cases where the situation is very different in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, the site will make reference to this and provide a link to the information provided by those administrations. Where there is only a small difference, such as a different telephone number or deadline, this is included on the new site. It is intended that any UK citizen can begin looking for information on GOV.UK and find their way to devolved information if required.

The launch is the first phase of making GOV.UK the definitive website for people interacting with Central Government. More content from government departments and other public bodies will be added to the new site in the future, reducing complexity for site users and reducing running costs. For now, the DWP website will still be available.

The next phase is the transition of 24 departmental websites, including DWP, and a number of agency and non-departmental public body websites. All of the information about the departments, and most of their detailed and specialist guidance, will be available on GOV.UK by March 2013, with the remaining information available by December 2013.

The third phase will be the transition of remaining department and agency websites. This will take place between March 2013 and March 2014. It will bring everything published by Central Government under the single domain, with the exception of a few specifically exempted websites.





# Carers Rights Day

## Raising awareness of the vital role carers perform

Carers Rights Day takes place on Friday 30 November, with the theme of 'Getting help in tough times'. It is organised by [Carers UK](#), an organisation that works closely with DWP to ensure that the millions of people who are caring for an ill, elderly or disabled relative, friend or partner, receive the advice, benefits and services they are entitled to.

Families affected by illness and disability can struggle more than most with high household bills and worries about jobs. They face the extra costs of caring, and often lost earnings, as a result of illness and disability.

Being a carer comes with huge responsibilities. People often give up their jobs and many enjoyable aspects of their lives to look after someone. It is an act of human kindness.

There has never been a more important time for carers to know their rights and access all the financial and practical support they are entitled to. Events to support Carers Rights Day will be happening all around the country, so look out for what is happening locally.



**More information about Carers Rights Day is on the Carers UK website.**



# State Pension Calculator and statement

## New products will help people to estimate their pension

The new look State Pension Calculator was launched on 17 October 2012. This replaced the State Pension profiler that used to be on the Directgov website.

Additionally, on 22 October 2012, DWP introduced its new State Pension statement service. This replaced the State Pension forecasting service.

A State Pension statement gives people an estimate of the State Pension they may get, based on their National Insurance record at the time the statement is produced. It also includes simple information to help people understand what effect further qualifying years may have on the amounts shown in the statement.

The statement has been designed in response to customer feedback and research, which has shown that people want clear information, in particular, 'How much will I get?' and 'When will I get it?'.

State Pension statements are available on the GOV.UK website, or can be requested directly from Future Pension Centre, either by telephone or in writing.

A new leaflet, DWP040, has been designed to complement the statement. To help the reader, and ensure there is a clear link between the leaflet and the statement it accompanies, the leaflet presents the more detailed information in the same subject order as it appears in the statement.

The Combined Pension Statement service, which enables employers and pension providers to include State Pension information in their annual benefit statements, is being re-launched in early November 2012. It is a voluntary service. Participating employers give their employees, and pension providers give their scheme members, information about their State Pension and workplace or private pension in a single statement.



**The State Pension Calculator and State Pension statements are on the GOV.UK website, as are the details for contacting Future Pension Centre.**

# Other news in brief...

## Telephone line opening hours

DWP has reviewed its telephony service opening hours, finding that the majority of people choose to contact the Department between 8am and 6pm on weekdays.

From 1 October 2012, the following telephony services have changed to be available between 8am and 6pm on Mondays to Fridays:

- Disability Living Allowance/Attendance Allowance Helpline
- Benefit Enquiry Line
- Regional pension centres
- National Pension Centre
- Future Pension Centre.

The change allows DWP to improve the service to callers and better manage peak demand.