

# Touchbase

## September 2014

### Welcome to September's Touchbase



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It's results time for GCSE and A level students and this month we have two stories which they should find encouraging.

The August jobs figures showed the largest annual fall in youth unemployment for 30 years. There were 206,000 fewer young people out of work in June, bringing youth unemployment to its lowest level for nearly six years. There is also a new government campaign promoting apprenticeships as an alternative to university for ambitious young people.

In other reports we learn that four million people have been automatically enrolled in a workplace pension, three new pilots will seek to support claimants' mental wellbeing needs, two online portals are open for employers and parents using the Child Maintenance Service, and a new Money Advice Service site is signposting people to free debt advice.

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# Record fall in youth unemployment

Youth unemployment has seen the largest annual fall since records began 30 years ago – according to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics.



It is also the steepest annual fall in unemployment for 25 years with unemployment now standing at 6.4 per cent, the lowest since late 2008.

Schemes such as the Government's Work Programme have also contributed to the biggest fall in long-term unemployment since 1998 – down by 171,000 on the year.

The number of people in work also continues to rise – with 820,000 more people in a job compared with 12 months ago. It means that, on average, over 15,000 more people are in work each week. Full-time work made up the vast majority of the increase.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Iain Duncan Smith said:

“In the past, many people in our society were written off and trapped in unemployment and welfare dependency. But through our welfare reforms, we are helping people to break that cycle and get back into work.

“The Government's long-term economic plan to build a stronger economy and a fairer society is working – with employment going up, record drops in youth unemployment and hundreds of thousands of people replacing their signing-on book with a wage packet.

“This is transformative, not only for these individuals and their families, but for society as a whole. That is why we have set full employment as one of our key targets”

Youth unemployment has fallen by 206,000 over the past year, which is the largest drop since records began in 1984, bringing it to its lowest level for nearly six years. The youth unemployment rate is 4.5 per cent less than it was a year ago.

Unemployment has fallen overall by 437,000 in the past year and by 132,000 in the last three months alone.

“In the past, many people in our society were written off and trapped in unemployment and welfare dependency. But through our welfare reforms, we are helping people to break that cycle and get back into work.”

More details are available in DWP's [press release](#) and in the Office for National Statistics' [Labour Market Statistics – August 2014](#).

# University is not the only option for ambitious young people



The Government has launched a major advertising campaign to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to young people.

The 'Get in. Go Far' campaign features real apprentices from some of Britain's brightest companies, including Asos, PWC, ITV, Google, BAE Systems, Airbus, Jaguar Landrover, IBM and Capgemini.

The apprentices, some of whom are gaining degree level qualifications while working and earning, are appearing in TV ads, posters, and on digital channels to showcase the variety and quality of apprenticeships on offer.

'Get in. Go Far' is aimed at showing parents and young people that apprenticeships can be an equal choice to university. It uses 'selfies' taken by apprentices in the workplace to show their pride and sense of achievement in apprenticeships.

Images have been uploaded to an interactive map as a visual to illustrate the variety and spread of Apprenticeship opportunities and options.

An employer campaign will also be launched in coming weeks. This will have a strong regional focus aimed at encouraging employers to commit to taking on an apprentice or increasing the numbers they employ.

This campaign will be supported by radio advertising and other activities including digital, PR, e-marketing and direct marketing. This follows on from a very successful regional apprenticeship campaign last year.

The 'Get in. Go Far' campaign features real apprentices from some of Britain's brightest companies, including Asos, PWC, ITV, Google, BAE Systems, Airbus, Jaguar Landrover, IBM and Capgemini.

To find out how to get involved you can [download the toolkit](#) from the Apprenticeships Brand Site.

# Brighter retirement for millions through automatic enrolment

Four million people have now been automatically enrolled in workplace pensions – an increase of more than 1 million this year and over 6,000 a day on average.



Automatic enrolment began in October 2012 for the largest employers. It requires all businesses to enrol eligible staff into a workplace pension and to start paying contributions for them.

success with 4 million people now automatically enrolled into workplace pensions – enough to fill 10,000 jumbo jets.

“This policy is helping build a fairer society as millions of workers who didn’t have the chance to save in a workplace pension before are now on track for a more comfortable retirement.”

“And while people have the choice to opt out of a workplace pension the overwhelming majority are staying in, ensuring a better future for themselves and helping reverse the savings slump in Britain.”

Recent research by DWP has found that 11.9 million people in the UK are not saving enough for retirement.

This is mainly because they do not have a full work history or have not contributed to a pension when they were working or contributed enough to get enough income for their retirement.

The next stage of automatic enrolment will see small firms begin to enrol their workers into workplace pensions, with all employers due to be included in the scheme by 2018. Employers have to automatically enrol workers who:

- Are not already in a qualifying workplace pension scheme;
- Are at least 22 years old and below State Pension age;
- Earn more than £10,000 (2014/15) a year;
- Work or ordinarily work in the UK under their contract.

The Government introduced automatic enrolment for workplace pensions in response to the problem of millions of people in Britain not saving enough for retirement.

Pensions Minister Steve Webb said: “Automatic enrolment is a tremendous



More information is available in the [monthly automatic enrolment report](#). Employers can also visit the [The Pensions Regulator’s site](#) to check when they are due to enrol their staff.

# New pilots to help claimants

DWP is running three pilots aimed at finding the best ways to improve employment and health outcomes for benefit claimants of working age who have mental well-being needs so that they are able to find, or move closer to work.

The three pilots are:

## Improving Access to Psychological Therapies

This pilot will test whether combining talking therapies with employment support works better than the usual Jobcentre offer or psychological support for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants.

This pilot is suitable for ESA claimants who are in the 12 to 17-month work related activities group (WRAG) as well as those who return from the Work Programme. The amount of support offered varies according to individual needs. It is running in four Jobcentre Plus districts, Surrey and Sussex, Midland Shires, Black Country and Tees Valley

## Group Work

The Jobs 11 programme aims to help jobseekers who are not confident about looking for a job and can find it difficult to cope with setbacks in their jobsearches

This pilot will help them to identify potential difficulties and set backs. It will test if this approach can improve employment and well-being outcomes for Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants.

It is running in Thames Valley, Gloucestershire and the West of England Jobcentre Plus districts and caters for JSA claimants who are not currently attached to the Work Programme.

There will be facilitated group work for 15 to 20 participants using active learning techniques in five four-hour sessions over a week. The aim is to increase the jobsearch skills and the motivation of participants.

## Telephone Pilots

This pilot will test whether telephone-based psychological and employment-related support can improve people’s sense of well-being as well as their chances of moving closer to or into work. This is for JSA claimants who are not on the Work Programme.

This will be delivered by a provider who will offer claimants individually tailored telephony sessions to help them resolve their barriers to finding work and to support them with their jobsearch.

The pilots are running in North East Yorkshire and the Humber and South Yorkshire.



More information is available at [GOV.UK](#).

# Child Maintenance Service goes digital



Clients of the Child Maintenance Service, and employers who deduct child maintenance payments from their employees, can now manage their records and interact with the service directly through an online portal.

Around 40,000 employers currently deduct child maintenance payments from their employees' wages using Deduction from Earnings Orders. The new online [employer portal](#), which is very similar to online banking, will streamline the service and reduce the amount of administration and paperwork they have to do.

The employer online portal will be particularly helpful to smaller employers and will make it easier for money to get to children.

It will allow employers to:

- Check their monthly Deduction from Earnings Order schedules;
- Make safe and secure payments;
- Send enquiries through to the dedicated Employer Support Team.

The portal is in addition to the dedicated telephone service that is currently available to employers.

Parents who use the Child Maintenance Service can now also benefit from a [client portal](#) which will allow them to manage and securely check and update their case online. They will initially need to register with the Government Gateway in order to access this service.

Using the service, clients will be able to:

- View and update the details of their case including their contact information, bank and employment details;
- Make payments and view payment details;
- Submit and view correspondence.

The Child Maintenance Service has been gradually introducing this service to clients since August 2014 to ensure that it works as planned before it is fully rolled out.

 **Further information on the Child Maintenance Service can be found at [GOV.UK](#).**

# Advisers asked to spread the word about free debt advice

The [Money Advice Service](#) has launched a new free online service to help people to manage their debts.

The Money Advice Service [Debt Advice Locator](#) gives people access to free and impartial debt advice which Jobcentre advisers and other organisations can signpost their clients to.

Money Advice Service's Chief Executive, Caroline Rookes, said:

"If someone is struggling to pay day-to-day bills, or to keep up with loan repayments and other financial commitments, it can be hard to know where to turn for help. That's why we've developed our [Debt Advice Locator](#) – which helps people find free, confidential and impartial debt advice near where they live or work.

"We know that DWP's staff will often come into contact with people who need help with their finances and the Money Advice Service is keen to work with DWP to make sure people get the help they need.

"We also fund debt advice projects across the country and work with our partners – including organisations such as Citizens Advice – to drive higher standards and ensure a more consistent service for people struggling with debt."

The [Debt Advice Locator](#) site provides information about partner organisations that can help, such as the National Debtline and StepChange Debt Charity, as well as telephone services which allow people to speak directly with an expert advisor.



Most importantly the face-to-face debt advice search tool allows you to type in your location and instantly find local organisations that give free advice on managing finances and dealing with debt.

The [Money Advice Service](#) is an independent service set up by the Government to help people manage their money better. It provides a wealth of other online information, where partners and claimants can access extra support material on how to budget.

 **General information on managing your finances is also available on the [Money Advice Service](#).**

# Communities challenged to be inclusive and accessible



The Minister for Disabled People Mark Harper has launched a six-month Accessible Britain Challenge to encourage local communities to become more accessible and inclusive for disabled people.

The aim of the challenge is for individuals and organisations to engage and work with the 12.2 million people who are disabled to remove the barriers that can stop them from playing a full and active part in their communities. This follows the Government's disability strategy "Fulfilling Potential – Making it Happen", which was published in July 2013.

At the end of the challenge communities that are making a real difference will be recognised through new awards that are now being developed.

Awards will be given under the following broad categories:

- Improved mobility;
- Innovative use of buildings, places and spaces;
- Safer neighbourhoods;
- Inclusive social activities.

Examples of some community projects that are already making a difference to the lives of disabled people include:

- **Blackpool Transport's Safe Journey Card.** The company has worked with disabled people and their organisations to develop the card which lets tram, train and bus

drivers know that someone is disabled and might need extra support. Drivers also receive training on disability issues from disabled people;

- **Living Options in Devon** have worked in partnership with a range of organisations, including Devon and Gloucestershire County Councils, the National Trust and Forestry Commission to develop the Countryside Mobility scheme to improve disabled people's access to the countryside.

Minister for Disabled People Mark Harper said:

"Many disabled people face barriers in their everyday lives that prevent them from realising their full potential. I hope that organisations across the country will engage and work in partnership with businesses, employers, service providers and community groups to make their local area more inclusive and accessible."

DWP's Office for Disability Issues has worked with other government departments, councils, employers and local organisations to share advice and products that showcase good practice.



Further information is also available from Brian Keating on 0113 251 9828 or at [fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).

## Other news in brief..

### Bookings open for Social Justice Conference

The third annual Social Justice Conference takes place on Tuesday 18 November.

This year's event will look at social investment, the changing economy and the role employers and business can play in changing lives.

It will also include the Social Justice Awards for the second year running.

For more information and to sign up for the conference visit [GovKnow website](#).

### Supporting disadvantaged adults and children

Throughout September the cross-government Social Justice: Transforming Lives website will be focussing on supporting disadvantaged adults and children.

This month's guest editors will be the London youth charity XLP.

There will be articles by charities, local authorities and government on tackling gang culture, protecting young people from alcohol and drugs misuse and putting relationships at the heart of engagement.

You can also keep up-to-date with the latest Social Justice news from DWP, The Home Office and the Department for Education amongst others at [Social Justice: Transforming Lives](#).

### Commercial partner sought for Remploy expansion

Remploy Employment Services will become independent of government so it can expand its business to help even more disabled people into work.

It is estimated that by March 2015, Remploy Employment Services will have supported over 100,000 disabled and disadvantaged people into work since 2010.

As part of the Government's long-term economic plan to help more people into work a commercial process has started to find a new partner for Remploy Employment Services so it can expand with the help of private investment

DWP will have a contractual arrangement with the new company to continue Remploy Employment Services' national delivery of Work Choice and the contracts and agreements, which are expected to be transferred as part of this process.

More information is available from the [Written Ministerial statement on Remploy Employment Services](#) and from Liz Sayce's 2012 independent review of Remploy; [Getting in, staying in and getting on](#).