



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

## DWP Employer News - March 2015

Hello and welcome to the March 2015 issue of DWP Employer News. This is a monthly update for employers of all sizes. It provides information about services from Jobcentre Plus, support available for businesses and the latest news from across government.

### Latest News

#### Not just for boys

In support of International Women's Day, a cross-government campaign has been focusing on job roles and sectors where women are under-represented. With 12 million job opportunities forecast to become available over the next decade, it's imperative that there is a wider and more diverse recruitment pool to ensure employers are able to recruit and compete in today's market. This showcases male dominated industries, and aims to help everyone achieve their potential.

Many employers, large and small, have been getting involved by sharing case studies of their own female success stories - [view the Pinterest pages for more](#), or [find out how you can get involved](#).

#### Building your business online

Starting a business in the UK is relatively easy; but growing it can be more difficult. In today's digital world, businesses need to be online – online is the new landline. In 2013 website sales hit £193bn. With internet sales on the rise, it's time to get your business online. Your company might have been doing nicely through word of mouth but if you're not online, you're missing out on potential new customers.

##### Why be online?

- Businesses actively using the internet to promote or trade online are almost twice as likely to grow.
- 57% of people are uncomfortable using a business if they can't find it online.
- 52% of consumers consult a search engine before buying from a local business.

The Government's [Do More Online](#) campaign aims to support businesses like yours to grow your business online.

For advice on how to build your business via the internet, visit the [Business is GREAT Britain website](#).

To help cover the costs of installing superfast broadband [Connection Vouchers](#) could also help. See the Better broadband for your business article in this issue of DWP Employer News.

## Want to share your skills and knowledge?

Interested in becoming a business mentor? Then find out more about mentoring opportunities with the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA).

NEA supports unemployed people with a viable idea to start their own business; providing financial and mentoring support. More than 60,000 new businesses have been supported by NEA.

Support from an experienced entrepreneur can be invaluable to a start-up business. So, if you want to help people make a success of their business idea, then mentoring is for you.

For more information visit: [NEA for mentors](#).

## Universal Credit update

Universal Credit is a radical new service that reduces poverty by making work pay. It supports people who are on a low income or out of work and ensures that people are better off in work than on benefit.

Universal Credit is based on income not the number of hours people work, and ends the 16 hours a week rule that may previously have led people to restrict the hours they work to avoid losing benefits. Employers will:

- Find it easier to fill jobs as more jobseekers will be willing to consider part time or temporary work
- Be able to identify opportunities for flexible working using your existing part time employees for overtime and extra shifts at peak times, without the overheads associated with recruiting and training new staff

Universal Credit is already live in nearly 140 jobcentre areas across Great Britain and will be in every jobcentre by this time next year. On 2 March Universal Credit expanded further to families in 96 of those areas - completing our plans to make it available to even more families by spring 2015.

Please read our [frequently asked questions](#) to find out more how Universal Credit benefits employers.

## Automatic enrolment - Don't leave it too late

Auto enrolment means that all employers will be required to automatically enrol certain staff into a pension scheme and make contributions towards it.

If you've not yet implemented the new rules, then they will legally apply to you from a specific date - known as your staging date - [find your staging date here](#). The Pensions Regulator recommends allowing plenty of time to prepare for auto-enrolment.

Figures published recently by The Pensions Regulator show an increase in the number of fines issued to employers who didn't comply with their workplace pension's duties on time. With more than 1,300 compliance notices and over 165 fixed penalty notices issued by the end of last year, more employers are regretting not allowing enough time to prepare for their automatic enrolment duties.

Find out more about auto-enrolment at the [Pensions Regulator website](#) – you can even [create a personal action](#) plan to identify what needs to be done, and by when.

## Public sector procurement changes

New public sector procurement changes will make it easier for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to win public sector annual contracts worth £187 billion.

The legislation is part of the reforms proposed by Lord Young, the Prime Minister's Enterprise Advisor, to help small businesses drive innovation and grow.

The new regulations will ensure that:

- 30 day payment terms are mandatory through the whole supply chain, including suppliers and sub-contractors.
- The bidding process will be simplified across the wider public sector, with complex forms, such as Pre-Qualification Questionnaires, abolished for low value contracts.
- The procurement process for public sector contracts will be accelerated.

The [Contracts Finder](#) website has been redesigned to offer improved search facilities, enabling businesses to find contracts by price, sector and postcode.

The site will contain current and future public sector contracts, above £10,000 in Central Government and £25,000 in the wider public sector. At its launch, there are already over £5 billion of public sector opportunities, representing a great opportunity for small businesses

For more information, please visit the [Doing business with government website](#) and register for free alerts on contracts in your local area.

## Fit for Work goes live

The [Fit for Work](#) advice service is live and the referral service will roll-out shortly. Once referred by their GP, employees will be able to get tailored advice from an occupational health professional when they have been off sick for four weeks or more. They may receive a

Return to Work plan which offers advice as to how you can work together to help them back to work. You can use the Return to Work plan in place of a fit note.

Fit for Work intends to complement, not replace, existing occupational health provision. It will be particularly beneficial for SMEs who previously had no access to occupational health advice. The Government has also introduced tax exemptions of up to £500 on medical treatments recommended by Fit for Work or an employer's occupational health service.

Visit the [Fit for Work guidance for employers](#) or visit [Fit for Work](#) to find out what's available and sign-up to receive updates.

## **Catch 16-24 - youth employment report**

Catch 16-24; a new report on young people and the labour market, has been produced by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). This report looks at issues facing young people across the UK in gaining the experience they need to get into work.

It finds that two thirds of employers say that work experience is a critical or significant factor in their recruitment, however only 30% offer placements to people in education.

The need for employer leadership and collaboration and stronger business-education links is highlighted as the best way to tackle some of the challenges young people face.

For further information visit the [Catch 16-24: Youth Employment Challenge website](#).

Employment Minister, Esther McVey talked about youth employment and how employers can get involved recently - [read her LinkedIn blog](#) to find out more.

You can find more about how to offer work experience by talking to your local Jobcentre or Employer Adviser. Or view the [Work Experience videos](#).

## **Acas Early Conciliation update**

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) has published its [third quarter update on Early Conciliation](#), this shows that the service dealt with over 60,000 cases between April and December 2014.

Early conciliation helps people who would otherwise take their case to an Employment Tribunal resolve their dispute cheaply, quickly and with less stress.

For more information on Early Conciliation visit the [Acas website](#).

## **Other News**

### **HMRC employer bulletin online**

The latest edition of HMRC's regular employer bulletin is now available online. Issue 52 includes the following:

- From March 2015 for a limited time, employers will not incur late payment penalties for delays of up to three days in filing PAYE information. However, the statutory deadlines have not changed, including the requirement to report on or before the date of payment.
- An update to the Basic PAYE Tools (BPT) is available. HMRC strongly recommend that BPT users download this new version and complete this as soon as possible so that the upgrade for the tax year beginning 6 April 2015, due in early April, can be applied automatically.
- Student Loan threshold increase applying from 6 April 2015
- New Rules if you fund medical treatment to help an employee to return to work
- Do you employ anyone under the age of 21? Be prepared for April
- Employment Allowance – have you claimed yet?

You can find information about all these topics in the latest bulletin - [view it online](#)

or [subscribe to get your own copy](#).

## **Growth Vouchers - get them while you can**

The Growth Vouchers scheme is due to close on **31 March 2015**. Time is running out to get half price strategic advice about finance, recruitment, management, marketing or technology for your business.

[Apply for Growth Vouchers](#) and find out more.

There is a range of other support available for businesses, including advice, access to financial support and extra help. Just visit [Business is GREAT Britain](#) to see what's available.

## **Better broadband for your business**

Your business can get a connection voucher of up to £3,000 for faster, better broadband through the Government's Broadband Connection Vouchers scheme.

The scheme is active in 22 cities across the UK and is administered by each city through over 600 registered suppliers.

From **April 2015**, the scheme will be active in more cities across the UK. So, if you are not presently eligible, don't forget to check again in April to see if you can apply for a Connection Voucher.

For further information, please visit the [Connection Vouchers website](#).

## Help from Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus offers a range of recruitment services that can help you as an employer. You could get:

- Recruitment advice and support, including the Universal Jobmatch vacancy system
- Help setting up work trials to give you the opportunity to try out potential recruits
- Help with offering work experience placements or apprenticeships

You can find out more about [help for employers](#) and [advertise your vacancies online](#).

There's also a wide range of advice, support and financial help available to help businesses grow. Visit [www.greatbusiness.gov.uk](http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk) (for England), [Business Gateway](#) (for Scotland) and [Business Wales](#) (for Wales) to find out what's on offer.

## Pass it on

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