

## DWP Stakeholder Bulletin – October 2013

Welcome to the October 2013 issue of the DWP Stakeholder Bulletin – a newsletter to let you know what is happening in the Department for Work and Pensions.

If you have a comment or feedback about this bulletin, please email the [Strategic Engagement and Partnerships team](#).

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### New ministerial team

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has unveiled his new ministerial team. Esther McVey has become Minister of State for Employment and Mike Penning has joined the Department as Minister of State for Disabled People. They will work alongside Steve Webb, who remains as Minister of State for Pensions, and Lord Freud as Minister for Welfare Reform. More information is available [here](#).

### Social Security Regulations come into force

The Social Security (Persons Required to Provide Information) [Regulations 2013](#) came into force on 1 October 2013. They apply in Great Britain and allow authorised officers to gather information from landlords, rent officers, childcare providers and local authorities which administer a council tax reduction scheme.

The regulations take account of Universal Credit, ensuring DWP's information gathering across housing and childcare elements reflect equivalent provisions that apply to housing benefit and tax credits.

The changes also allow investigators to gather information about a person's local council tax reduction from local authorities.

### Universal Credit partner toolkit and employer guide

The [Universal Credit partner toolkit](#) explains how Universal Credit works and how it might affect you and those you work with.

An [updated guide for employers](#) is also available. It explains how employers will benefit from the introduction of Universal Credit and how real time earnings information will be used.

The guide covers the new approach to supporting people to stay and progress in work. Universal Credit claimants will be set personal, achievable work goals. Once in work, achieving these goals will help them become financially independent.

Please give feedback on the [toolkit](#) at [uc.partner toolkit@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:uc.partner toolkit@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

### **Universal Credit Local Support Services Framework**

The framework outlines how local delivery partnerships will provide claimant support for people who need extra help to make or maintain a Universal Credit claim.

An update will be issued this autumn. It will describe the trialling and testing strategy, aspects of the finance model and work on partnership development. It will give an update on key points of progress and lessons learned from the pathfinder and local authority led pilots.

A fully updated framework is planned for autumn 2014, to inform local authority budgeting timetables for 2015/16.

### **Disputes and appeals process changes**

From 28 October, mandatory reconsideration, direct lodgement of appeals and time limits for return of appeals responses will apply to all DWP benefits and child maintenance cases.

For six to eight weeks, the existing process and the new process will operate at the same time. If a claimant wishes to appeal against a DWP decision, it is important to find out which benefit they wish to appeal against and the date of notification of the decision. This determines which process should be followed.

See [GOV.UK](#) for more details.

### **Improving support for care leavers**

As part of cross-government work to improve support for care leavers during their transition to adulthood, Jobcentre Plus will begin to identify and track the support care leavers receive from October. This information will ensure DWP targets the most effective support to care leavers in the future. Jobcentre Plus will need support from Local Authority Leaving Care Teams to understand which of their clients are care leavers. Directors of Childrens' Services across England, Scotland and Wales are encouraged to support this new process. Contact [fpd.correspondence@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:fpd.correspondence@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) with any queries.

### **Re-launch of Domestic Violence Easement**

DWP directly supports domestic violence victims through the Jobseeker's Allowance Domestic Violence (DV) Easement; and the Destitute Domestic

Violence Concession (DDV) policies. The policies were introduced in April 2012. The easement supports DV victims claiming Jobseeker's Allowance; the DDV Concession helps migrant spouse victims of DV to access eligible income-related benefits.

This month, both polices are being re-launched to DWP staff to improve the overall quality of service. Improvement activity includes, increasing staff awareness to support victims, signposting advice for claimants, better use of management information and maintaining a good dialogue with local stakeholders.

### DWP consultations

All current live DWP consultations and the latest published consultation responses are available on the [consultation pages](#) of GOV.UK.

[Work Programme official statistics after June 2013: content and presentation](#).  
Closes 22 November 2013.