

Accessible version

## **Bereavement Support Payment Phone Lines closing**

The new DWP Bereavement Services Phonenumber (BSP) was introduced in April 2022 on 0800 151 2012.

from 31 March 2023, the previous BSP phone number 0800 731 0139 will no longer be in service with an unobtainable call tone.

A termination message has been active since 10 October 2022, directing to the newer DWP Bereavement Services number. Please ensure you signpost to the correct DWP Bereavement Services number on **0800 151 2012**:

To report a death to DWP

Enquire about, make, or maintain a claim to:  
Bereavement Benefit  
Bereavement Support Payments  
Funeral Expense Payments

Further information on Bereavement Support Payment and how to claim by phone, post or online can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

## **Jobcentre Plus arrangements over Easter**

Jobcentre Plus opening times are different over Easter.

- Friday 7 April: offices and phonelines are closed
  - Monday 10 April: offices and phonelines are closed
- From 11 April offices and phonelines are open as usual.

To make sure people get their payments on a day when Jobcentre Plus offices are open, payments will be paid early:

- If the expected payment date is Friday 7 April, benefits will be paid on Thursday 6 April
- If the expected payment date is Monday 10 April, benefits will be paid on Thursday 6 April

If the expected [payment date](#) is not shown, customers will get their money on their usual payment date.

## **Back to Work Budget' supporting people to return to the labour market**

[Click Here](#)

Millions of people will benefit from specific support to look for work, acquire new skills and progress into better-paid jobs.

Parents, over-fifties, disabled people, and those with long-term health conditions will have opportunities arising from changes announced in the Budget set to be delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Overall, DWP measures at Budget represent an investment of £3.5 billion over five years to boost workforce participation and grow the economy. That includes:

£2 billion investment in support for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions

£900 million investment in support for parents on Universal Credit

£70 million investment in support for over-fifties

£485 million investment in support for unemployed people and people who are on Universal Credit and working fewer than full time hours.

## **Government drive to help workers on Universal Credit boost prospects**

[Click Here](#)

Over 1.2 million low-income earners on Universal Credit can now tap into additional support to help secure promotions and higher wages.

DWP ramps up drive to help low earners increase their wages and encourage employers to support career progression.

Universal Credit claimants are securing job promotions and better pay after local Jobcentres step in with specialist In Work Progression support.

Network of specialist Progression Leads are in place across England, Scotland and Wales who work with local skill providers to develop tailored opportunities.

The support known as the In Work Progression offer has rolled out across all Great Britain and includes help with CVs and signposting to skills provision.

## **More people set to benefit from free support to help claim Universal Credit**

[Click Here](#)

An extra £22 million is being invested to extend free and impartial support for people making a Universal Credit claim.

The 'Help to Claim' support will continue to be delivered independently for another year by Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, following a

further £22 million investment by the department. Citizens Advice have provided the Help to Claim support since its inception in 2019.

This additional investment will ensure that support is available to help people make a new Universal Credit claim and manage their claim until they receive their first payment.

## **People given more time for voluntary National Insurance Contributions**

The Government has extended the voluntary National Insurance deadline to **31 July 2023** to give people more time to fill gaps in their National Insurance record and help increase the amount they receive in State Pension.

As part of transitional arrangements to the new State Pension, people have been able to make voluntary contributions to any incomplete years in their National Insurance record between April 2006 and April 2016, to help increase the amount they receive when they retire.

Further information and guidance is available on [GOV.UK Click Here](#)

**Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024** [Click Here](#) Guidance on getting extra payments to help with the cost of living if you're entitled to certain benefits or tax credits.

These payments are not taxable and will not affect the benefits or tax credits you get.

## **Apply for alternative fuel bill support if you do not get it automatically** [Click Here](#)

Most households will automatically get a £200 Alternative Fuels Payment (AFP) if they are in England, Scotland or Wales, or use alternative fuel for their heating [Click Here](#) such as liquid petroleum gas (LPG), oil or solid fuel are connected to the electricity grid

If you do not get it automatically, use this service to apply for £200 support to help pay for alternative fuels. You can only make one application per household.

## **Analysis of future pension incomes** [Click Here](#)

An estimate of the number and proportion of working age individuals aged twenty-two to State Pension age, who are under saving for their retirement.

## **Discretionary Housing payments for 2023/2024**

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding is available for those entitled to Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit who require further financial assistance with housing costs.

This circular provides details of the government contribution and overall expenditure limit for DHP for the financial years ending March 2024 and March 2025 [Click for Circular](#)

### **Government appoints first Menopause Employment Champion to improve workplace support** [Click Here](#)

Helen Tomlinson, Head of Talent (United Kingdom and Ireland) at The Adecco Group, has been appointed to the independent role by the Department for Work and Pensions and will collaborate closely with the Minister for Social Mobility, Youth and Progression Mims Davies.

As part of the voluntary role, Helen will focus on encouraging employers to develop menopause policies to create more supportive environments to help women experiencing menopause to stay and progress in work. She will conduct this work while continuing her employment at Adecco.

### **Government backs bill to expand pension saving to young and low earners** [Click Here](#)

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) today confirmed it will support proposals to expand Automatic Enrolment, enabling millions of people to save more and to start saving earlier.

### **Social Rented Sector Landlords: Annual Rent Changes April 2023**

For Annual Rent Changes (ARC) in 2023, property owners should plan based on what was delivered for ARC in 2022. We have not made any changes from last year's approach, guidance on ARC 2023 can be found on **Landlord Portal - Understanding Universal Credit** [Click Here](#).

### **Universal Credit and Prison Leavers**

[Click Here](#)

Information for prison leavers, work coaches and probation officers about Universal Credit.

Updated how prison leavers can verify their identity in Supporting prison leavers: a guide to Universal Credit [Click here to view guide](#)

### **National Partnership Agreement for employment and welfare support in custody and the community 2023 to 2026** [Click Here](#)

A partnership agreement between the Ministry of Justice, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and the Department for Work and Pensions. It sets out the basis of a shared understanding of, and commitment to, the way in which the partners will work together in England and Wales.

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## **Launch of life-saving public emergency alerts**

[Click Here](#)

A new system that will give the Government and emergency services the capability to send an alert directly to mobile phones when there is a risk to life has been launched today.

UK-wide Emergency Alerts service launched and in operation from 19 March 2023

System will bolster the UK's resilience and provides the capability to send alerts direct to mobile phones when there is a risk to life

UK-wide test to take place on Sunday 23 April 2023

Working with mobile broadcasting technology, the Emergency Alerts system will transform the UK's warning and informing capability; providing a means to get urgent messages quickly to 90 percent of mobile phones in a defined area; providing clear instructions about how best to respond.

The system is now ready to be evaluated across the country following successful tests in East Suffolk and Reading, as the Government continues to strengthen its resilience capability, making sure it offers the best possible protection against an ever-evolving range of threats.

A UK-wide alerts test will take place in the early evening of Sunday 23 April which will see people receive a test message on their mobile phones.

## **Big Screens to go up across the country to show Coronation**

[Click Here](#)

More than 30 UK locations will host big screens to show the Coronation, the Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer announced.

More than £1 million has been made available by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport for the screens. Confirmed sites include Cardiff Castle, Belfast City Hall, Piece Hall in Halifax, Jubilee Square in Brighton, and Piccadilly Gardens in Manchester.

It will mean thousands of people can come together at public screenings to celebrate this historic moment in towns and cities across the four nations of the UK.

The Coronation of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen Consort takes place on Saturday 6 May 2023 at Westminster Abbey in London. Their Majesties will be crowned in the same location as Her Late Majesty the Queen 70 years ago.

## **Tik Tok banned on UK government devices as part of wider app review**

[Click Here](#)

Social media app TikTok has been banned on government electronic devices, the Cabinet Office announced on 16 March 2023.

The ban comes after Cabinet Office Ministers ordered a security review. This looked at the potential vulnerability of government data from social media apps on devices and risks around how sensitive information could be accessed and used by platforms.

Given the potentially sensitive nature of information, which is stored on government devices, government policy on the management of third-party applications will be strengthened and a precautionary ban on TikTok on government devices is being introduced.

## **Illegal Money Lending Team Presentations**

Lin Fisher from the Illegal Money Lending team based in Birmingham is offering this session to partners if you have small numbers of staff/volunteers and they would like upskilling in this area. If so, please sign up for the event by clicking the link.

[Stop Loan Sharks - How to Spot and Support a victim of a Loan Shark Tickets, Fri 28 Apr 2023 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#)

## **Local Skills Dashboard** [Click Here](#)

The Local Skills Dashboard supports local skills planning and delivery by providing up-to-date information and published data on local skills, education, and employment.

Data is provided at bespoke geographies (including local skills improvement plan (LSIP) areas) in an easy-to-navigate format alongside links to additional resources and data downloads. The underlying data is available at local authority district and regional level in addition to the LSIP, Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) breakdowns.

## **Voter ID Campaign**

The Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo identification (ID) when voting at a polling station at elections.

This new requirement will apply for the first time at the local elections taking place in areas of England on Thursday 4 May 2023.

Anyone who does not have an accepted form of photo ID will be able to apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

Organisations collaborating directly with voters, including local authorities and charities, can play a key role in supporting voters to ensure they have photo ID ahead of the elections.

The Electoral Commission has created [Click here to read](#) for organisations in England. They are designed to help raise awareness, and to support people to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate, ahead of the local elections in May 2023. The packs also include information on voter registration.

## **UK and New Zealand expand schemes for young people to work abroad** [Click Here](#)

The Youth Mobility and Working Holiday schemes have been expanded so more young people will be eligible to live and work in both countries for longer.

Young Brits and New Zealanders will benefit from life-changing opportunities on the other side of the world thanks to the expansion of our shared visa schemes.

From 29 June 2023, the age limit for New Zealand applicants coming to the UK will go up from 30 to 35 years old and the maximum length of time people can stay in their host country will be extended to 3 years.

For Brits wanting to take advantage of the scheme in New Zealand, the age range will be increased on 1 July 2023, and they will be able to work throughout their stay of up to 3 years.

## **More People set to benefit from free support to help claim Universal credit.**

An extra £22 million is being invested to extend free and impartial support for people making a Universal Credit claim.

[Click Here](#)

## **Working and Workless households in the UK: October to December 2022** [Click Here](#)

The economic status of households in the United Kingdom, and the people living in them, where at least one person is aged 16 to 64 years. Taken from the Labour Force Survey.

## **Student finance to be radically transformed from 2025** [Click Here](#)

People across the country are set to benefit from a complete overhaul of student finance, helping them get flexible loan funding to train, retrain and upskill throughout their working lives.

The Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) will empower more people to study in a way that works for them, opening opportunities for those that might have never considered higher education. This could help them balance training or studies alongside other commitments such as childcare or financial commitments, which will revolutionise social mobility and plug skills gaps.

## **The fuel poverty statistics report for 2023 includes:** [Click Here](#)

the latest statistics on the number of households living in fuel poverty in England analysis of the composition of the fuel poor group in 2021 and 2022 projections of the number of households in fuel poverty in 2022 and 2023

## **Boost for bus, coach and HGV driver recruitment with proposed reforms to training rules** [Click Here](#)

Numbers of HGV (heavy goods vehicle) bus and coach drivers could be boosted through proposed reforms to driver training rules, further supporting the United Kingdom's (UK) vital supply chain and economic growth.

The proposed changes aim to help make it more affordable and more efficient for drivers to renew their qualifications or return to the industry. With the UK's newfound freedoms having left the European Union, the government is exploring how to best improve the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) to increase flexibility and choice for drivers to help safeguard road safety and support the industry in retaining and recruiting staff.

## **Social Housing managers must be qualified under new laws to protect residents** [Click Here](#)

Social housing managers must gain professional qualifications under new rules to protect residents and raise standards in the sector. Around 25,000 managers across the sector will now be required to have an appropriate level housing management qualification regulated by Ofqual equivalent to a Level 4 or 5 Certificate or Diploma in Housing, or a foundation degree from the Chartered Institute of Housing.



## **900,000 more households to benefit from £400 of government energy bill support** [Click Here](#)

Government launches portal for 900,000 additional Great Britain households to apply for £400 payments towards energy bills.

Households without a direct relationship to an electricity supplier, such as those living in park homes and care homes, can now apply via a secure online portal to receive the support as a one-off, non-repayable lump sum under the 'alternative funding' route of the government's Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSSAF).

For those without online access, the contact centre helpline can be reached on 0808 175 3287 for applicants in Great Britain, or 0808 175 3894 for applicants in Northern Ireland, where a representative will guide them through the application process. The helpline is open 08:00 - 18:00 Monday to Friday.

## **Skills Bootcamps**

Information about Skills Bootcamps, which are one of a range of training and employment schemes for employers. [Click here](#) Employers can use this list to find Skills Bootcamps training providers to with to, recruit new staff, for training existing employees or design bespoke Skills Bootcamps [Click Here](#).

## **Young People not in education, employment or training (NEET) UK** [Click Here](#)

Estimates of young people (aged 16 to 24 years) who are not in education, employment, or training, by age and sex.

## **Millions released from dormant accounts to support vulnerable people with the cost of living** [Click Here](#)

The most vulnerable people in society will be given additional support to deal with the cost of living, as £76 million tied up in forgotten accounts is unlocked. The cash will support people to get out of debt and assist social enterprises with innovative energy saving solutions.

Beneficiaries include no-interest loans for 69,000 individuals struggling with finances via a £45 million grant distributed by Fair4All Finance, and hundreds of charities and social enterprises which will receive support from a pot of £31 million, distributed by social investors Access and Big Society Capital. This will be used to retrofit premises with cleaner, greener, and more efficient energy systems, such as new boilers or heat pumps, solar panels, and new lighting.

## **Energy bill support schemes: next steps- letter to local authorities** [Click Here](#)

Next steps for the 'Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding' (EBSS AF) and the 'Domestic Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund' (AFP AF)

## **Touchbase**

Touchbase provides a roundup of recent announcements. It is produced weekly and circulated to subscribers. If you haven't already subscribed please click on the link to enable you to do so. [Click here](#)