

# Partnerships against child poverty

## A new commitment

The Government has made a commitment to halve child poverty by 2010 and end it by 2020. This is a huge and important challenge, and one that DWP cannot undertake alone, so we are working in partnership with other Government departments to achieve this long-term objective.

We have already begun to see results by implementing a wide range of measures, including:

- far-reaching reform of the tax and benefits system to improve family incomes
- helping parents into work and targeting help to those most in need
- simplifying the child support scheme so that more children get the support they are entitled to from their non-resident parent.

We are also contributing to wider cross-Government action to tackle child poverty – for example: by raising educational standards through Sure Start, improving housing and health services and supporting new parents. However, if we are to continue to make progress, we need to work much more closely with colleagues in local government.

At the launch of the Local Government Association's year-long benefit take-up campaign, on 12 May 2003, DWP Minister, Baroness Hollis said: "...we are already making a difference but lasting progress depends upon a combined effort across society. We all pay the price of poverty in society. It scars all of us. That is why I am delighted to announce an ongoing partnership between central and local government in the drive to eradicate child poverty."

Mark Neale, DWP's Children's Champion and Director of Children and Housing and Tony Orhial, Director of the Personal Tax Division in Inland Revenue, have committed themselves to work closely, together with the Local Government Association, to:

- create a Partnership against Poverty for children and
- develop a Partnership Accord.

## Ongoing work and publications *Learning to listen*

As reported in our last edition, all Government departments are committed to involving children and young people in the design, provision and evaluation of policies and services that affect them. In July 2003, DWP published this year's plan to take forward the *Learning to Listen* principles. (Children and Young People's Participation in the Planning, Delivery and Evaluation of Policies and Services, The Second Action Plan for the Department for Work and Pensions).

This report looks at the promises made last year, the work done to keep those promises and further aims for promoting the participation of children and young people in the year ahead.

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Welcome to the September 2003 edition of **Touchbase**, our quarterly newsletter designed to help you help others.

In this edition, as well as our usual updates and reminders, we bring you a summary of the Government's response to the Pensions Green Paper, new measures to reform Incapacity Benefit being piloted in parts of the country, and further ways in which we're helping people move from benefits to work. As ever, we hope you find it interesting.

In this edition you should also find an Index.

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## Partnerships against child poverty

### UK National Action Plan

The Government is committed to supporting action across the European Union (EU) in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Three years ago, EU member states agreed to a co-ordinated process, intended to make a decisive impact on these problems by 2010. An important element is the production of National Action Plans, which allow EU member states to learn from good practice across the Union and support joined-up working within countries.

In the UK, action to tackle poverty and social exclusion takes place at many levels. Devolved and regional governments have a key role to play and local authorities are increasingly aware of their importance in creating inclusive communities. The Action Plan has allowed us to develop partnerships with local government and key non-government organisations such

as Oxfam and the European Anti-Poverty Network. We have worked with them, and people at 'grassroots' level, to develop plans for extending participation in the future.

The UK National Action Plan for 2003 not only identifies good practice but also develops a framework to allow us to monitor progress in tackling social exclusion in the future. It was published in July 2003.

### *Opportunity for all*

Finally, the latest *Opportunity for all* report – a cross-governmental review of its performance in tackling poverty and social exclusion – will be published in September 2003. To obtain a summary document, contact Welfare Reform, Freepost (HA4441), Hayes UB3 1BR.

T: 020 8867 3201.



#### Further information

Donna Rigsby,  
Poverty and Social  
Exclusion Division

T: 020 7962 8762

E: donna.rigsby@  
dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Or visit:

[www.dwp.gov.uk/publications](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications)

## Child Benefit

The residence and presence rules for Child Benefit changed from 7 April 2003.

The following is a brief round up of some of the changes.

### Stop Press

#### Helpline for intermediaries

There is a dedicated Child Benefit helpline for intermediaries, which ensures your calls are treated as a priority.

T: 0191 403 3006

A person can normally get Child Benefit if they live in the United Kingdom (UK), and are responsible for at least one child living in the UK.

To be treated as living in the UK, a person must be both **present** and **ordinarily resident** here. A person is ordinarily resident if they have their settled home here and normally reside in the UK. However, the restrictions on customers subject to immigration control continue to apply.

#### Transitional exemption

When the new residence rules were introduced on 7 April 2003, existing Child

Benefit customers were exempt from the requirement to be ordinarily resident in the UK for three years (until April 2006), or until their entitlement ceases, whichever is the earliest. This ensures they are not disadvantaged by the move to the new rules.

#### Customers coming to live in the UK

A person subject to immigration control under certain circumstances may not be able to get Child Benefit.

#### Temporary absence from the UK

Although people must be present in the UK to qualify for Child Benefit, they



continue to count as being present if they go abroad temporarily.

- They are counted as present in the UK for the first eight weeks, whatever the reason for their temporary absence.
- They are counted as present for the first 12 weeks where the absence, or the reason it has been extended beyond eight weeks, is in connection with the death or treatment of an illness or disability of the customer, a child or qualifying young person in their care, or a relative (as defined).

For temporary absences beginning on or after 7 April 2003, the absence must be unlikely, at the time it begins, to exceed

52 weeks.

### Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Due to different legislation, there are special rules for people moving between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

### Crown Servants posted overseas

Crown Servants posted outside the UK may be treated as being in Great Britain, depending on their circumstances. To qualify for Child Benefit, their partner, or children, must be present in the UK or living with them overseas.

#### Further information

Full details of the changes, and definitions of the general rules etc, are available in CH5 Notes – *Child Benefit if you are coming from abroad or going abroad*. To obtain a copy call the Child Benefit Office on 0845 302 1444.

Information is also available on [www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/child\\_benefit.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/child_benefit.asp)

# Child Support Reform

The Child Support Agency's priority for the next year is to implement Child Support Reform. Alongside this we are seeking to maintain and, wherever possible, improve our service to existing clients whose maintenance is assessed under current arrangements.

Child Support Reform is likely to proceed in three broad stages:

- implementation of the new rules for new clients from 3 March 2003
- the transfer of cases from the existing computer system to the new system
- converting existing maintenance assessments into new maintenance calculations based on the new rules. This will not commence until Ministers are satisfied that new arrangements are working well for new clients.

As the Chief Executive, Doug Smith, points out in the Agency's 2003/4 Business Plan, success during the next year will take us a long way towards achieving the aspirations he set on joining the Agency, which were:

- the Child Support Agency will be seen as one of the leading providers of child support services worldwide

- we will be regarded by our clients as providing a professional, efficient and sensitive service
- we will ensure staff feel good about being employed by the Child Support Agency.

The Agency's Annual Plan sets out the aims and objectives for the next year, detailing key areas of performance and results. This publication is one of several regular communications the Agency sends out to its external stakeholders. Others include:

- *Open Door* – produced specifically for client representative groups, this quarterly newsletter gives up-to-date information and news about the Agency
- Child Support Reform Information Pack – this revised publication details the new scheme and outlines the key areas.

These publications and other material, including all revised and new leaflets for clients, are available on the Agency's website at [www.csa.gov.uk](http://www.csa.gov.uk).

Or, if you would like to be included on the mailing list to receive regular information from the Agency, contact:

Dave Whatcott,  
Department for Work and Pensions,  
Room BP6201,  
Benton Park Road,  
Longbenton,  
Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE98 1YX.

T: 0191 224 9873

E: [david.whatcott@](mailto:david.whatcott@childsupportagency.gsi.gov.uk)

[childsupportagency.gsi.gov.uk](http://childsupportagency.gsi.gov.uk)



# Winter Fuel Payments

In June and July we sent around 225,000 letters and claim forms to people we identified as being **newly** eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment in 2003, inviting them to claim.

Successful claims that we receive on or before 19 September 2003 should be paid before Christmas. Claims can still be made after that date, but payments may be made after Christmas. **We must receive all claims for winter 2003/04 by 30 March 2004.**

**Remember!** Most people aged 60 or over will get their Winter Fuel Payment automatically and do not need to claim.

People **only** need to claim if they are aged 60 or over, are **not** getting a State Pension or other social security benefit in the qualifying week of 15 to 21 September 2003 and did **not** get a Winter Fuel Payment last winter. (This also includes people who are receiving only Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit.)

If a person's circumstances have changed – for example, they have moved house, changed their bank account details or stopped getting social security benefits – they need to tell us as soon as possible. For details of how they should contact us, see our article in June 2003 **Touchbase**.

## New 80+ Annual Payment

As announced in the Budget, people aged 80 or over in the qualifying week of 15 to 21 September 2003, who are entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment, will receive extra money from this winter – the 80+ Annual Payment.

- If they receive Minimum Income Guarantee, and they or their partner are aged 80 or over, they should get an extra £100.
- If they do not receive Minimum Income Guarantee but they are the

only eligible person in the household aged 80 or over, they should get an extra £100. Where there is more than one eligible person, each should receive £50.

This money will be paid automatically, as part of the Winter Fuel Payment. It will not be a separate payment, and people do not need to claim it. The amount people get will depend on their circumstances in the qualifying week of 15 to 21 September.

## Publicity materials

Adverts are appearing in the national press this month, to provide reassurance that most people will be paid automatically and do not need to claim. They also explain what those people who do need to claim should do.

The new Winter Fuel Payment leaflet, leaflet dispenser, audiocassette and poster are now available. To request your **free** copies call **0845 601 1562** or 0845 601 1107 for textphone users. The leaflet is also available in Welsh, Braille and large print, along with a Welsh language version of the poster.

For further information and claim forms, for both winter 2003/04 and past winters:

- call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on 0845 9 15 15 15 (or 0845 601 5613 for textphone users). Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and calls charged at local rates.
- or visit our website [www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel)

Tackling pensioner poverty began in earnest in April 2003 with the start of Phase 1 of the take-up campaign.

## Pension Credit – update

The campaign got off to a good start in its first month, with customer contact exceeding all expectations, and interest remains high. Pension Credit will now be launched in full from 6 October 2003.

In Phase 2 of the campaign we will ensure that all remaining pensioners are contacted by June 2004, to give them the facts they need to help them decide whether they should apply. Customers will not lose out – we have special arrangements in place to backdate entitlement to 6 October 2003, or the date of entitlement, if this is later, for those who apply before October 2004.

### How will we advertise Pension Credit?

We are continuing to send out personalised mail packs to pensioners, encouraging those eligible to apply. The Pension Credit campaign *Pick it up. It's yours.* supports this mailing, and includes:

**Television** – national TV advertising is due to start this month. The adverts were developed following extensive research and consultation with pensioner groups, to ensure our message is clear, and will be aimed at pensioners, their friends, family and third parties. They will run mainly during the daytime but also at relevant times in the evening to reach as wide an audience as possible.

**Radio** – we will be running advertising from October on ethnic radio stations, in a number of community languages and English, aimed at older people, their friends and their family.

**Press** – press activity starts around the *Pick it up. It's yours.* campaign this month. Adverts will appear in national press, and specialist press specifically targeting the carer community. We may also use loose inserts in magazines that target the elderly, to boost response if necessary.

**Website** – [www.pensions.gov.uk/pensioncredit](http://www.pensions.gov.uk/pensioncredit) provides information for pensioners and their carers, friends and family. It also carries some information about qualifying conditions to help people check their potential entitlement and – from October 2003 – the application form.

We are targeting 'harder to reach' groups such as disabled pensioners and those in rural and ethnic communities, for example, by using ethnic media channels. Our local service is also working with their local partners on a range of take on initiatives to reach these customers.

### Pension Credit at a Glance PC09S (English), PC09S Wales (Welsh language only)

The one-page 'At A Glance' guide is a simple, laminated guide for use by those who work or have contact with the housebound

elderly – for example, Home Care and Meals on Wheels workers and nurses. It contains easy to understand information about Pension Credit (and how to apply for it) in a question and answer format. It will be available following the October launch.

### Pick it up. It's yours. (PCIL)

Following the positive introduction of PC1L in April 2003, we have taken on board valuable feedback from partner organisations and updated the leaflet for October 2003. The new leaflet will be available from the start of October, after which all April 2003 versions should be destroyed.

From October, you can order copies of the leaflet PC1L via CAT1 using Order 5 forms.

The leaflet may also be downloaded from [www.pensioncreditinfo.gov.uk](http://www.pensioncreditinfo.gov.uk).

### Website and support group registration

If you would like to receive regular email news about Pension Credit and have not already registered (registration is free) please visit [www.pensioncreditinfo.gov.uk](http://www.pensioncreditinfo.gov.uk)

# Response to the Pensions Green Paper

The Pensions Green Paper, published in December 2002, stressed the importance of partnership between the Government, individuals, employers and the financial services industry in saving for retirement.

The consultation period came to an end on 28 March 2003. In total, more than 800 responses were received from a broad and diverse range of stakeholders, as well as feedback from 35 consultation events attended by nearly 2,000 people.

In June, the Government published its response, *Simplicity, security and choice: Working and saving for retirement – Action on occupational pensions*. This sets out the steps it will take to reform occupational pensions in order to address the concerns raised.

The Government recognises the importance of protecting accrued rights but, to meet future challenges, also recognises that all partners need greater flexibility to find solutions right for them.

## Proposals

The proposals announced in *Action on occupational pensions* aim to improve member protection, make provision easier for employers and allow people

to exercise choice. They include:

- new measures to improve security for pensioners, including a Pensions Protection Fund to guarantee a specified minimum pension if the sponsoring employer becomes insolvent (the first ever insurance scheme for defined benefits in the UK)
- streamlining the legal framework
- helping people stay in work until they choose to retire with the option of taking their pension later
- ensuring the Government, as an employer, acts as an example to other employers in helping their staff to plan for retirement
- a programme, including pension forecasts and education involving employers, to inform individual choice.

These measures aim to improve protection and give employees much greater confidence that a pension promised is a pension delivered.

At the same time, they are designed to make it easier for pension schemes to operate, and ensure, through simplification and deregulation in some areas, that the costs of providing good schemes do not rise.



To get a copy of the Government's response, visit [www.dwp.gov.uk/publications](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications) or contact any Stationery Office bookshop.

Alternatively, copies of the document are available free of charge from:

Welfare Reform,  
Freepost (HA4441),  
Hayes UB3 1BR.

T: 020 8867 3201

F: 020 8867 3264

## Automatic Pension Forecasts for the self-employed

Self-employed people do not have access to State Second Pension or an occupational pension scheme. As such, they are a key group who may not have made adequate provision for their retirement. By issuing automatic State Pension forecasts to self-employed people, we aim to raise their awareness of the need for sound retirement planning.

The forecast details an individual's current and future entitlement to State Pension at today's prices.

The exercise will run until Spring 2004. Approximately 1.8 million forecasts will be issued during this time.

It is the first time such forecasts have been issued automatically. To ensure that future exercises of this nature are effective, we will carry out a full evaluation.

Other people can continue to request a full individual pension forecast from

The Pension Service is currently issuing State Pension forecasts to self-employed people.

the Retirement Pension Forecasting Team by telephoning

**0845 3000 168.**

They may also download the forecast form (BR19) from the Pension Service website at [www.thepensionservice.gov.uk](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk)

Or by writing to the Retirement Pension Forecasting Team, The Pension Service, Whitley Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE98 1BA.

Incapacity Benefit (IB) Reforms are a set of measures arising from the Government's *Pathways to Work* Green Paper published in November 2002.

# Incapacity Benefit Reforms

They aim to provide people of working age with health problems or disabilities, with the same employment opportunities as everyone else, and help them break down barriers which prevent them from getting back to work.

The measures aim to help people with a moderate health condition or disability, who have the clear potential to get back to work, to find and move into a job quickly. They do not aim to force sick or disabled people into employment.

The measures will be piloted in three Jobcentre Plus Districts from 27 October 2003:

- Bridgend, Rhondda, Cynon and Taff
- Derbyshire
- Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute

and in a further four sites from April 2004:

- East Lancashire
- Essex
- Gateshead & South Tyneside
- Somerset.

They will run for at least two and a half years and focus on people who are making new or repeat claims to IB. However, the opportunities offered will be available to all IB customers who volunteer to participate.

## What will the pilots offer?

The pilots will provide early support from specialist IB Personal Advisers. They will involve:

- moving the initial work-focused interview to the eighth week of the claim. This will enable the benefit claim to be processed and allow time for the customer's health to stabilise
- more frequent work-focused interviews

(six within seven months) and completion of a personal Action Plan. This will provide extra personal support for clients in the crucial early months

- linking more closely the work-focused interviews and the Personal Capability Assessment (PCA). This will ensure that key medical and benefit entitlement information is available to the Personal Adviser at the right time.

The pilots provide access to a 'Choices' package – a wider, more comprehensive range of support and opportunities, including:

- direct access to new vocational health programmes being developed jointly with local NHS. These will offer an holistic approach by considering both a customer's work and health needs
- more, and easier, access to existing programmes and incentives such as New Deal for Disabled People and Work Preparation. Such targeted programmes have already proved effective in helping customers back to work
- greater financial incentives to work, including a new Return to Work Credit of £40 a week for 52 weeks. Also, earlier access to the Adviser Discretionary Fund can provide up to £300 to pay for goods or services which may help a person to find work – for example, suitable clothing for an interview.

The pilots will also provide improved support for those having to move from IB to Jobseeker's Allowance through better skilled Advisers and early entry on to New Deal programmes.



### Further information

Stella Needham,  
IB Reforms Project,  
Room 4S25, Quarry House,  
Quarry Hill,  
Leeds LS2 7UA.

T: 0113 232 4236

E: stella.needham@  
jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

# Personal Capability Assessments and Evidence Based Medicine

Medical assessments for Incapacity Benefit are carried out by approved doctors supplied by Schlumberger Medical Services. They also provide the independent medical advice on which the Department's decision-makers base their decisions.

Over the last three years, Schlumberger have been working with the Department to design and develop an intelligent IT software programme – LIMA (Logic Integrated Medical Assessment) that will help to simplify the assessment process, and make the reports clearer and more consistent.

The programme is based on fully researched, up-to-date and reliable medical opinion (Evidence Based Medicine – EBM) on the various disabling conditions most commonly seen in people undergoing the PCA. The data covers musculoskeletal, mental health, heart and lung conditions, which together represent around 70% of claims for Incapacity Benefit.

Doctors carrying out the PCA examine and undertake formal and informal observations of the customer, as usual. The doctor then enters this information into the computer. Typing is kept to a minimum by offering doctors a choice of suitable phrases to click on, in order to build up a description of the customer and enter the data in an efficient way.

The LIMA programme then analyses the data and offers a choice of PCA 'descriptors' – clearly worded statements describing levels of functional ability – and their

appropriate scores. The programme is designed to guide doctors through the process and help them select the most appropriate descriptor based on the information they have entered about the customer.

The result is a printed report which, as well as being legible, is consistent and quality assured because it is supported by the best available medical evidence.

LIMA and EBM represent a major technological achievement. The programme has been very well received by both the doctors using the system, and by the Department's decision makers who are responsible for making the decisions about benefit entitlement. We are sure that customers, too, will be pleased to get a legible report, with clear reasons for the doctor's opinion.

## Appointments

After trials, telephone programming to schedule examination appointments has been rolled out nationally and evaluation of its success is ongoing. Whilst this has improved customer service, so far there has not been any real reduction overall in the number of customers who fail to keep their examination appointment.

We are continuing to look at appointment scheduling and develop tools to assist in reducing the number of people who fail to attend their examination.



### Further information

Hilary Cresswell,  
Medical Provision & Contracting  
Team,  
Spur B, Government Buildings,  
Cop Lane,  
Preston PR1 0SZ.

E: [hilary.cresswell@  
jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hilary.cresswell@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk)

When the Department for Work and Pensions was created – principally, to implement the Government’s Welfare to Work strategy – Ministers felt the time was right to establish a new committee to concentrate on policies and services to support disabled people into employment.



Further information  
DEAC Secretariat,  
Room N809, Moorfoot,  
Sheffield S1 4PQ.  
[www.deac.org.uk](http://www.deac.org.uk)

# Disability Employment Advisory Committee

There was also a need to reflect new developments around disability and employment, for example:

- the extension of the Disability Discrimination Act to cover more people and occupations
- the creation and roll-out of Jobcentre Plus integrated offices
- increased focus on mainstream, and not just specialist, support
- increasing recognition that people who may have been excluded from work in the past, want to work and can with appropriate support.

In response, the Minister for Disabled People, Maria Eagle, established the Disability Employment Advisory Committee (DEAC).

The Committee’s terms of reference are to:

- offer Ministers and officials strategic advice on the employment of disabled people
- advise on the labour market barriers that disabled people face
- develop recommendations on the support required to overcome these barriers
- advise – in confidence – on the effectiveness of specialist and mainstream policies, retention and rehabilitation measures and employment advice for disabled people.

The DEAC cannot get involved in individual cases, nor will they consider benefits or transport issues as other, specific, advisory bodies assist and

comment in these areas.

## Membership

The Committee, which has 13 Members including the Chair, Sally Witcher, consists of representatives from leading companies, trade unions, organisations of and for disabled people, providers of employment support, as well as independent analysts and consultants.

It meets formally, four times a year but ad hoc meetings will be held to take forward specific projects. One such task assigned to the Committee in the Incapacity Benefit Green Paper – *Pathways to Work* – is to advise how best to engage employers and other major stakeholders in this key agenda.

## Terms of reference

# Decision making

To maintain standards and ensure consistency, the results of all decision making and appeals are monitored and published in an annual report.

The Secretary of State’s *Report on the Standard of Decision Making in the Benefits Agency, Child Support Agency and Employment Service 2001/2002* was published in July.

To obtain a print or digital copy, email your order to:

(please state your preferred option)  
[lyndon.walters@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:lyndon.walters@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or  
[emma.watson@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:emma.watson@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).

A copy is also available on:  
[www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/2003/index.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/2003/index.asp)



Further information  
Emma Watson,  
ACI (Adjudication and  
Constitutional Issues),  
The Adelphi,  
1-11 John Adam Street,  
London WC2N 6HT.  
F: 020 7962 8541

# The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday, 18 March 2004 · Swallow Hotel, Glasgow · 10am until 4.30pm

The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) advises the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions on the prescription of industrial diseases, industrial accidents and on other matters relating to Industrial Injuries disablement benefits. The Council is made up of medical, scientific and legal experts, as well as representatives of employees and employers.

The IIAC is planning to hold a public meeting at the Swallow Hotel, Glasgow on 18 March 2004.

The aim is to give members of the public, and people with a professional interest in occupational diseases, the opportunity to learn about the Council's work and take part in a day of presentations and structured workshops.

The meeting will:

- describe the process of prescribing occupational diseases
- seek public opinion about new issues of concern in occupational health
- provide an opportunity to contribute views and ideas on IIAC's future programme (for details visit our website).

**Please note: individual cases or claims cannot be discussed at the meeting.**

Admission is free – **by ticket only**. To apply for tickets, or obtain further information, fax Neil Davidson in the IIAC Secretariat on 020 7712 2255 or email [iiac@dial.pipex.com](mailto:iiac@dial.pipex.com)

Or telephone 020 7962 8066.



Further information  
[www.iiac.org.uk](http://www.iiac.org.uk)

## WORKSTEP

WORKSTEP is an employment programme, funded by Jobcentre Plus, which provides individually tailored and flexible support for disabled people in work.

WORKSTEP began in April 2001 and replaced the former Supported Employment Programme.

WORKSTEP is delivered by over 240 providers throughout England, Scotland and Wales. At the moment there are around 21,500 people on the programme.

WORKSTEP has been designed to:

- enable disabled people to work effectively in a job, focusing on their needs as well as those of their employer
- provide the support they and their employer need
- help people to develop and improve

Disabled people often face complex barriers to finding or keeping a job, but with the right support they can realise their full work potential in a wide range of jobs.

- their skills and job prospects
- provide a stepping-stone into unsupported employment – if appropriate.

The wide range of support provided by WORKSTEP is tailored to meet individual needs, for example:

- job tasting or work experience
- access to learning and development
- support through a job coach or job trainer
- mentoring from colleagues
- advice and help in the workplace
- steps to progress into unsupported work – where this is the right option for the person
- a regular review progress to update the individual's development plan.

WORKSTEP can provide support to

disabled people in a variety of different jobs with a wide range of organisations – from small high street shops to multi-national companies. Some supported employees are also employed in factories and businesses run by local authorities, voluntary organisations or Remploy Ltd.

Referrals to WORKSTEP can be made by the Disability Employment Adviser in a Jobcentre Plus office or, in some cases, via the provider.



Further information  
Sandra Smith,  
DS6, Level 3, Rockingham House,  
123 West Street, Sheffield S1 4ER.  
F: 0114 259 6990  
E: [sandra.smith@jobcentreplus.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.smith@jobcentreplus.gov.uk)  
[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

Removal of the Residential Allowance and Part III Accommodation Rate from 6 October 2003.

## Changes to long term care funding

The Residential Allowance and Part III Accommodation Rate are special rates of Income Support and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance paid to customers living in independent sector or local authority care homes.

As we reported in our Winter edition, from 6 October 2003, the Residential Allowance and Part III Accommodation Rate will no longer be payable to anyone who currently receives it. This includes those customers who are being provided with aftercare in a care home following being detained in hospital under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act.

Customers will have their benefit re-calculated. Those under age 60 will be assessed for Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance personal allowance and premiums. Those aged 60 and over will be assessed for Pension Credit.

Customers who already receive help from their local authority will continue to do so. Local authorities will, as now, calculate

how much the resident can afford to pay towards their care home costs, and make up the difference.

We wrote to these customers in early May, to advise them of the changes.

Some customers choose to fund their care from a combination of private income and benefits and do not ask their local authority to help with their fees. We offered to visit these customers, to re-assure them that, once they'd contacted their local authority, funding would be made available to them from October – and to answer any questions they had.

During the visits, which we made between March and June, we gave each customer a letter, outlining the changes and advising them to contact their local authority.

Funds to cover the extra costs incurred by local authorities will be transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions to Health Departments, who will allocate them to local authorities.



### Further information

Ismay MacDonald,  
SPC1 (Long Term Care Team),  
Room 1W60,  
Quarry House,  
Leeds LS2 7UA.

E: [ismay.macdonald@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ismay.macdonald@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## Are your customers looking for a job, training course or information?

*It's a jungle out there...but here's how they can hack their way through all that information.*

### [www.worktrain.gov.uk](http://www.worktrain.gov.uk)

is the national jobs, learning and careers site. It is a complete online resource for anyone looking for a job...and it's changing – a new look, a new style, a new way to get information – *fast*.

There are still over one million opportunities: jobs, training courses, career profiles, voluntary jobs and childcare providers, as well as a huge information section – all available 24/7. But the information is so much easier to find – all you have to do is type in what you're looking for...

All will be revealed in Autumn 2003 when you can preview the new site via the link from the existing Worktrain home page.

In the meantime, whatever the needs of your customers, log on and explore. . .



# New Deal 50 plus

New Deal 50 plus is a voluntary programme of practical help for people aged 50 and over who have been out of work and claiming income replacement benefits – such as Jobseeker’s Allowance, Income Support or Incapacity Benefit – for at least six months.

As reported in our last edition, prior to 6 April 2003, eligible people could claim an Employment Credit of up to £60 per week. This has been replaced by the 50 plus element of the Working Tax Credit.

New Deal 50 plus now offers:

- access to an additional element of the Working Tax Credit, payable for 52 weeks
- a training grant of up to £1,500 for in-work training
- one-to-one practical help and advice on looking for work from a personal adviser.

The Working Tax Credit is a payment to top up the earnings of working people

(whether employed or self-employed), including those who do not have children. Additional amounts are paid to people with disabilities and to people aged 50 or over returning to work after a period on benefits.

The New Deal 50 plus programme has been very successful at helping people into work (98,000 since April 2000) and we need to ensure the move from Employment Credit to Working Tax Credit does not affect future success.

Proposals were put forward in the Pensions Green Paper *Extending opportunities for older workers* section to provide extra back-to-work help for those aged 50 and over, through New Deal 50



Further information

Sue Johnson,  
Employer Links and PSL Team,  
Jobcentre Plus,  
Level 2, Rockingham House,  
123 West Street,  
Sheffield S1 4ER.

E: [sue.johnson@jobcentreplus.gov.uk](mailto:sue.johnson@jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

plus and a range of other initiatives. We plan to launch a number of measures in October this year to add to our advisers’ skills and knowledge, and raise customers’ awareness of the help available to them.

We will also promote the use of volunteering opportunities as a stepping-stone to work, encourage employers to consider the advantage of employing older people and test the use of voluntary organisations to contact eligible customers.

In September, a major New Deal advertising campaign, *The deal is – you’re not alone*, will be launched on television and radio, supported by press advertising, posters and the Internet.

## New Deal *The deal is – you’re not alone*

The aim is to increase people’s understanding of what New Deal offers and encourage those eligible for help through the various voluntary New Deal programmes – specifically lone parents, the over 50s and sick and disabled people – to find out more.

Prior to developing the campaign, research revealed that:

- public awareness and understanding of New Deal has declined due to a lack of general New Deal advertising
- many were not responding to invitations to attend work-focused interviews
- an extra push was needed to encourage those hardest to help to consider the voluntary programmes

- previous advertising campaigns, though successful in increasing interest and take-up, had promoted individual New Deal programmes rather than New Deal as a whole.

The new campaign focuses on the barriers that prevent people from getting into work, for example, each of the television and radio adverts aimed at sick and disabled people focus on money worries or career path problems, but these are also relevant to a wider audience.

The creative approach emphasises the role of the Personal Adviser, or Job Broker, in providing tailored help and support to individuals wanting to work (*The deal is – you’re not alone*) and directs people towards the New Deal information line or

website.

The campaign will be supported by local marketing activity such as mailings, outreach work and events.



Further information

New Deal information line  
**0845 606 2626**

Textphone **0845 606 0680**

In Northern Ireland call  
**0800 35 35 30**

[www.newdeal.gov.uk](http://www.newdeal.gov.uk)

In his Pre-Budget Report in November, the Chancellor announced a programme of intensive support in neighbourhoods with very high concentrations of worklessness.

## More help for deprived neighbourhoods

The programme, which will be piloted in 12 of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, will run for two years from April 2004. £77 million of new money will cover set up, evaluation and running costs.

The pilots will test a new approach of offering intensive support to local residents to help them overcome barriers to employment and access the jobs that can often be found within travelling distance of where they live.

They will run in the following local authority wards:

- Glasgow – Parkhead, Hutchesontown (2 pilots)
- Birmingham – Aston
- Newcastle – Monkchester
- Hastings – Castle
- Swansea – Penderry
- Great Yarmouth – Central & Northgate, Regent
- Knowsley – Northwood
- Wirral – Birkenhead
- Tower Hamlets – Bromley-by Bow, East India & Lansbury, Limehouse, Mile End East
- Sheffield – Manor
- Middlesbrough – Thorntree, North Ormesley & Brambles Farm.

The enhanced support offered will include as a minimum:

- more frequent work-focused interviews for all lone parents receiving Income Support, and all partners of customers in receipt of

designated benefits (because, despite high levels of unemployment, there are often widespread employment opportunities in these neighbourhoods)

- more help for new Incapacity Benefit customers to ensure that employment opportunities and the support available to overcome barriers are regularly discussed and explored
- weekly signing at weeks 7-13 and accelerated access on to New Deal programmes after just three months for all residents claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.

Each pilot will receive around £3 million a year. This includes around £1 million for a discretionary fund to allow Personal Advisers, working with Local Strategic Partnerships, the flexibility to deliver services that best meet the needs of the local community. This, in turn, will enable them to tackle the substantial and varied barriers that prevent residents in these neighbourhoods from finding or returning to work.

The pilot aims to offer help to all residents, whether they are in receipt of a working age benefit or not. However, young people aged 16/17 are specifically excluded and will continue to have Learning-focused interviews with Careers/Connexions Service Advisers.

We'll bring you more information in a future edition of **Touchbase**.

# Job Retention and Rehabilitation Pilot

The Job Retention and Rehabilitation Pilot (see **Touchbase** Winter 2002) was launched on 1 April 2003. It is testing the effectiveness of three different ways of helping people who have been off work because of sickness, injury or disability to get back to, and remain in, work.

The pilot is running in six areas:

- Sheffield, Birmingham and West Kent – where it is known as *WorkCare*
- Tyneside and Teesside – *RouteBack*
- Glasgow – *HealthyReturn*.

The pilot has already helped some volunteers – for example:

A mechanic with a degenerative disc disease had been off work for over three months due to illness and depression. Following liaison between his caseworker and employer, he was offered a non-manual job within the company.

He has also enrolled on an IT course and is receiving support from a Disability Employment Adviser.

## Who is eligible?

The pilot is open to both employed and self-employed volunteers who:

- live and work in one of the pilot areas
- have been off work because of sickness, injury or disability, for between 6 and 26 weeks
- are at risk of losing their job.

If volunteers are eligible and willing to participate, they will be randomly assigned to one of four groups.

One group offers help in the workplace, another with healthcare; the third is a combination of the two. All three focus on the individual and offer an enhanced service to that currently available in the

area.

The fourth group is the control group. This allows us to compare the experiences of people receiving the enhanced service with those using existing services, to see which types of help are most effective at returning people to work.

Participation in the pilot is voluntary and free, and does not affect a person's rights to any benefits or other forms of healthcare/assistance participants may be entitled to.

The results from this research study will be used to inform future government policy.

For further information, or if you know someone who might benefit from the pilot, call the appropriate helpline:

**WorkCare**  
**Birmingham and West Kent**  
T: 0800 052 1659  
[www.workcare.co.uk](http://www.workcare.co.uk)

**WorkCare**  
**Sheffield**  
T: 0800 052 6528  
[www.workcare.org.uk](http://www.workcare.org.uk)

**RouteBack**  
**Tyneside and Teesside**  
T: 0800 052 4038  
[www.routeback.co.uk](http://www.routeback.co.uk)

**HealthyReturn**  
**Glasgow**  
T: 0800 052 1012  
[www.healthyreturn.org](http://www.healthyreturn.org)

# Work-Focused Interviews for Partners

## The changes

From April 2004, work-focused interviews will be introduced in Jobcentre Plus offices for partners of customers receiving the following working-age benefits:

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Carers Allowance (if paid with one of the above).

The interviews will be compulsory. While there will be a system of waivers and deferrals to protect partners for whom work is not a viable option, failure to take part may lead to a reduction in the amount of benefit paid to the customer.

## Who does it affect?

Working-age partners of people receiving the above benefits – when part of that benefit is paid in respect of the partner.

## What will happen?

Partners will be required to take part in an interview at the 26-week point in each claim. We plan to start identifying relevant claims from October 2003 – and to hold the first interviews from April 2004.

## What are the benefits?

The interview will provide partners with the opportunity to discuss their skills and experience, the barriers they face in moving closer to the labour market and the help and support they need to overcome those barriers.

At the interview, a trained Personal Adviser will offer advice on how the whole family could be better off. After learning more about what the partner

would like to do, they will give advice on job prospects, how to look for and apply for work, what training is available to gain up-to-date skills, and mentoring. Specialist advice will also be available.

## New Deal for Partners

The voluntary New Deal for Partners is being revamped to offer an enhanced level of support to partners from April 2004. It will provide significant extra help to the many additional customers who will access the programme as a result of the introduction of work-focused interviews.

## Why make these changes?

This measure is part of the Government's commitment to decrease the number of workless households and tackle poverty by increasing employment opportunities for all through modern and efficient work-focused services.

The interview will ensure that partners of customers receiving working-age benefits are aware of the opportunities available to them.



### Further information

Sylvia Benes or Frank Spiers,  
Area 5D,  
Caxton House,  
Tothill Street,  
London SW1H 9NA.

E: [sylvia.benes@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sylvia.benes@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

E: [frank.spiers@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:frank.spiers@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk)

## Jobcentre Plus – update

The roll-out of Jobcentre Plus continues with the following offices due to have opened between June – September 2003.

Norwich Kiln House

Clacton on Sea

Harlow

Yeovil

Matlock

Heanor

Ilkeston

Okehampton

Brixton South  
(Wentworth House)

Devonport

Barnstaple

Exeter  
(Clarendon House)

Leamington

Bailey Court (West Street)

Gosport

Belper

Long Eaton

Loughborough

Bridgwater (Hanover House)

Chesterfield  
(Markham House)

Bridgwater (West Quay)

The Home Office Social Exclusion Unit report *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners*, published in July 2002, noted that not enough was being done to help prisoners to retain their jobs or assist them to access work or employment programmes when they leave prison.

## Helping ex-offenders into work

The Government has responded by introducing more direct help to offenders while they are in custody, which is expected to reduce the likelihood of them re-offending on their release.

One measure – developed by Jobcentre Plus with the co-operation of HM Prison Service and the Scottish Prison Service – is to provide employment and benefit surgeries in prisons. National implementation is now underway following successful pilots in a

limited number of prisons towards the end of last year. Implementation is due to be completed by April 2004.

The service is provided by Jobcentre Plus advisers, who offer help with employment and benefit related issues faced by prisoners at the start and end of their period in custody. They aim to help as many people as possible, on a voluntary basis, to ensure:

- they receive advice about benefits appropriate to them – and claim

For further information contact

Mike Dixon

T: 0114 259 5490



and receive payments they are eligible for

- they receive signposting to sources of advice about housing
- existing employment is preserved where possible
- jobsearch advice is given prior to release
- customers are linked to appropriate initiatives such as Freshstart (see **Touchbase** Autumn 2002) and New Deal.

## Housing & Employment Mobility Services

The Housing & Employment Mobility Services (HEMS) is the working title for another new initiative helping people into work, being developed as a result of the Prime Minister's announcement in February 2001. This said that the Employment Service (now Jobcentre Plus) should be 'put on a new footing that lets them help people find new jobs across the country by identifying housing as well as job placements'.

HEMS is a joint project between the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, DWP/Jobcentre Plus, the Treasury and the Scottish, Welsh and

Northern Ireland Offices. It specifically aims to:

- improve labour market mobility throughout the UK
- help modernise services provided by Jobcentre Plus advisers
- make more information more accessible to customers
- develop the Jobcentre Plus role as a provider of choice by encouraging customer consideration of a wider range of opportunities, particularly for those living in poorer areas (most likely to be those living in social

housing).

HEMS will do this through a new website providing integrated national information – for advisers, jobseekers and employers – on jobs, housing, transport, training and education.

The initiative is still in the early stages of development. Over the coming year, the website will be designed and developed, and the service should be available towards the end of 2004.

For further information contact

Moira Barclay

T: 0114 259 5473



# Labour Market Division

This is the second in a series of articles about the work of Labour Market Division in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

## The Employer Relations Unit

The Employer Relations Unit (ERU) aims to raise the profile and importance of employers within DWP. Working with Ministers and Directors, they ensure employers are at the centre of the Government's drive to tackle poverty, through work and sustained economic growth. The ERU supports this important and long-term objective in a number of ways:

- by encouraging joint working across all DWP businesses to ensure effective co-ordination in our approach to employers
- by providing briefing for Ministers before they visit or hold meetings with employers
- by developing an [employer's guide](#) to DWP.

Another key responsibility is raising awareness of the range of support, through New Deal and Work-based Learning, and across Government, for DWP customers interested in becoming self-employed. ERU works with the Small Business Service and other Departments to ensure the most disadvantaged know about the advice, guidance and business planning help available ([www.businesslink.org](http://www.businesslink.org)).

Complementing this work, ERU is responsible for The Prince's Trust Business programme offering grants, loans and mentoring to business start-ups. They work closely with The Trust to focus efforts on disadvantaged young people who might otherwise not consider self-employment as a viable option ([www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk)).

## The Labour Market and Skills Strategy Team

The Labour Market and Skills Strategy Team (LMSST) works to improve labour market understanding in DWP and across government. It is developing a range of presentation materials, and together with the Department for Education and Skills is taking forward a project to make better use of labour market information.

As part of DWP's contribution to the National Skills Strategy, the Team, along with Jobcentre Plus and others, is developing a coherent information, advice and guidance service for customers – in the community and the workplace. LMSST is also responsible for the policy lead and continuous improvement of the Work-based Learning for Adults training programme, Work Trials, Programme Centres and the Travel to Interview Scheme.

Acting as the point of contact in DWP for Regional Development Agencies and Government Offices, the Team works with them and other Departments on Regional Agenda issues and the development of the Frameworks for Regional Employment and Skills Action. These regional action plans aim to encourage healthy labour markets.

LMSST also supports the Joint International Unit and acts as the gateway between domestic and EU employment policy units, as well as representing the UK at the European Employment Observatory Mutual Information System on Employment Policies network.



Further information  
Ann Kinsella,  
Employer Relations Unit,  
T: 020 7712 2521  
E: [ann.kinsella@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ann.kinsella@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Pat Cook,  
The Labour Market and Skills  
Strategy Team,  
T: 020 7962 8407  
E: [pat.cook@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pat.cook@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Labour Market Division,  
Department for Work  
and Pensions,  
Level 2, The Adelphi,  
1-11 John Adam Street,  
London WC2N 6HT.

# New measures to help people move from benefits to work

As part of the 2002 Pre-Budget Report, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced new and improved incentives to help people make the transition from benefits to work.

New measures announced included:

- **a new Job Grant from 25 October 2004**

The new Job Grant, which replaces the Lone Parent Run-on, will consist of two rates:

- £100 for single people and couples without children
- £250 for all lone parents and couples with children.

Customers receiving Jobseeker's Allowance who are eligible for New Deal for Young People, including couples with children, will not be eligible for a Job Grant.

The grant will be payable to customers or their partners who have been getting Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Allowance or Severe Disablement Allowance for a

continuous period of 26 weeks or more, subject to qualifying conditions.

- **closure of the Back to Work Bonus Scheme**

The Back to Work Bonus (BTWB) scheme will close from 25 October 2004, for new customers. Existing customers who have accumulated bonus will have it protected for a further three months to allow them to claim their cash lump sum.

A mailshot to advise customers of the closure will be issued during September/October 2003. BTWB notifications issued by computer will be amended from November 2003. We will also be updating leaflets, forms and other publications to provide detailed information on the closure of the scheme.

- **extension of the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit Run-on**

The Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit Run-on will be extended to people on Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance from April 2004.

We'll bring you more details about this – and the other new measures – in future editions of **Touchbase**.



Further information

Gordon Lynch

T: 01253 339704

E: [gordon.lynch@  
jobcentreplus.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.lynch@jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

## Direct Payment – update

Direct Payment is the way that all benefits and pensions will be paid in future. Order books and girocheques are being phased out and both new customers and those who currently collect a benefit or state pension using these methods will get their money paid directly into an account of their choice.

Our mailing packs – being issued to those customers who collect their benefit or state pension using an order book or girocheque – give them details of all their options and information about what to do next. This does not include Jobcentre Plus customers in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance, who will be provided with the same details and options as part of normal business – for example, as part of any interview when a Jobseeker's Allowance customer visits a Jobcentre Plus office.

There are accounts that let customers continue to get their money at the Post

Office® if they want to, and once customers have transferred to Direct Payment, they'll still get the same amount of money, as regularly as they do now.

You may have seen our advertising on TV, in the press and on the radio, letting people know that Direct Payment is being introduced. It explains the different types of account available, and that customers do not need to do anything until they receive their mailing pack.

If you or your customers want to speak to someone about Direct Payment, or request the general leaflet DPL1 – including alternative formats ie Braille, audio and large print – call the Direct Payment Information Line opposite.

DPL1 is also widely available from post offices or, for advisers, through the usual channels (see CAT1 for details).

Information is also available on

We are continuing to write to customers inviting them to transfer to Direct Payment.

our website

[www.dwp.gov.uk/directpayment](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/directpayment) which is regularly updated and has links to pages with specific information for pensioners, benefit customers and speakers of other languages.

### Direct Payment Information Line

**0800 107 2000**

in England, Scotland and Wales

**0800 107 5000**

in Northern Ireland

**0800 107 8000**

for Welsh speakers

**0800 107 4000**

Textphone for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland

**0800 107 6000**

Textphone for Welsh speakers

# Touchbase questionnaire

Earlier this year we asked a random selection of our readers to give us their views about **Touchbase** by completing a short questionnaire. We received responses from a wide cross-section of the Publicity Register database, including general and welfare rights advisers (25%), health professionals (19%), and disability and mental health advisers (13%). Here are some of our findings:

- Relevance to your work  
Good/Very good 83%
- Easiness to understand  
Good/Very good 90%
- Design and layout  
Good/Very good 90%
- Amount of detail  
Good/Very good 77%
- Provision of information  
at the right time  
Good/Very good 80%
- Overall level of satisfaction 91%

Asked how many readers see each copy of **Touchbase**, 23% said that it is seen by more than 6 readers, 40% between 2-6 readers and 36% by a single reader.

The information in **Touchbase** is used by 68% of readers for reference within the team, 38% use it for personal information and 12% for staff training purposes.

Although most readers feel that the amount of detail in our articles is pitched at the right level, some people said they would like more. Whilst **Touchbase** provides a concise, easy to read update about the changes and developments in the Department, some of you need more detailed information and guidance.

Wherever possible, we provide references to where additional

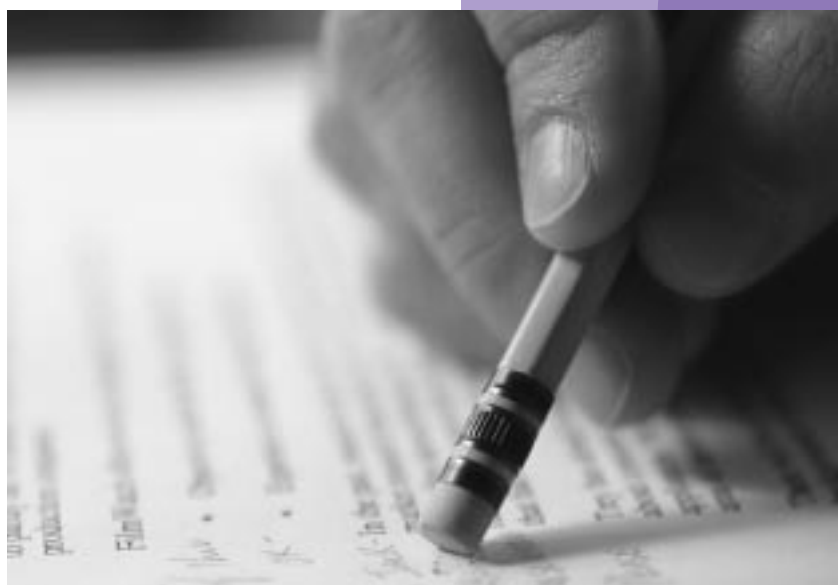
information can be found. The DWP website is a good source of more detailed guides and publications. We will look at the provision of a bit more detail in future.

We also received suggestions about topics you would like to see covered in **Touchbase** and we will consider including some of these in future editions, when space permits.

Thank you to all those who took the time to respond to our questionnaire. We are pleased that you find **Touchbase** informative and interesting and useful to your work. Please remember that your comments and suggestions are always welcome (see back page for how to contact us).

If you have to share a copy of **Touchbase** with colleagues and would like to receive your own copy, please see the back page for how to order.

We received a number of comments about ordering leaflets. We have forwarded these to DWP Customer Services at Norcross who are responsible for handling your orders. *Please see CAT1 for contact details and information about ordering.*



## Stop Press

### The Department for Work and Pensions Forum Update

The Disability Forum was held on 3 June 2003 in Manchester, and the Annual Forum in London on 16 July 2003. To receive a report of either of these, or to be added to our database to be notified of these or any other events, please contact the Corporate Customer Liaison Team – see opposite.

### Forthcoming Forums

- **The Scottish Pensions Forum** will be held on Wednesday, 8 October 2003 in Edinburgh.
- **The Pensions Forum** will be held on Tuesday, 4 November 2003 in London.
- **The Scottish Working Age Forum** will be held on Tuesday, 11 November 2003 in Glasgow.

Touchbase is mailed free of charge to anyone who joins our Publicity Register. Join the Publicity Register by making contact using any of the methods below.

# How to obtain copies of Touchbase

## What is the Publicity Register?

The Publicity Register is a mailing list of advisers, intermediaries and other professionals who want to receive **Touchbase**, CAT1 – A catalogue of leaflets and posters, and other relevant information about Government services.

## When to contact the Publicity Register

Contact the Publicity Register to:

- obtain your own copies of **Touchbase** and CAT1
- cancel or order more copies of **Touchbase**
- change your address or contact details.

## How to contact the Publicity Register

There are four ways to contact us:

Email: [Publicity-Register@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Publicity-Register@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)  
Fax: 0870 241 2634

Letter: The Publicity Register,  
Freepost, NWW 1853  
Manchester M2 9LU

Telephone: 0845 602 4444

## Comments about Touchbase content

The **Touchbase** Editorial Board is always pleased to receive comments about the style and content of **Touchbase**. We want to ensure it meets your needs. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions then please contact:

Lynne Fromings,  
DWP Corporate Customer Liaison,  
5th Floor South,  
1 Trevelyan Square,  
Leeds LS1 6EB.  
T: 0113 232 7125  
F: 0113 232 7221  
E: [lynne.fromings@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:lynne.fromings@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

## Obtaining leaflets and posters

CAT1 gives details of how to order leaflets and posters. These cannot be obtained from the Publicity Register or DWP Corporate Customer Liaison.

**Touchbase** is the Department for Work and Pensions newsletter for advisers, intermediaries and other professionals. We aim to provide you, the reader, with information about benefits, pensions, the New Deals, employment issues and tax credits, in order to help you in your work with our customers. We aim to provide information about changes, signpost you towards further information and alert you to future developments.

Although every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of this newsletter are correct, it gives general guidance only and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. Wherever this may be important to you, you should always check details with your social security or Jobcentre Plus office, or pension centre.