

Glasgow Jobcentre Plus Partners Newsletter



Welcome to latest edition of the Glasgow District Partners Newsletter which contains a range of information about changes to our service delivery.

This includes the introduction of a fit note to replace the existing medical statement and details of the additional support available for Carers.

The newsletter also contains information about a new model of flexibilities for Jobcentre Plus which will be piloted in 4 UK Districts, including Glasgow. The pilots will be assessed in terms of the outcomes they achieve for customers and pilot districts will have additional flexibilities and discretion to determine how they will deliver these outcomes.

Please contact The Glasgow District Partnership Manager, Alison Campbell on 0141 207 3816 if you want more information about any of the articles in this Newsletter.

Regards



David Collie

Glasgow District Manager

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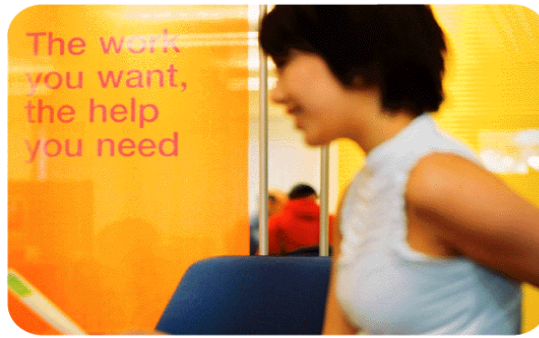
Questions/Information Sessions

jobcentreplus

Part of the Department
for Work and Pensions

Reforming the Medical Statement

The Government is planning to implement changes to the current medical certificate (sick note) from April 10. This is in response to the public consultation following Dame Carol Black's review "Working for a healthier tomorrow" which proposed replacing the sick note with a fit note – to switch the focus on to what people can do instead of what they cannot.



The new medical statement is similar to the existing sick line and GPs will be able to say whether they think their patient is 'not fit for work' or 'may be fit for work'. The new form will have space for GPs to include advice for the patient and their employer on how simple changes in the workplace could allow an early return to work. This could mean temporarily working different hours, doing different duties or having some support to do their usual job

There is strong evidence that work can be beneficial for health and well-being and we know that long periods out of work are associated with poor mental and physical health, increased use of health services and poverty.

Providing further information and advice in this way will enable the patient and their employer to have informed discussions about any workplace or job roles changes that are required to support an earlier return to work.

Employees will be encouraged to return to work, when they feel able to do so and will no longer need to be signed back to work by their GP.

More help for Carers

A National Audit report states that one in four carers would like to combine work with their caring responsibilities. As part of the National Carers Strategy, Jobcentre Plus is committed to improving the support and advice available to carers who wish to enter the Labour Market. This includes providing funding for replacement care to enable Carers to participate in training or other employability opportunities.

Each Jobcentre District has a Care Partnership Manager to support the introduction of these new services. Anne Smith is the Care Partnership Manager for Glasgow and she can be contacted on 0141 207 3802.

Carers Credit From 6 April 2010, a new Carers Credit will be introduced. This is a National Insurance credit which will enable carers to build up qualifying years for the basic State Pension and additional State Pension. Applications for Carers Credit can be made on form CC1 available from the Directgov website or via the Carers Allowance Unit.

Flexible New Deal



Flexible New Deal will replace the Employment Zone and all the existing mandatory New Deals such as New Deal for Young People. Starting from October 2010, Jobcentre Plus Flexible New Deal suppliers will provide work focussed support to people who have been claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) for 12 months or more.

Core Principles of the Flexible New Deal include

A strong framework of rights and responsibilities to move benefit customers from being passive benefit recipients to active jobseekers.

A personalised and responsive approach to individual customer needs which will provide tailored employment and skills support to meet the needs of jobseekers and employers.

Access to relevant pre-employment and in-work training.

The Flexible New Deal Providers will deliver an individual tailored service for each customer. This includes Assessment and Action Planning to identify and overcome any skills gaps or work related barriers.

The programme lasts for 12 months and includes a 4 week period of Work Related Activity such as Work Experience and provides a minimum of 26 weeks In Work Support.

Customers will be referred to a Flexible New Deal provider when they have been claiming Jobseekers Allowance for 12 months or more. Jobcentre Plus will continue to provide employability support and advice for customers who have been unemployed for less than 12 months.

There will be 2 Flexible New Deal providers in Glasgow and the results of the selection exercise are likely to be announced in late May/early June.

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Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment Accelerated Flexibilities Pilot

In December 2009, the Government published a White Paper on achieving full employment. This White Paper set out a vision for flexibility to become a guiding principle within the welfare system and included proposals for some Jobcentre Plus Districts to pilot a programme of accelerated flexibilities. There are 4 Jobcentre Plus Districts involved in this Pilot and they are Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Swindon; Central Manchester; South West Wales and Glasgow.

The White Paper proposals are a move towards greater personalisation and flexibility within the Jobcentre Plus Customer Journey and Pilot Districts will have freedom to deviate from the standard Jobcentre Plus Operating Model.

This new approach will therefore give Jobcentre Plus Advisors more flexibility to tailor the employability support on offer-in line with individual customer requirements. Instead of standard interventions at New Claims, 13 week and 6 month stage of unemployment –the frequency and timing of interventions will be determined by the individual needs of each customer.

All Benefit Customers (JSA, ESA, IB and IS) will be included in this new approach – although existing Benefit Conditions of Entitlement (such as JSA 16 Hour rule) will continue to apply.

The desired outcomes from the Pilot Districts are earlier sustained job outcomes and an improved customer experience .In Glasgow we have set up a Flexibilities Project Team which is being led by Karen Corrigan a former Advisory Service Manager.

Karen and her team are looking at a range of potential flexibilities. These include

- Customer Journey including customer assessment and group sessions
- Employer Engagement
- Internet supported self service jobsearch facilities

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All pilot districts will be required to operate within existing budgets and contracts with existing Welfare to Work suppliers are unlikely to be affected. The first elements of this new approach will be introduced in April.

Want to find out more or get involved?

Please contact Alison Campbell if you want to find out more about this Pilot Initiative.

Please also contact Alison if you have any suggestions about flexibilities including innovative and creative services that could be used to support our customers return to work.

Alison can be contacted on 0141 207 3816 or by E Mail at Alison.A.Campbell@jobcentrepplus.gsi.gov.uk

Benefit Delivery

Customer Contact Intelligence Pilot

A Customer Contact Intelligence pilot is now well under way in our Employment and Support Allowance Telephony team. Staff are gathering information from customer telephone calls and analysis gathered will be used to develop snapshot pictures of customer journeys and identify areas where service improvements could be introduced.

Data has already been gathered from incoming calls and we are currently monitoring outbound contact with customers. We hope this will provide us with a fuller picture of ESA customer journeys. Additionally, at the end of February ESA Claims staff trialled sending SMS texts to customers, acknowledging receipt of claims. The impact of this proactive step will be measured as part of the pilot.

The project will continue until the end of March. A report with recommendations will be ready by the end of April 2010. This will help us to identify reasons customers contact us and improve the quality of our contact with customers.

Child Maintenance Disregard

Child maintenance income is currently fully disregarded for Tax Credits and Council and Housing Benefit.

However only £20 is currently disregarded for Income Support, JSA and Employment and Support Allowance.

Starting from 12 April 2010, child maintenance will also be fully disregarded from all the above benefits.

The aim of this measure is to encourage the non resident parent to pay maintenance because this will increase the child's household income even if their main carer is in receipt of benefits.

National Performance Awards

Clyde and Fife BDC Telephony Team have received a Highly Commended in the Most Improved Performer category.

This recognises improved call answering times across service lines and their involvement in the Customer Contact Intelligence pilot which is detailed above. Our Income Support Maintenance Team also claimed first place in Benefit Delivery Scotland Performance Awards.

This was in recognition of their continuing performance improvements -where they were winners in the Most Improved Performer category.

Benefit Rates

A list of revised benefit rates that apply from April 2010 can be found at

www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/benefitrates2010.pdf

New Services

Jobcentre Plus Flexible Fund

The Flexible Fund was introduced at the beginning of the year and will give Jobcentre Plus more flexibility to meet the individual needs of customers. Jobcentre Districts will now be able to purchase niche provision which would otherwise not be available locally.

This initiative will complement our existing Rapid Response Service which can provide skills training for those customers who have been affected by redundancy.

Most of our employability provision will continue to be delivered by our network of contracted Welfare to Work providers and our partners Skills Development Scotland (SDS). This includes Training for Work (TFW) and the Jobcentre Plus Support Contract which is also available to Carers and Lone Parents.

Access to the Flexible Fund will be via Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisors who will also check the support required is not currently available locally via our network of contracted and non contracted providers.

Interested in supplying DWP?

DWP has switched to an electronic process for procuring Low Value Provision (LVP).

LVP is defined as a one-off training requirement which is not currently available via contracted or non contracted provision. LVP can vary from as little as one days training to several weeks of training activity which leads to a formal qualification.

The new web based procurement process offers a range of benefits

- Quick and easy to use
- Reduces paperwork for suppliers
- Customers get speedier access to the training they require

From February 2010 potential LVP suppliers will need to complete an on-line application form detailing the type of training they can provide and which areas of the country they wish to cover. The on-line registration will last for 12 months and will cover issues like Health and Safety and Risk Assessments.

When Jobcentre Plus instigates (via our Advisory process) a request for LVP training, DWP will contact all registered suppliers who have indicated that they can deliver that particular training in the locality required. Existing best value principles will continue to apply to this new electronic process.

For more information about this new process, please visit
<https://buyers.procserviceonline.com/otis/preregistration/details.html>

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Online Moves

New, significant changes to our online services are on the way for customers and employers. The Jobcentre Plus website closes on March 2010 and all our online services will move to new locations.

All information for jobseekers, including help with interview techniques, preparing job applications and CVs, and our online jobsearch, is available **now** at

www.direct.gov.uk/employment

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Information about benefits-including an online application service for contributions-based Jobseeker's Allowance, and the benefits adviser service, is available **now** at

www.direct.gov.uk/money

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Information about our services for employers will be available at

www.businesslink.gov.uk/employingpeople

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Jobcentre Plus corporate and policy information including supplying Welfare to Work services will be available on

www.dwp.gov.uk/about-dwp

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The move to these sites is part of the government's strategy to bring all Government services together on line. Both the Directgov and Businesslink sites provide access to a wide range of services, including travel and transport, finance and grants for business.

Interested in finding out more?

Please contact Alison Campbell on 0141 207 3816 if you want more information about any of the articles in this Newsletter.

Alison regularly holds short information sessions for Partners and Stakeholders. These provide an update on changes to Jobcentre Plus services and give partners the opportunity to ask questions and raise any issues.

If you are interested in attending a short information session, please contact Alison at Alison.A.Campbell@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

National Single Number for Jobcentres

A new, national Jobcentre 0845 phone number is being introduced to replace more than 700 geographical phone numbers.

Switchboard services will be provided by 4 Balfour Beatty Workplace (BBW) Service Centres to provide a consistent national service for people wishing to contact their local jobcentre.

Existing numbers for New Claims, Benefit and Social Fund enquiries are unaffected by these changes.