



Department
for Work &
Pensions

DWP Partnership News East London

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Benefit Awareness Sessions

Benefit awareness sessions for partners of the Department for Work and Pensions are educational meetings designed to inform stakeholders about the various UK state benefits available to the public. These sessions aim to ensure that partners fully understand the scope, value, and utilisation of benefits to better assist and guide individuals in need. Key components of these sessions include:

1. **Comprehensive Overview:** Detailed explanations of different benefits such as Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Housing, and Access to Work (to name a few).
2. **Eligibility and Application:** Information on who is eligible for each benefit, how to apply, changes in circumstance and important deadlines or criteria.
3. **Utilisation Guidance:** Practical advice on how to effectively use benefits, including navigating the claims process, accessing support services, and understanding how benefits interact.
4. **Updates and Changes:** Updates on any changes to existing benefits or the introduction of new benefits, including policy changes that may affect entitlements.
5. **Interactive Q&A:** Opportunities for partners to ask questions and get personalised advice from DWP representatives.

The primary benefits of these sessions include increased awareness and understanding of available benefits among partners, improved collaboration and support for individuals seeking benefits, and enhanced ability to navigate and explain the benefits system. They also help demystify complex information, making it more accessible and actionable for those assisting individuals in need.



I am excited to invite you to our upcoming Benefit Awareness Sessions this July. These online sessions are a great opportunity to deepen your understanding of key benefits and ask questions directly to a DWP representative. Please see the schedule below and email harry.mcelwee@dwp.gov.uk to request a registration form.

Benefit	Date	Time	Location
Attendance Allowance & Bereavement Support Payment	17 th February	10:00am to 11:00am	MS Teams
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit	19 th February	10:00am to 11:00am	MS Teams
Access to Work	23 rd February	10:00am to 11:00am	MS Teams
DLA Child	24 th February	10:00am to 11:00am	MS Teams

Testimonials

The DWP place huge value on strong relationships and have seen the benefit they bring to our service. Your feedback is crucial to us.



'Harry McElwee delivered an excellent training session. It went smoothly and was very easy to understand. Thank you.'

Team Leader - Island Advice Network



'The session was helpful. We would like more sessions as it is important to be kept updated and informed. The links and slides are good, as I can refer to when needed. Harry spoke clearly and well. He delivered the session well. Thank you.'

Manager - Pollards Hill Residents' Association



'It's always a genuine pleasure to have Harry on board. He's not only a fantastic presenter — clear, engaging, and incredibly knowledgeable — but also a true expert when it comes to the benefits system. His sessions are consistently well-delivered, full of insight, and extremely valuable to all who attend, whether they are new to the field or seasoned professionals.'

Manager - Citizens Advice



'Harry McElwee delivered an excellent training session. It went smoothly, and very easy to understand.'

Team Leader – PHRA



'I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the impactful and informative training session on Pension Credit and State Pension Awareness you delivered to our champions today. Your expertise and clear delivery have equipped the champions with valuable knowledge that will help them better support our residents.'

Manager - Newham Council



'Thank you for all the information sessions you've delivered recently, they have been really helpful and informative. I support the nine local London boroughs in my role, and recently, several of them have expressed concerns about the long wait times for Access to Work applications.'

Manager - Redbridge Council

LA Welfare Direct bulletins: 2025

These LA Welfare Direct bulletins provide information that affects Housing Benefit and other areas of DWP, to local authority staff.

Alan Milburn calls for a 'movement' to address lost generation of young people not earning or learning as investigation opens

With almost one million young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) Mr Milburn is leading an investigation into the causes of soaring unemployment in the young in recent years. Today he used the formal launch of the investigation to set out his ambition to inspire a 'Movement' to galvanise communities in all corners of the country.

As well as naming the panel – made up of health, business and policy experts – which will help him to come up with recommendations he launched a call for evidence to help shape the investigation, saying a 'coalition of the concerned' must mobilise to save a generation not earning or learning.

The inquiry comes as Government launches a major drive to get young people earning or learning, including a recent £1.5 billion investment over the Spending Review to help hundreds of thousands more into work or training through the Youth Guarantee, as well as apprenticeships places for up to 50,000 young people.

New laws bring the world of work into the 21st century

Over 15 million workers across the UK will benefit from a modern framework for workers' rights that helps more people stay in work, supports productivity, and boosts living standards – as the Employment Rights Act has become law today.

New day one rights will now allow 32,000 more dads and partners each year to take paternity leave and 1.5m more parents to take unpaid parental leave. This will support working families to juggle the modern demands of work with raising children.

Mental Health Bill receives Royal Assent, revolutionising care

Patients with severe mental illness are to be better protected thanks to landmark new legislation.

The new Mental Health Act has received Royal Assent, meaning it is now law, delivering on a key manifesto commitment.

It will reform the outdated Mental Health Act of 1983, which provides the legal framework to detain and treat people in a mental health crisis who are at risk of harm to themselves or others.



Disability Confident scheme overhauled to boost workplace standards for disabled people

Sick and disabled people will have more opportunities to move into work following the overhaul of a scheme that will boost living standards and workplace inclusion.



The Disability Confident scheme - launched by the previous government in 2016 - has delivered huge variations of support across different UK regions, often overlooking specific local needs and priorities.

While around two thirds of employers agree that joining the scheme had a positive impact on their organisation, the landmark Keep Britain Working review by Sir Charlie Mayfield concluded that while it has many positive aspects it “lacks teeth”.

Expansion of support scheme to help thousands of people back into work - GOV.UK

Up to 250,000 more people with health conditions will receive support to stay in or return to work, as a groundbreaking programme proven to transform lives and boost living standards is to be rolled out across England.

WorkWell provides personalised, early help for people struggling with their health — connecting them to local services such as physiotherapy, counselling and workplace adjustments. WorkWell forms part of the Pathways to Work offer, created to help disabled people and those with health conditions move from welfare into work and provide a joined-up support system for local residents.

Stronger parental leave rights to give millions of working families the “security they deserve”

Millions of workers who were previously denied time off for the birth of their child will become eligible for new day one rights to parental leave from April, through measures being laid in Parliament today (Monday 12 January).

The changes, which stem from the recently passed Employment Rights Act, will see parents no longer be forced to make the heart-wrenching choice between being there for the first weeks of their child’s life or going back to work to avoid losing their job.

An additional 32,000 more dads per year will be able to access Paternity Leave immediately, as a mother would with maternity leave.

Record £9.5 billion early years investment

Families across the country will continue to benefit from more affordable, high-quality childcare as from next year nurseries and childminders will be backed by a record £9.5 billion investment to deliver the places families need.

Benefit Updates

A14/2025 Housing Benefit uprating for the financial year ending March 2027

Housing Benefit uprating for the financial year ending March 2027.

Reforms to welfare system set to save £1.9 billion by the end of 2030/31

The changes will see the Government deliver on a commitment it made in the Pathways to Work Green Paper to increase face-to-face assessments after they were turned off in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with contracts agreed by the previous government requiring 80% of assessments to be completed virtually.

The proportion of face-to-face assessments will be increased, with those for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) increasing from 6% in 2024 (57,000) to 30% of all assessments, and the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) from 13% in 2024 (74,000) to 30%.

£200 million landmark SEND teacher training programme

More children and young people with SEND to thrive at their local nursery, school or college as the government unveils the most ambitious and comprehensive SEND training offer ever seen by the English schools system.

Acting on the feedback from parents shared through the national conversation on SEND, the government is making sure that children in every classroom will benefit from brilliant teachers trained in supporting a wide range of needs.



Help with the cost of living in 2026

We know that families across the country are feeling the impact of the cost of living - it's the number one issue impacting working people.

It's why we're taking action to reduce everyday costs, whether it's freezing rail fares and prescription charges or increasing wages and lowering energy bills. We are taking practical steps to help ease the pressure.

Funding and Initiatives

Government unveils ambitious plan to tackle youth isolation crisis and deliver real life opportunities

Young people across England will benefit from over £500 million of government investment as the first National Youth Strategy in 15 years is published today, setting out an ambitious delivery plan to rebuild youth services over the next decade.

‘Youth Matters’ has been co-produced with more than 14,000 young people across England through a landmark ‘State of the Nation’ survey. It represents a fundamental shift in how the government will support young people over the next decade - turning the tide from isolation online, to real life connections.

National plan to halve long-term rough sleeping and prevent homelessness

The government launches a bold new National Plan to End Homelessness to support the most vulnerable in our society to find their feet and improve their lives.

Unveiled today and backed by £3.5 billion of investment, this landmark strategy has been shaped by the voices of those who have experienced homelessness as well as those involved in the Inter-ministerial Group on Homelessness.

Government extends free NHS services for care leavers

A new package of measures brought in by government on 23rd December 2025 for young people leaving care will provide free prescriptions, dental and eyecare services up to their 25th birthday, and enhanced job opportunities in the NHS.



Children in care will receive better protection under new safeguards with GPs given a clearer picture of those in care, so they have the right information at the right time to stop young people falling through the cracks.

Major expansion of colleges to train next generation of workers

More builders, coders and engineers of the future will be able to access the life-changing opportunity to gain the skills they will need for their careers, as the government delivers on its investment of more than £283 million to help them meet surging demand for homegrown skilled workers.

Around £100 million of this funding will go to mayors and local leaders to boost capacity specifically in construction courses to address growing college waiting lists across the country and help achieve the government’s goal to train 60,000 additional construction workers to build 1.5 million homes by the end of the Parliament.

Employers that have signed up to the Disability Confident scheme

This document lists the employers that have signed up to the Disability Confident scheme, and their status (committed, employer or leader).

Thousands to get free digital training so everyone has the chance to shop around for cheaper deals online

Free support to get people online is rolling out in communities in every region of the country, so they can book a doctor's appointment on the NHS app, shop around for better deals on things such as home insurance and food, or stay in touch with loved ones.

On Wednesday 10th December, Minister for Digital Inclusion, Liz Lloyd is unveiling 80 local schemes receiving backing from the first-of-its-kind £11.7 million Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund.

Universal Credit statistics, 29 April 2013 to 9 October 2025

Statistics for the number of claims, starts, people and households on Universal Credit.



Links and Resources

Touchbase is being produced weekly and is being circulated to subscribers every Friday. Although these provide a roundup of announcements and are useful for organisations, they will not be published on GOV.UK.

[Subscribe to Touchbase](#)



1. Touchbase: News and articles from across government for advisers, employers and organisations that help people find jobs.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/touchbase-dwp-news-about-work-working-age-benefits-and-services>

2. The Personal Independence Payment (PIP) toolkit: This toolkit provides information to individuals and organisations that support PIP and DLA claimants.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-personal-independence-payment-toolkit-for-partners/the-personal-independence-payment-pip-toolkit>

3. The Health Assessment Advisory Service – This service arranges and carries out assessments on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). If you are claiming benefits as a result of a disability or injury, you may be required by DWP to have an assessment with a qualified Healthcare Professional as part of your claim process.

<https://www.chdauk.co.uk/assessment-process>

4. Universal Credit Toolkit: This toolkit contains information about Universal Credit and the changes it brings.

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit-toolkit-for-partner-organisations>

5. Pension Credit Toolkit. Use this collection of materials to help older people get Pension Credit.

[Pension Credit toolkit - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

6. HM Revenue and Customs Employer Bulletin: A bi-monthly magazine for employers and agents giving up-to-date information on payroll topics.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hm-revenue-and-customs-employer-bulletin>

7. UK Online: All 3,000 UK online Centre's partners offer FREE or low-cost access to computers and the internet, plus help and support to use them.

<https://www.gov.uk/ukonline-centre-internet-access-computer-training>

8. Supporting people back to work: Useful links to support people back to work.

[@JCPinEastLondon](#) X account.

[Job Help website](#) an external Government website with a range of information on finding a job, applying for opportunities, and developing skills.

[Find a Job website](#) an external website for job seekers with nearly 65,500 vacancies.

[Find a Job website](#) an external website for employers to post their opportunities.

[@JCPJobsPlusMore](#) National Employer and Partnership Teams National X account.

[Civil Service Jobs](#) Search for jobs in the Civil Service.

I trust that existing partnership arrangements are meeting your needs. However, if you have any questions or would like to discuss local partnership issues further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I am available to deliver DWP benefit awareness sessions to all external partners and your colleagues using MS Teams. If you would like to discuss arranging a session, please do get in touch.

Harry McElwee: East London District.

Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Barking & Dagenham, Havering.

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