



Department for Work & Pensions

Mims Davies MP
Minister for Employment

Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON
SW1H 9DA

www.gov.uk/dwp

To: All MPs

3 July 2020

Dear Colleague,

Support for Claimants

DWP has met the challenge of an unprecedented demand for our services during the coronavirus emergency, with over 3.2m individual claims for Universal Credit being made in the three months from 16th March to 16th June. Now, our focus is rightly switching to support people back into work.

Jobcentres have remained open to support our most vulnerable claimants throughout this health emergency and have been putting in place safety measures to enable them to safely see more and more claimants. There will be a general message from 1st July that claimants should be looking for work, where safe to do so. Work Coaches are already reaching out to claimants to engage and support them with their work search. From the beginning of this month they will begin to agree their Claimant Commitment. If Claimants want to, they can request a face-to-face meeting with their Work Coach.

Our dedicated Work Coaches were key players in supporting record high employment levels just a few months ago, and they will continue to help Britain back into work. We are empowering them to scale up the tailored support they give to jobseekers, with a relentless focus on building skills and moving towards secure, fulfilling employment.

As the Secretary of State told the House of Commons on 29th June, Claimant Commitments must reflect our 'new normal', acknowledging the reality of a person's local jobs market and personal circumstances, to prepare them for getting back into work. We are managing this in a phased approach to ensure our Work Coaches can deliver an effective service in a reasonable, measured and safe way, taking into account any Covid-19 restrictions. Work Coaches will continue to support claimants by tailoring commitments to include easements where appropriate, whilst maintaining the ability to look for work.

These are difficult, uncertain times for many people and we want to do everything we can to help them find work or increase hours, where that is possible for them.

Rapid Response Service

Providing the right advice to businesses and employees facing redundancies is vitally important, especially during these difficult times, and I am writing to share some information about the support Jobcentre Plus continues to provide through its Rapid Response Service.

Throughout the pandemic, the Rapid Response Service has adapted to provide support to businesses going through the redundancy process. They offer immediate help and advice to any company who has submitted a redundancy notification or made announcements in the media of potential job losses. They continue to work closely with the Insolvency Service and any appointed administrators to ensure that affected

employees have information as quickly as possible on how to access benefits and the help available from Jobcentre Plus and its partners to find alternative work.

The central rapid response co-ordination team are part of the National Employer and Partnership Team who work with employers and other organisations to maximise employment opportunities for DWP customers. Given this link they are well positioned to source opportunities from other national employers to help affected employees find alternative employment quickly. This seamless service helps prevent customers having to move onto the welfare system wherever possible. The central rapid response co-ordination team are currently supporting 23 businesses nationally, across a variety of sectors, in preparing for changes to their workforce. That support includes:

- Contact on first day of announcement to provide a factsheet of essential information for distribution to all their workforce where appropriate. The factsheet includes information on the new JobHelp and Find a Job website on gov.uk, which contain all the information employees need to support them back to work including DfEs Skills Toolkit.
- In support of the Rapid Response Service, our Employer Help site offers a range of advice to employers making redundancies, including how they can help their staff secure alternative employment.
- Agreeing contact arrangements and the forward programme of support required from DWP. This will include agreeing the support available from local Jobcentres dependent upon which parts of the country will be impacted by the redundancies.
- Providing information on the latest jobs and opportunities available from the large employers on DWP's national employer portfolio.
- Signposting to careers advice and other services provided by our delivery partners, which include the National Careers Service in England, PACE in Scotland and ReAct in Wales. Redundancy support in Northern Ireland is devolved with separate funding and delivery arrangements where no partner support is available.

The package of support is tailored to suit the needs of the individual business and is available throughout the entire redundancy process.

This service is replicated locally for smaller businesses who may also be facing redundancy. Again, the support offered will always be in agreement with the individual business to reflect the needs of the workforce and the local labour market.

Finally, our operational teams are always keen to work on new initiatives to prevent unemployment and I have included a selection of some of this work in annex A.

We will also deposit a copy of this letter in the House library.

Yours sincerely



Mims Davies MP
Minister for Employment

Annex A

Examples of Jobcentre Districts working with employers to support employees under notice of redundancy to transition into new jobs:

Blackburn Jobcentre Employer Advisers have supported a series of 14 'Ask the Expert' live sessions for businesses to help them through lockdown and assist them in opening up. This has been a collaborative approach with key local stakeholders to offer advice and support ranging from claiming Universal Credit, help for self-employed people, financial support and recruitment services.

Greater Manchester have established a virtual redundancy hub to support a significant local redundancy (250 employees). It was set up to include DWP, local colleges, National Careers Service (NCS), Local Authorities and the Growth Company. A Digital Local Offer is being developed to include information, advice and guidance, 121 sessions, employability skills and local jobsearch. We are continuing to develop this joined up Digital Offer for any future local redundancies.

North Tyne and Wear have been working hard to support employers who are making redundancies. They have reached out to a company offering virtual workshops in collaboration with NCS to provide information on job opportunities and have undertaken brokering activities with other employers who are looking to recruit within the complementing sectors.