

Press release: New streamlined Jobcentre Plus network with more support for jobseekers

Plans have been published to reform Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Jobcentre Plus offices and benefit centres, in light of 20% of office space being under-used.

The way DWP services are delivered has changed significantly in recent years; for example 8 out of 10 claims for Jobseeker's Allowance and 99.6% of applicants for Universal Credit submit their claims online.

Since 2010, 2.7 million more people are in work, youth unemployment has fallen by 366,000 and the employment rate is at a record high.

Jobcentres and benefit centres are covered by old building contracts which are now coming up for renewal. In the 20 years since these contracts were signed the welfare system has undergone large scale reform.

The DWP estate covers around 1.5 million square metres across the country and 300,000 square metres of this is under-utilised and could be vacated.

Some smaller jobcentres will be merged with larger ones, and others will be co-located with local government premises. DWP will be better able to offer a more efficient service while delivering good value for the taxpayer, saving around £180 million a year for the next 10 years.

The support provided to jobseekers will be further strengthened this year as staff numbers are boosted by a recruitment drive to hire 2,500 new work coaches.

Damian Hinds, Minister for Employment said:

We will always make sure that people have the support they need to get into and progress within work, that's why we are recruiting 2,500 more work coaches to help those who need it most.

The way the world works has changed rapidly in the last 20 years and the welfare state needs to keep pace. As more people access their benefits through the internet many of our buildings are under-used. We are concentrating our resources on what we know best helps people into work.

The changes we've announced today will help ensure that the way we deliver our services reflect the reality of today's welfare system.

Today's announcements include proposals for:

- merging 78 smaller Jobcentre Plus offices in urban areas with larger ones nearby
- co-locating around 50 Jobcentre Plus offices with local authorities or other community services to provide joined-up services for the local community with all services in one place
- closing 27 back office buildings around the country and developing larger, more efficient processing sites including opening 5 new large service centres across the country in a phased approach starting in 2018
- retaining over 700 existing offices
- re-organising our corporate centre to make maximum use of 6 regional corporate hubs, including establishing a new office in central Manchester

The planned changes will be made in consultation with staff taking into account the impact on benefit claimants and DWP staff. The vast majority of staff will have the option to relocate or offered alternative roles.

Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus estate proposals

PDF, 758KB, 59 pages

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More information

We announced that we would renegotiate our tenancies in the [2015 Spending Review](#).

DWP currently uses about 900 buildings around the UK – all of them leased from a range of landlords.

The expiry of the PRIME contract provides DWP with the opportunity to review which offices we need, leaving those that we no longer need at commercially advantageous terms and having the opportunity to negotiate better deals on those we want to use in future.

The savings of around £180 million a year for the next 10 years will be made by a combination of a smaller estate, rent set to market levels, a new service delivery model and maximising space usage.

Where practical, we are co-locating with local authorities in their

buildings. These arrangements bring benefits for the department, claimants and the taxpayer. More of the services that customers use are in one place which means that claimants have access a greater breadth of expertise.

The most recent figures show that employment rate is at 74.5 per cent – a joint record high; unemployment down 906,000 since 2010 as the economy has grown.

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