

Press release: New site to help schools save thousands on recruitment costs

Schools will save thousands of pounds in recruitment costs as the Government launches a new online tool to help them avoid agencies that charge excessive fees.

The Education Secretary Damian Hinds today (15 January) announces an [online tool](#) which will clearly show the fees recruitment agencies charge on top of staff wages, so school leaders know what they are getting for their money. It will also help schools avoid agencies that charge fees for making temporary staff permanent.

In 2016/17, the last year for which figures are available, schools in England spent £825 million with supply agencies.

To appear on the list of approved agencies available through the tool, they must set out their costs up-front – allowing schools to compare prices – and conduct rigorous background checks on their staff.

Schools across the country are already benefiting from the Government's clampdown on expensive fees after plans were initially set out last year. Rainhill High School, an academy in St Helens, Merseyside, reported savings of £2,500 in three months – thanks in part to using the tool to find a new supply agency that offered the best value. The Education Secretary is now calling on more schools to follow their lead by using the new online tool when recruiting supply teachers and agency workers.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

I want to help schools use their resources as effectively as possible. There will always be a role for supply teachers within schools, but schools shouldn't be ripped off when trying to recruit them. This new online tool will bring much-needed transparency to the fees that agencies charge to enable school leaders to see what they are getting for their money.

This is the latest step in our effort to help schools bear down some of the costs they face, building on the School Resource Management Strategy I launched last year to provide practical advice and support to school leaders so that they can focus on what they do so well – delivering high-quality education for their pupils.

There can be no great schools without great teachers to inspire and motivate children, so it's absolutely right that we help schools to maximise the money they have to spend in the classroom by working

together, making sure they're getting the best deals and are not being overcharged for services.

Lord Agnew, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System, is writing to all schools in England to let them know about the online tool, which has been developed with Crown Commercial Service.

Today's launch follows the Education Secretary's pledge at the National Association of Head Teachers' annual conference in May to work with schools and drive down unnecessary cost pressures so headteachers can get maximum value for every pound they spend and bring in the best staff.

It also follows a series of steps taken by the department to help schools deliver value for money and ensure resources can be targeted at the frontline.

This includes:

- A free website to advertise school vacancies – this will help schools save on advertising for positions, which currently costs them up to £75 million per year;
- Recommended deals that are helping schools to save money on the things they buy regularly, such as printers and photocopiers – one school in the North West has saved an estimated £40,000 on its printing costs;
- Regional Schools Buying Hubs, piloted in the North West and South West, providing hands-on support and advice to schools on complex procurement. One school saved £75,000 across a three-year cleaning contract, while 82 schools in the South West have saved an estimated £137,000 on water;
- A network of advisers providing practical support on how schools can use their budgets more effectively. During the pilot phase of 72 deployments, advisers identified £35 million of potential savings for schools;
- A [benchmarking website](#) to allow schools to compare their income and expenditure with others in England.

[News story: Policing Minister chairs new taskforce to tackle vehicle theft](#)



The Policing Minister, Nick Hurd, has today (15 January) chaired a new taskforce to tackle vehicle theft.

The taskforce replicates the successful model used to reduce moped-related crime in London, which fell by a third in the period from January to October 2018 compared with the same period in 2017 last year. It will drive forward action to reduce and prevent vehicle crime and promote best practice.

The taskforce will meet every six months and publish an action plan with new measures. Vehicle theft has risen by 7% in the last 12 months and has impacted communities across the country.

Chairing the meeting, Policing Minister Nick Hurd said:

We are determined to take swift and decisive action on emerging crime threats. With rates of vehicle theft increasing, I am keen to ensure everything is being done to prevent these crimes.

Drawing together the police, industry and government proved to be a successful way to see what more could be done to support police efforts to tackle moped crime and I'm eager to see the results of applying a similar model to vehicle theft.

The determination and common purpose at this morning's meeting was encouraging and I'm confident the taskforce will significantly strengthen our response to vehicle theft.

The taskforce's work includes:

- improving vehicle security standards across the industry
- ensuring robust measures are in place to prevent criminals exploiting the motor salvage process
- reviewing whether further measures are required to stop devices that may be used to commit vehicle theft falling into criminals' hands

Attendees for today's event included representatives from:

- National Police Chiefs' Council Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Limited
- Thatcham Research

- Retail Motor Industry
- Motorcycle Retail Industry Association
- Association of British Insurers
- Combined Industries Theft Solution
- Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
- West Midlands PCC
- West Midlands Police

Published 15 January 2019

Press release: First tower crane arrives as HS2 prepares to demolish Euston towers

Delivered last week and assembled over 4 days, the 66 metre high crane will be the first of 3 in the Euston area and comes a week after the completion of the station's new taxi rank, which opened to the public on Sunday 6th January.

Together, this progress allows HS2 to push ahead with the demolition of One Euston Square and Grant Thornton House, which stand above the entrance and exit to Euston's old underground taxi rank.

Expected to take around 10 months to complete, their removal will be the biggest change to the Euston skyline for almost 50 years. HS2's early works contractor, a Costain and Skanska joint venture (CSjv), working with expert subcontractors McGee, are already hard at work, stripping out the interiors and erecting the scaffolding that will support acoustic screening around the buildings.

The screening, designed to limit noise and dust, will cover the 2 1970s towers, with 93% of the material from the building set to be recycled or reused. The deconstruction itself will happen floor by floor, with waste material removed via the building's lift shafts.

HS2 Ltd's London Programme Director, Rob Carr, said:

HS2 will transform Euston, delivering much-needed extra capacity and better journeys for the 44 million people who use the station every year. We are already hard at work, delivering essential pre-construction work, including archaeology, utility diversions and of course, the demolition of the 2 Euston towers.

The opening of the new taxi rank and the delivery of the project's

first tower crane is a significant milestone for HS2 and I would like to thank everyone involved in making it happen.

CSjv's Programme Director, Peter Jones, said:

Costain and Skanska have successfully delivered many major infrastructure projects and are pleased to be delivering the HS2 enabling works programme in London. Our work continues to gather pace and constructing this temporary taxi rank to replace the underground taxi rank is vital to allow us to demolish the 2 large office towers at Euston.

Over the last 8 months, HS2 has also been working with TfL and Network Rail to deliver a new taxi rank in front of the station.

The new rank, which has capacity for around 40 vehicles, has been designed to incorporate as many of the existing trees as possible, with special measures including permeable pavement and root protection in place.

The taxi rank will be in use while HS2 construction work at Euston is ongoing. Taxis will ultimately move to a new location once construction is complete.

HS2 will more than double the number of seats out of Euston during peak hours and free up space on the west coast mainline for more local and long distance commuter services to places like Watford, Northampton and Milton Keynes.

[Speech: Minister for Employment gives speech on 'Full Employment' report](#)

Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen good morning.

A huge thank you to the Resolution Foundation, and to Lord Willetts in particular, for the invitation to speak at the launch of the report today.

This is a momentous week for Parliament and our country as a whole.

We stand at the crossroads of history.

And how Members of Parliament act, and vote, on Tuesday may well have a profound impact on our labour market.

Both in the shorter and longer term.

I will return to that point later, but first the findings of the report.

The overall message of this report is positive and encouraging.

And a re-affirmation for me that the economic policies David, I and our parliamentary colleagues supported from 2010 were the right ones.

As outlined by Stephen, the report concludes that not only are there more people in work today than ever before, but that it is those on low incomes, and those historically unengaged in the jobs market, who have benefitted most.

The report also notes that the net increase in employment is down to people taking on professional roles. Which is good news because those jobs attract higher pay.

And the regions which had the lowest employment rates a decade ago, have seen the greatest increase. Effectively catching up on historically slow jobs growth.

Any analyses of the last decade will of course be skewed by the financial crash in 2008.

We in government prefer to measure the jobs market from 2010, when we took on responsibility for the economy.

[political content]

Since 2010, the labour market has gone from strength to strength – with an average of 1,000 people a day moving into work. That's 3.4 million more people in work today than in 2010.

We politicians and think tankers love our statistics. For us they build an overall picture.

But what we must never forget is that behind every single extra job created, and vacancy filled, there is a human success story.

Of someone whose family income, self-esteem and life chances are all hugely improved by being in work.

And our reform of the welfare system has made a positive contribution, playing its part in helping people into work.

And last week Amber Rudd announced further reforms to Universal Credit to ensure that we provide additional support, especially for the most vulnerable.

Given some of the conclusions of today's report there are 3 areas in particular I want to focus on briefly.

First, the work we are doing to ensure that people do not just have a job,

but that they have a good job.

Second, is on improving further participation of under-represented groups in the employment market.

And third, is about how we help people to progress in work and to earn more.

Good jobs

So first, let's look at the quality of employment.

Today's report focuses on atypical employment.

This looks at employment groups in a different way to the Office for National Statistics. Including part time and self-employed in the same bracket as contract or zero hours workers.

While the self-employed may welcome their categorisation as atypical – a label that emphasises their ability to break the mould and be innovative – part-time workers have been a longstanding part of our labour market. Indeed, rather typical.

That aside, I welcome the report's detailed analysis that looks at the growth of atypical work at different stages since 2008.

It shows the high growth in atypical work directly following the 2008 crash, but concludes that in the last 2 years the employment boom has been driven largely by full-time roles.

It is worth noting that according to the ONS, of the new jobs created since 2010 around 75% are full-time, permanent and in higher level occupations.

I want to see even more of these type of jobs being created.

The government responded positively to the findings of Matthew Taylor's review of modern working practices.

And through the government's Good Work plan, published in December last year, we are already recognising the need to find the right balance between employees and employers, when it comes to job flexibility and security.

As a part of this, we have brought forward new legislation to upgrade workers' rights.

Including a day-1 statement of rights for all workers, setting out leave entitlements and pay.

The rise in Artificial Intelligence and automation will continue to disrupt the jobs market.

Indeed, the impact of new technology changing the jobs market has been the one constant through the ages.

The good news is that every industrial revolution has resulted in more jobs being created.

But as some workers feel precarious in their positions, we need to provide certainty for their future, with an offer of building new skills and retraining.

And we will need to be dynamic in our ongoing response to the changing nature of work and the workplace.

Under-represented groups

The changing nature of the world of work leads me to the changing make-up of our workforce.

There are now 10 million workers over the age of 50.

We have seen record numbers of women in work.

Youth unemployment has almost halved since 2010.

Almost a million more disabled people have entered employment since 2013.

And the ethnic minority employment gap is at a record low.

Regardless of circumstance, people are able to access support tailored for their individual needs as they look for work.

It is that support which has delivered the current success in the labour market. And it is an enhanced personalised approach that will see us go further still.

We have older workers' champions in all our jobcentres, leading the way on finding the right opportunity for those later in life.

We have around 1.2 million potential returners to the work place in the UK – 91% of whom are women. Through specialist return-ship programmes we can support them back into work.

There are specialist disability advisers that work across our jobcentre network. Helping people improve their confidence. Offering financial support for specialist equipment to help them at work.

We have an intensive programme to support young people into employment or training. And we work with schools to assist 12 to 16 year olds who have been identified as most likely to be at risk of becoming NEETs.

As the report has highlighted there has been a strong rise in employment of those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

But if we want to accelerate this progress, we must look at the employment rates between individual ethnic minority groups – not treat them as one.

There is a wide range in the employment rate between different ethnic minority groups and significant disparity in employment rates between men and women.

That is why our national network of jobcentres are offering personalised support.

For example, in Yardley we have been working with women from the British Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities to build their confidence and understanding of what they have to offer.

And I have asked the department to roll out personalised mentoring programmes for young people from ethnic minority communities, in areas where the employment gap is largest.

In-work progression

The kind of tailored support I have referred to is fundamental to the welfare reforms we are making.

And I believe that support should not stop just because someone gets a job.

Supporting people to get their foot on the first rung of the ladder has always been the central focus of my department.

But I want us to go further.

To spend time supporting people to move up the ladder in their earnings and the quality of their job. Helping people to achieve their potential.

If we are going to do this, we are going to need to be world leaders.

Because there is very little evidence of good practice from around the world for us to follow.

And we have already made a start.

We recently completed a large-scale trial on in-work progression involving some of the lowest paid people in the country.

The trial tested the provision of varied levels of support and conditionality for current in-work claimants.

What we found is that after 52 weeks on the trial, participants who received frequent and moderate support from the jobcentre network earned more than those getting minimal support. This is only a start.

We have secured £8 million from the Treasury to develop a programme of research, proofs of concept and trials to develop and test our in-work services.

Some of the potential interventions we will consider exploring include the role of mentoring.

Looking at how we can support the development of the National Retraining Scheme in a partnership with our jobcentres.

Making sure our front-line staff have the skills for this new era of personalised job support.

And looking at what we can do with 'digital nudges'. Using the new online system to plant the seeds of progression in people's minds, and offer a practical route to help them get there.

And of course, we are looking at ways in which we can test more place-based approaches, with collaborations between jobcentres and other bodies, such as local authorities.

And we're keen to see how we can work with those outside of government, including employers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I welcome some of the key findings of this report, as it highlights the successes in the labour market.

But I am not complacent.

There is more for us to do to drive up the quality of work.

To increase participation from under-represented groups in the labour market.

And to deliver a fundamental and positive shift in in-work progression.

My final point is on Brexit.

I want us to respect the result of the referendum.

But I also believe that a disorderly Brexit presents a real risk to the health of the labour market.

It is a risk which, I hope, all Members of Parliament will consider seriously as they walk through the division lobbies tomorrow.

Thank you.

[News story: Final report on GP partnerships published](#)

The [final recommendations from the independent GP partnership review](#) have been published.

The review was led by Dr Nigel Watson.

Using his research and his personal experience as a GP partner, Dr Watson sets out recommendations for the government, NHS England and other representative bodies.

The recommendations include:

- reducing the personal risk and unlimited liability currently associated with GP partnerships
- the need for a wider range and capacity of healthcare professionals available for services in the community, embedded as part of general practice
- increased funding for GP training places and a more specialised focus in medical training on general practice as a positive career choice

The review, which began in May 2018, received written feedback from over 120 individuals and organisations.

As part of his research, Dr Watson visited over 25 GP practices around the country, ranging from those that were experiencing challenges with recruitment and retention, to those that had developed innovative solutions to issues they faced.

The government will respond to the recommendations.

Dr Nigel Watson said:

General practice remains the fundamental building block of the NHS and essential for the health and wellbeing of the rest of the NHS.

It is clear to me having talked to many GPs and others who work in general practice and also visited many parts of the country that there remains huge potential in terms of delivering high quality care based in the community delivered close to people's homes.

To unleash this potential, general practice needs to see a secure future which is associated with an expanded workforce, less personal financial risk and the working day being more manageable.

The recommendations today I hope will not only be accepted by government and supported by the profession but make a real difference with more resources going to the delivery of care on the frontline.