

New Government support package to help more disabled people into work

- New package of support to help thousands of disabled people into work as Government builds back fairer.
- 15 Jobcentre Plus sites to trial framework to become more autism-friendly.
- 26,000 work coaches are undergoing accessibility training to improve jobcentre services for disabled people.

Thousands more disabled people are set to benefit from a new package of support designed to help them into the work they want.

Minister for Disabled People, Chloe Smith, has today announced that 15 Jobcentre Plus sites will be testing an autism framework, designed with the National Autistic Society (NAS), to transform the service available to jobseekers on the autism spectrum. The framework pilot will aim to help people with autism find, retain and progress in fulfilling jobs.

This comes as 26,000 work coaches in jobcentres across the country are undergoing specialist accessibility training, delivered in partnership with Microsoft, in a further effort to help more disabled jobseekers secure employment.

The work coaches will look at how they can support disabled jobseekers with tools including immersive readers, magnifiers and automated captions, which will not only improve their daily work but will also help with the completion of job applications and interviews.

One in 100 people are autistic and there are around 700,000 autistic people in the UK, according to the National Autistic Society. Not all autistic people will be able to work, but the charity's research found that the vast majority want to.

Working age autistic people are often locked out of employment due to a lack of understanding and knowledge from employers and colleagues, and anxiety-inducing environments that can be distressing. It is hoped that the framework will help to break down these barriers and see more autistic people in jobs they love.

The Minister for Disabled People Chloe Smith said:

Everyone deserves an equal opportunity to find a job they love and to progress in their career, but we know we must do more to help people with autism.

By testing this autism framework and offering new specialist training to our jobcentre staff we are helping to deliver more employment opportunities for those who would otherwise feel locked

out, as we work towards seeing one million more disabled people in work by 2027.

The framework explores how best to support autistic people into employment, including ensuring jobcentre appointments with autistic customers take place in the right environment and educating local employers in the additional requirements of autistic workers.

For example, many autistic people become distressed in busy, bright or noisy environments. As part of the pilot, jobcentre staff will therefore be asked to carry out appointments with customers triggered in this way in quieter rooms, with more appropriate lighting.

Work coaches will also be able to help providers and employers in the local communities understand the additional needs required by autistic employees, which should in turn create more opportunities for autistic jobseekers in settings where they can thrive.

If successful, the framework could be rolled out to more jobcentres in England, Scotland and Wales, benefitting thousands of people with autism.

Christine Flintoft-Smith, Head of Autism Accreditation at the National Autistic Society, said:

We are pleased to be working in partnership with the DWP to make sure autistic people get the support they need delivered in the way they need it, when they visit Jobcentres. We both want to work to close the autism employment gap and make sure autistic people are getting the help they need to get jobs.

Our framework of best practice has been developed with input from autistic people, specifically for Jobcentres. We want all Jobcentre staff to understand autism, be able to think about their practice and make the necessary changes to the support and environment that autistic people need.

We look forward to our continued work with the team at DWP to get jobcentres working better for autistic people, and to get more autistic people in the jobs that they want and deserve.

Hector Minto, Lead Accessibility Evangelist at Microsoft, said:

Technology has the potential to greatly empower disabled people in the workplace, but awareness is often low, people don't know that there is support built into modern digital experiences.

In creating this training with DWP, built on our own internal training, we found there is terrific passion and energy in this workforce to share their knowledge with jobseekers. I am confident

that it will drive real impact and help us tackle a real challenge in society.

Autism framework

- The test project began in October 2021, using 15 Jobcentre test offices across the country, assessing the current state of knowledge and practices for dealing with autistic customers within those offices and then going on to create a new service delivery framework that ensures those customers get the support they need, in the way they need it.
- There will then be an assessment of each of these test sites to ensure compliance with the framework and accreditation against it.
- The test project will be completed by the 31 March 2022. The results of this test will be evaluated and if results are positive then DWP will explore how this can be rolled out across the whole network of Jobcentres.
- Jobcentres taking part in the test:
 - England: Gosport, Slough, Leeds Eastgate, Croydon, Grantham, Wigan, Stourbridge.
 - Scotland: Alloa, Falkirk, High Riggs, Leith, Musselburgh, Paisley, Fraserburgh.
 - Wales: Aberdare

About the National Autistic Society

- The National Autistic Society is the UK's leading charity for autistic people.
- We are here to transform lives, change attitudes and create a society that works for autistic people.
- Since 1962, we have been campaigning for autistic people's rights and providing support and advice to autistic people and their families
- To find out more about autism or the charity, visit autism.org.uk
- Follow the National Autistic Society on Twitter @Autism or Facebook.

Microsoft Accessibility Training

- Around one in five working-age adults report having a disability, therefore health and disability issues are affecting the working lives of millions of people.
- The learning is called Accessibility Fundamentals and is a one-hour learning product that will be completed by all DWP colleagues in work coach roles along with their line managers.
- The Accessibility Fundamentals learning aims to support the government's commitment to getting one million more disabled people into work by 2027.

Additional quotes

Testaments from work coaches who have completed the Microsoft Accessibility Fundamentals training:

- "I have just finished the training and what can I say!! This will be an

incredible source of tools for a lot of my customers with amazing resources such as immersive reader and dictate. This is an excellent support tool for colleagues and customers alike and has certainly improved my knowledge for myself as well as customers.”

- “I have completed the training and learnt a fair bit! It is a really useful course and got me thinking about which of my customers would benefit from some of these functions both during meetings and to upskill customers in what is available. I think colleagues will benefit from this too. LOVED the immersive reader – what a fantastic tool!”

Children whose parents smoke are four times as likely to take up smoking themselves

- Experts warn that teenagers whose parents smoke are likely to copy them in adulthood
- New film features health experts discussing how adult smokers can act as role models
- NHS support offered to smokers – in particular parents, carers and other adults – to encourage them to quit in the new year

Top medical experts have warned that teens whose parents or caregivers smoked are four times as likely to have taken up smoking.

Analysis has also shown that early teens whose main caregiver smoked were more than twice as likely to have tried cigarettes (26% vs 11%) and four times as likely to be a regular smoker (4.9% vs 1.2%).

A new government Better Health Smoke Free campaign has launched as leading family doctors warn of the issues facing the children of smokers – and calls on people to help prevent this by quitting in January.

[In a new film released today](#), NHS and behavioural health experts discuss the link between adult smoking and the likelihood of children in their household becoming smokers. This includes family GP Dr Nighat Arif, child psychologist Dr Bettina Hohnen, and smoking cessation experts Professor Nick Hopkinson and Dr Anthony Lavery of Imperial College London, who have called on parents in particular to give up smoking in the new year in order to set a good example to their children.

Maggie Throup MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Vaccines and Public Health, explained why the campaign is launching now:

We know that many people make a quit attempt in January, and while

there are so many good reasons to stop smoking for yourself, we hope that this new campaign – by highlighting the inter-generational smoking link with parents influencing their children – will be the added motivation many need to ditch the cigarettes for good this year.

With so much help and support available for parents, carers and anyone looking to quit – including the NHS Quit Smoking app, support on Facebook, daily emails and texts, and an online Personal Quit Plan – you won't be alone in your New Year's resolution.

Recent research from NatCen Social Research has also shown children aged 10-15 were more likely to smoke if either their mother or father currently smoked. Children were also more likely to smoke if either parent had smoked in the past, even if they were not a current smoker.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer and joint lead for the Office for Health Improvement and Disparity, Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy said:

Smoking is terrible for your health but it also has a negative impact on people around you.

Most people know the dangers of second smoke but we should not overlook the impact that parents have as role models. Every parent wants what is best for their child and will not want them to become smokers. By stopping smoking now, parents can help break the pattern of smoking in their family across the generations, protect their children and improve their own health.

The film forms part of the Better Health Smoke Free campaign from the new Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) in the Department of Health and Social Care, and aims to give smokers a strong motivation to quit in January, offering free and proven NHS resources and advice.

The campaign comes as the most recent data from the Office for National Statistics shows that one in eight adults in England still smokes. There has been a complex picture of smoking patterns since the pandemic, with high rates of quitting but also high levels of relapse and signs of a rise in smoking rates among younger adults.

Professor Nick Hopkinson of Imperial College London said:

Our research findings are clear – adult smoking has a tangible impact on children. Children whose caregivers smoke are four times as likely to take up smoking themselves. The most effective way to help prevent this would be for adults to quit smoking – clearly not only does this have enormous benefits for them but it will also benefit their children both now and in later life.

Dr Bettina Hohnen explains how parents' behaviours can have a huge impact on their children's':

Even if we don't directly expose children to second-hand smoke, or believe we are hiding our smoking by not smoking directly in front of them, it can still have a major impact and children can pick up the behaviour without you even being aware you'd had an influence. Children copy their parents' and carers' behaviours, so it's important to model the behaviour you want from your child – or we can pass on behaviours without even realising. Actions really do speak louder than words, so if you don't smoke, you will significantly reduce the chances of them taking up smoking in the future.

Family GP Dr Nighat Arif has first-hand experience of helping smokers in her general practice:

One in eight adults in England still smokes, and it remains the leading preventable cause of premature death. Stopping smoking is one of the best things you will ever do for your health, and it's never too late to quit. If you want to quit smoking for your family or for your own health this January, you're not alone. The Better Health campaign provides tons of proven support and resources from the NHS which can help you quit for good.

Georgina from Harrogate, North Yorkshire, is 35 and stopped smoking in January 2021 after being a smoker since she was only 16. Her nephews inspired her to quit:

After 15 years of smoking I took the decision to quit because I really didn't want to pass the habit on to the children in my life. I was totally unaware at first, but over time I noticed that my 7- and 4-year-old nephews were watching me smoke. I am a big influence in their lives so obviously I was worried they'd one day pick up smoking too. In the end I quit smoking – both for my own health but for my nephews as well. When I felt ready to start my stop smoking journey, I turned to the Better Health website, and looked at the different resources they had available to help me build confidence and give myself the best possible chance of quitting.

The Better Health campaign gives access to a range of free quitting support and tools including free expert help from local Stop Smoking Services, the NHS Quit Smoking app, Facebook messenger bot, Stoptober Facebook online communities, daily emails and SMS, and an online Personal Quit Plan.

Search "Smoke Free" for free and proven quit smoking tools and advice on different types of support, nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) and e-

cigarettes, to help you quit smoking.

Queen's Baton Relay arrives in Pakistan

Press release

A welcome ceremony was hosted by the Deputy British High Commission, Karachi to officially hand over the Queen's Baton to the President of the Commonwealth Games Association.



The 16th official Queen's Baton Relay arrived in Karachi on Monday as it continues its global journey around the 72 Commonwealth nations and territories before concluding at the opening ceremony of the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games on 28 July 2022.

A welcome ceremony was hosted by the Deputy British High Commission, Karachi to officially hand over the Queen's Baton to the President of the Commonwealth Games Association.

The Baton will be carried by Pakistani squash legend Jahangir Khan, and Muhammad Inam, World Beach Wrestling Champion and Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist. During its time in Pakistan, the Baton will also visit the Madressatul Islam University, Mazaar-e-Quaid, Karachi Grammar School and Moulana Muhammad Ali Johar Park (Kakri Ground) as Batonbearers, athletes, and others share untold stories of striving for change in their communities.

British High Commissioner to Pakistan Christian Turner, said:

Birmingham, the baton's final destination, has one of the largest Pakistani diaspora in the UK. With the 75th anniversary of our relations and the Commonwealth, this is another important milestone in UK-Pakistan relations.

The Baton Relay has been an essential part of the Commonwealth Games for over 60 years and celebrates communities from across the Commonwealth during the run up to the Games. It ignites hope, solidarity, and collaboration as it connects communities embracing unique cultures and inspires the next generation of sporting heroes.

Notes to editors:

1. The 16th official Queen's Baton Relay is an epic journey covering the entirety of the Commonwealth as it will travel to all 72 nations and territories, covering a distance of 140,000 kilometres. For 269 days, the Baton will travel to Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania, the Caribbean and the Americas, before it embarks on the final stretch of its journey across England for 25 days.
2. The Commonwealth Games bring nations together in a colourful celebration of sport and human performance. But the Games have evolved dramatically since its beginnings in 1930. Held every four years, with a hiatus during World War II, the Games have grown from featuring 11 countries and 400 athletes, to a global spectacle of 6,600 sports men and women from across 72 nations and territories.
3. Underpinned by the core values of humanity, equality and destiny, the Games aim to unite the Commonwealth family through a glorious festival of sport. Often referred to as the 'Friendly Games', the event is renowned for inspiring athletes to compete in the spirit of friendship and fair play.
4. Pakistan has competed in 13 of the 21 previous Commonwealth Games, from 1954. Its most successful games have been the 1962 Commonwealth Games in Perth, where it was 4th in the overall rankings and won 8 Gold Medals. Its most successful event has been wrestling, where it has won 42 medals, 21 of which have been Gold. It ranks 3rd overall in Wrestling at the Commonwealth Games.
5. After Pakistan, the Baton relay will travel to the Maldives.

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- Facebook: facebook.com/bhcpakistan

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 - Website: <https://www.gov.uk/world/pakistan>
-

Contact: British High Commission, Islamabad; tel. 0300 500 5306

Published 28 December 2021

[Rugby stars show support for booster campaign](#)

- Support comes as 32 million have now had their booster jab
- Booster jab increases protection against Omicron

Stars of women's rugby are today urging fans and the public to Get Boosted Now.

In a [new short film](#), Sarah Hunter, Harriet Millar-Mills and Amber Reed are encouraging people to continue to do what they love by getting the protection provided by the booster.

As more than 61% of adults across the UK have had their booster vaccine, the rugby stars have united to ask more people to find the motivation to get the jab and help the country get through the winter.

Sarah Hunter, England Women's Rugby Captain and Loughborough Lightning Number 8 said:

My motivation to get the first 2 vaccines and the booster is so I can continue to go to work to play the sport I love, and to do so in front of the amazing fans.

I urge all those that haven't yet had theirs to do so now, so we can keep ourselves and our loved ones safe from COVID-19 and look forward to a brilliant year of sport ahead throughout 2022.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Thank you to the Rugby Football Union and especially Sarah, Harriet and Amber for supporting the booster programme to tackle Omicron to

the ground.

Kick COVID-19 into touch and Get Boosted Now. Against the Omicron variant, 2 doses are not enough, but a third jab will bring you over the try line to boost your protection.

The NHS continues to work tirelessly to deliver jabs and it's so important for people to play their part by rolling up their sleeves in this national mission.

As friends, families and loved ones gather for the festive season, the public is reminded that vaccines remain the best way to protect people against COVID-19.

Data published by the UK Health Security Agency shows vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic infection is substantially reduced against Omicron with just 2 doses over time, but a third dose boosts protection back up to over 70%.

In response, the government and NHS England launched an urgent national appeal to encourage the public to Get Boosted Now. This includes advertising that encourages all those eligible to book their jabs.

A total of 750 armed forces personnel have been drafted in to support the deployment of booster vaccines across the UK and extra vaccine centres and pop-up sites have opened to make it as easy as possible for people to get vaccinated.

Over 32 million people across the UK have already received their top-up jab. With the rate of infection doubling every 2 to 3 days, government and medical experts are urging people to come forward for their jab as soon as they are eligible, so they can protect themselves and their loved ones.

[Watch the rugby stars' film now.](#)

£75 million boost to modernise UK fishing industry and level up coastal communities

Fishing communities across the UK will benefit from better infrastructure, strengthened supply chains, new jobs and an investment in skills thanks to a £75 million boost for the sector announced by UK Government today.

The investment will strengthen the sector's ability to land more fish in the UK and take them to market faster. This will be achieved by improving the

capacity and efficiency of our harbours and processing facilities while boosting the long-term sustainability of the fishing industry and supporting jobs, increasing opportunities for coastal communities and levelling up across the country.

A £65 million infrastructure scheme will be made available for projects such as modernising ports and harbours alongside increasing capacity and efficiency at processing and aquaculture facilities. A competition will be run to identify the best projects, prioritising those that reduce carbon emissions, helping increase the sustainability of the sector and contributing towards the UK's commitment to reach Net Zero by 2050.

Up to £10 million will also be used to encourage new entrants into the processing, catching and aquaculture sectors, alongside training and upskilling current workers. We will do this by offering an improved package of training to people joining the industry and making it easier for people from coastal communities to progress through their career.

The two funding schemes are the second and third parts of the £100 million UK Seafood Fund designed to level up coastal communities across the UK. This follows the [Science and Innovation pillar](#), announced in September, which is investing in new technology, trialling new gear and supporting world-class research to improve the productivity and long-term sustainability of the industry.

The investment will ensure the industry and coastal communities are equipped to benefit from additional quota gained as a result of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) signed last year with the EU. Following our departure from the Common Fisheries Policy, there have been uplifts in quota for UK vessels, with the value of UK-EU fishing opportunities for the UK in 2021 totalling approximately £333 million.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

A year on from the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, a positive picture is emerging for our fishing industry.

Today, we are announcing a £65 million infrastructure scheme which will allow us to modernise ports and harbours and increase capacity and efficiency at processing facilities. A £10 million fund will encourage new entrants into the processing, catching and aquaculture sectors, and train and upskill those in the industry.

We are committed to levelling up coastal communities across the UK, and this marks a period of rejuvenation for our fishing industry.

Sustainability is an important aspect of both schemes. The Infrastructure pillar will invest in the transition to renewable energy. Examples could include the electrification of UK ports to accommodate docking of electric or hybrid powered ships as well as increasing use of solar panels. Port electrification has already proven effective in cutting fossil fuel

consumption and reducing emissions produced by the fishing industry. The transition of the UK seafood industry to more sustainable practices and a greater use of renewable sources will drive down energy costs, protect fish stocks in the future and improve sales as well as building on the UK's reputation as a global leader in action to protect the environment.

Supporting the long-term future of the fishing sector, fishers will also be trained in more sustainable fishing techniques. This will help businesses work alongside offshore wind developments and existing Marine Protected Areas. The funding will also provide further support for fishers and industry workers through the development of new, tailored courses in business management, mathematics and literacy, as well as courses on health, safety and wellbeing improvements to existing courses with funding for staff and equipment.

We will invite industry to put forward bids for Infrastructure and Skills and Training with funding is provided to those that most benefit the industry. There will be several opportunities to bid for Infrastructure funding as we look to target different elements of the industry.

A further £1 million will be dedicated to promoting UK seafood, further details of which will be set out in 2022.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Michael Gove, said:

This multi-million pound investment will have a real and tangible impact on coastal communities across country and the UK fish industry.

It will support the creation of jobs and training opportunities that will help put the industry on a sure footing for the future.

We are working hard to boost local communities and spread opportunity to every corner of the country as we level up the nation.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart, said:

The UK Government is committed to Wales's fishing industry and to ensuring its many coastal communities enjoy a sustainable, prosperous future.

I encourage everyone in Wales eligible to apply for this funding to take up the opportunity to upskill their workforce, improve facilities, drive innovation and boost recruitment.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Malcolm Offord said:

We want to guarantee our fishing industry has a bright future and today's allocation of funding is a great step forward. From upgrading ports and improving processing facilities to boosting training and encouraging recruitment, it all brings a massive boost for the industry.

Our engagement with Scotland's fish and seafood sector is ongoing. We are listening to concerns and we are acting upon them for the benefit of business owners, workers and Scotland's wider coastal communities.

This funding will be felt throughout the country as we support improvements to the UK supply chain by helping establish greater coordination between regions and nations of the UK. Funding will also ensure training schemes are coordinated so that benefits are felt across the Union.

This comes as the UK government also publishes its [response](#) to a consultation with industry on proposed changes, collectively known as the 'economic link'. This will increase the percentage of fish that must be landed in the UK by English registered vessels following our departure from the EU, providing a boost to fishing companies and producers, further strengthening the UK economy. The changes apply to UK vessels fishing against English quota and will come into effect from 1 April 2022.

In a further move to ensure that fishing communities reap the benefits of Brexit, the package of measures known as the 'economic link', also includes increasing the minimum percentage of UK crew members that must be on board vessels to 70%, creating more job opportunities for UK residents. It will contribute to the financial boost to the local economies in fishing communities. The amount of fish that must be landed in the UK after it is caught will rise from 50 to 70%, meaning more fish being sold and processed in the UK. Vessels that do not meet the landing or crewing requirement will be required to donate quota that provides valuable extra fishing opportunities to the inshore fleet. This will be increased from 16.5% to 20% in 2022 and we will seek to increase the current threshold over time.

These changes will provide a further boost to the fishing industry and the wider economy following our departure from the European Union. Funding to infrastructure will ensure the industry is equipped to fully benefit from these changes and support the levelling up of UK coastal villages, towns and cities.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Simon Clarke said:

I'm delighted that we are supporting coastal communities across the country to level up by investing £75m in modernising and upskilling the fishing industry. The UK Seafood Fund will boost opportunities for coastal communities by creating jobs and supporting the long-term sustainability of the fishing industry.