Press release: New budgeting support for Universal Credit claimants

Money Advice Service's Online Money Manager is an interactive tool that offers personalised advice, on making the most of your money while you're on Universal Credit. It offers help and advice on a range of money topics, including opening a bank account, keeping on top of bills and dealing with debt.

Universal Credit is built to mirror the world of work to make the transition much easier for claimants and so there is always an incentive to work. New claimants receive monthly benefit payments, just like a pay cheque, and some may need extra help to manage this change.

Employment Minister Damian Hinds said:

> Universal Credit gives people back control of their own lives and finances, and makes the transition into work much smoother. We know that this can be a big change. Our work coaches offer budgeting support to all new claimants and this new tool will help more people get all the skills they need to manage their money.

Caroline Rookes, Chief Executive for the Money Advice Service, said:

> The Online Money Manager is an essential tool that will help people to plan and budget for this new way of receiving their money and paying their bills. They will be able to find personalised information about bank accounts, help with setting up direct payments to landlords, budgeting and saving money on regular bills, as well as where to go for additional support if they are struggling with financial commitments.
>
> We are pleased to be working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to bring this tool to the people who can benefit the most.

Online Money Manager

The online service includes:

- step by step questions that signpost users to financial guidance and support relevant to their personal circumstances
- hints and tips for managing money and paying bills from a monthly payment.
- signposting to further support, such as advance payments and free debt advice

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment which replaces 6 benefits. It is simpler for claimants, and adjusts automatically when someone moves into work. It is designed to mirror the world of work and the monthly payments reflect the way many people’s wages are paid. Money for housing costs also goes to the claimant, rather than direct to a landlord, giving people control over their own finances.

Jobcentre Plus work coaches:

- give people the support they need to prepare for, move into and stay in work – including help with job searching and signposting to relevant training and interview advice
- can provide budgeting advice for those that need it

Budgeting tips from the Money Advice Service

List all your income and outgoings

Keep track of how much money you have coming in and how much you need to spend on essentials. You can use the Online Money Manager to help.

Divide your spending into essential and non-essential items

Take a look at your spending and create 2 lists: one for things you really need, and another for things you could live without.

Sort out your rent or mortgage payments

Make sure you keep your rent or mortgage money separate from your everyday spending money. Think about setting up a direct debit or standing order to pay your landlord or lender directly each month after you get your first Universal Credit payment.

Think about how you’ll manage a monthly payment

Universal Credit is paid monthly so if you’re used to working out your spending weekly or fortnightly, you’ll need to start managing your money across the whole month.

Work out how you’ll cover your essential outgoings

These include rent or mortgage, Council Tax, utility bills, and repayments on loans, credit cards or store cards. If there’s a risk you’ll fall behind with payments, don’t bury your head in the sand. Lenders, councils and landlords can work with you to manage repayments if you tell them as soon as there’s a problem.

Get better deals on regular bills

With essential bills, like your gas, electricity or phone, you could save up to £200 a year if you switch to a better deal. Even making a single call to your current provider to ask about cheaper tariffs could make you better off.

Check for insurance policies and make a claim

If you've taken out any income or payment protection policies you might find the insurance company will cover loan repayments if you're not working. Check your policy paperwork if you're not sure.

Think before you borrow

If you're tempted to borrow, think carefully about how you will keep up with repayments. Stay away from high-cost borrowing like payday or doorstep lenders. If you must borrow, credit unions can offer cheaper loans and will work with you to set affordable repayments.

Prioritise debts – and get help if you're struggling

Your rent or mortgage, Council Tax and gas or electricity bills are priority bills. If you're struggling to pay them, get free, confidential debt advice as soon as you can. A debt adviser can help you manage your debts even if you think you have no spare money to deal with them. The Debt Advice Locator Tool will help you find free advice in your area.

About the Money Advice Service

The Money Advice Service is an independent organisation. It gives free, unbiased money guidance online at moneyadviceservice.org.uk or via free phone on 0800 138 7777. Debt advice is also provided through a variety of partners across the UK.

The service was set up by the government and is paid for by a statutory levy on the financial services industry, raised through the Financial Conduct Authority. Its statutory objectives are to enhance the understanding and knowledge of members of the public about financial matters (including the UK financial system) and to enhance the ability of members of the public to manage their own financial affairs.

For more information about the Online Money Manager for Universal Credit claimants contact pressoffice@moneyadviceservice.org.uk or call 0207 943 0593.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5111

Follow DWP on:

Speech: "The spirit of 21st century

Britain is not to oppose change, but to drive it", says Chief Secretary, David Gauke

The topic I want to focus on is a broad one, and one that governments and societies across the world ignore at their peril.

And that's how we prepare for the future.

Now there are clearly a lot of angles to that question.

And I am not going to attempt to provide a comprehensive answer.

At the moment, of course, most reports, discussions and column inches are looking at the question in terms of the future partnership between the UK and the EU.

And understandably so.

For both the UK and the other EU member states, this is an unprecedented question.

That's why a huge amount of research and planning is already underway in governments, businesses and 3rd sector organisations across Europe, as well as the wider world.

But I'd like to use this opportunity today to look even further ahead.

To look beyond the negotiations to come.

In fact, to look beyond the scope of this Parliament, or the one to follow.

And instead, to consider how we can make the UK a success throughout the 21st century.

So I want to focus on three interconnected aspects of how we are considering that question in government.

You won't be surprised to hear that for a Treasury minister, that starts with thinking about the future of our public finances.

But it also means thinking about the future of our public services.

As well as the impact of tomorrow's technologies.

Plenty, I think, for us to discuss in the time we've got.

Public finances

So let me start with that most Treasury of preoccupations – the health of the public purse.

And I think the main questions on this come in two forms.

First, how do we address the immediate and medium-term challenges in respect of the deficit and debt? And second, what is our response to the longer term fiscal challenges faced by advanced economies across the globe?

Dealing with the deficit

Two big questions, so I'll take each in turn.

First – the fact that we are in a historically difficult financial position.

I won't downplay the challenges we face. Whatever your views on the causes that brought us here – whether that be the loose fiscal policies of the 2000s whilst overly relying on volatile sources of tax revenue, or the international financial crisis – the fact is that when we came to government in 2010, the public finances required serious remedy. The deficit the country was running was at its highest point since the Second World War.

And in consequence, the trajectory of our national debt was inevitably moving in the wrong direction – and fast. Even with the difficult decisions we have taken over the last seven years – which mean that instead of borrowing one in four pounds, it's now one in 10 – next year debt will stand at about 90% of our GDP.

To put that in perspective, that's its highest in half a century.

So those who argue that spending control and deficit reduction are yesterday's issues could not be more wrong. For all the progress we have made, we are not yet out of the woods by any stretch.

And unless you're prepared to leave the country vulnerable to future economic shocks, and create even tougher fiscal choices in the future, it is an absolute necessity to get on top of this legacy of debt and deficit. That is why we'll be continuing our work to do so and get the structural deficit to below 2% of our GDP this Parliament, and put ourselves on course to returning to balance as soon as possible in the next Parliament.

Dealing with our debt

But there is a bigger fiscal challenge at play too.

We're seeing seismic changes to our societies which will present long-term economic challenges for governments the whole world over.

For a start, we're getting older.

If I look just at the period of my own life time, when I was born in 1971, the global life expectancy at birth was 59 years. That’s now increased to over 71 years. And it’s not a trend confined to developing countries. In the UK too, we saw a similar rise in that period from 72 years to over 81.

And one in three of all babies born here today can now expect a message from the Palace on their hundredth birthday, compared to the one in every hundred people born over a century ago.

So as people live longer and longer, public services have to meet the needs, first, of a larger older population, but second, of a more expensive one – with people nearing the end of their lives requiring much more support.

But our ageing population is just one challenge.

Consider too the increasing identification of long-term illnesses – for the young and old alike.

Research from the King’s Fund, for example, suggests that the cost to the NHS of mental health disorders and dementia will increase by half between 2007 and 2026. We can also expect increasing rates of obesity to raise the number of people with conditions like cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

And the rise in the identification of illnesses carries a corresponding rise in costs. Not just in terms of what we spend on health care, but on social security too.

Look at how our spend on Disability Living Allowance has almost doubled as a share of GDP over the past 20 years – the largest rise associated with the increase in identifying mental health issues.

Then there is the fact that research shows people have increasingly high expectations concerning their standards of care, their engagement with medical professionals and their access to the very latest treatments.

And all those cutting edge treatments, those new drugs, complex procedures, and advanced pieces of equipment – they all come with a much higher price tag.

So there are a wide range of pressures that are driving up costs to the public purse.

An illustration of which can be seen in the fact that over the last 60 years, there’s been a huge change in how much we are spending on the NHS as a proportion of government spending as a whole – from around 8% in 1955. To nearly 18% in 2015. So the implications of all of these pressures are far-reaching.

The recent report from the OBR, for example, gave a blunt assessment of what they could mean for UK public finances.

It projected that without mitigating action, in 50 years time, our debt would stand at 234% of GDP.

To put it another way, the kind of factors I have outlined are set to add to government debt by more than either of the World Wars did.

But without the prospect of spending pressures relenting once the war was won.

The UK is not, of course, unique in facing such challenges.

The reality is that responsible governments across the world will have to take steps to prevent such a fate.

Even if that means short-term unpopularity.

So it is in the context of this looming and growing challenge, that our determination to deal with the deficit and restore public finances to balance is hardened still further.

Public services

That brings me to my second point – the future of government services.

And so often, political debate on this subject is reduced to sheer weight of numbers.

Are we spending more than we did before?

Are we spending more than the opposition are saying they would spend?

Are we spending more than other countries are spending?

But the answers to any of these questions will only take you so far. The question we should also ask is not just how much, but how well we are spending that money.

It is in that spirit that I am leading a government-wide drive to make our public services more productive – quite simply, to get more for less.

That might sound idealistic.

Even simplistic.

But unless you think government services are already running like clockwork, and offering our taxpayers perfect value, I think you will agree that there is plenty of scope for us to improve how we operate.

And I’m not someone who subscribes to the view that the only way you can do so, is to throw money at the problems.

That’s not how businesses operate, and it shouldn’t be how governments operate either.

Instead, we should make a relentless effort to become ever smarter, ever more productive, and ever more efficient in the future.

That’s why I’m working with all my Cabinet colleagues to look at how we do so – and we’ve set ourselves a target of saving the taxpayer £3.5 billion by the end of this Parliament.

It can certainly be done. Just look at the gains to be made in our Health Service alone – the Carter review has identified that by working more efficiently we can save £5 billion pounds a year by 2021.

A recent Radio 4 documentary highlighted how we are raising productivity in the NHS. It gave a good insight into just how much room for improvement there is – for both the patient, and the taxpayer.

One example came courtesy of orthopaedic surgeon, Professor Tim Briggs, who is also the National Director for Clinical Quality and Efficiency in NHS Improvements. Just looking at hip and knee replacements, he found standards varied wildly across the NHS – whether that was in how much any given hospital spent buying the joint replacements, the different rates of infection or the varying patient outcomes and costs of mistakes and litigation. By making changes to share best practice, whether in treatment or procurement, he showed we could not only raise care, but reduce costs – freeing up of millions of pounds to be used elsewhere.

In fact, he reckoned the money saved just from getting infection rates down to the level of the best performers, would be enough to pay for around 50-60,000 more such knee or hip operations – for the same amount of money. That’s a staggering figure and I’m pleased to say he’s now looking at what we can do in 30 other specialities, including diabetes and heart surgery.

This is exactly the kind of approach we can and should be taking across our public sector as a whole. Improving productivity and efficiency must become embedded in the culture of our public services if we are to meet rising expectations and cope with the long-term fiscal pressures.

And that’s why I’m inviting experts from across our society – from within the public sector, from academia, 3rd sector organisations, and businesses – to look at how we can reform the ways in which we work, put our workforce to best use and invest in the technology and systems that will raise our productivity to another level.

Tomorrow’s technology

And that brings me to my third and final point today – which is to consider the implications of the rapid technological advances of our age.

Because change is happening at an astonishing pace.

We’re seeing artificial intelligence that can pass the Turing test.

Cars that can drive themselves.

Houses that can be printed out.

Hotels run by robots – and indeed robots that can care for the elderly, perform heart and brain surgery, or explore outer space.

And we shouldn't regard such advances with the hostility of 21st century luddites.

Nor should we seek to stifle them in a misguided attempt to protect jobs – don't expect to hear the Chancellor announce a new 'tax on robots' any time soon.

Because we take the view that the role ofgGovernment is to back and enable the science, research and innovation of the next generation.

This brings benefits both to our society, and our economy.

I saw an example of this last week, when I went to Oxford to celebrate investment from Novo Nordisk, a multinational Danish pharmaceutical company, in a brand new research facility.

Drawn by such a world-leading university, they recognised that the UK was the best place in the world to research how we address diabetes.

We have the talent, the expertise, and the culture of academic excellence to help advance global scientific understanding.

And in doing so, we can bring new jobs and foreign investment to British shores.

So we're putting science and research at the very centre of our industrial policy.

You'll have heard us announce £4.7 billion pounds of public R&D spending at last year's Autumn Statement – the largest increase in any Parliament since the 70s.

That's in addition to our commitment to protect science funding – to the tune of over £24 billion up to 2020. But beyond supporting our world-class research base, there's much more we're doing to embrace the future. We're modernising the way we provide public services through technology – such as the investment we're making so that people can complete their tax returns online.

The UN have already ranked us the most digitally advanced government in the world, with the UK coming out on top in their E-Government survey.

And today, Cabinet Office Minister, Ben Gummer, launched a new strategy to see us build on that further. We're also putting in place the digital infrastructure we will rely on – we already have one of the fastest 4G rollouts in Europe, and we announced in November a £1 billion investment in broadband, to spread fibre networks and 5G across Britain.

And just look at the advances we're making in the future of how we will travel.

Like investing millions in the world’s first large-scale live testing system for connected and autonomous vehicles. Or supporting tests of driverless cars, using smart motorways to trial connected vehicle technology, or expanding the infrastructure for ultra-low emission vehicles.

Just this morning, in fact, the Science Minister, Jo Johnson, launched a competition to fund proposals that will establish the UK’s first spaceport by 2020, and keep us at the forefront of commercial spaceflight. But beyond the investments we are making as a government, we’re also backing our businesses to innovate, with a low and competitive tax environment and support for R&D.

So across the spectrum, we’re encouraging new technology and embracing the benefits it can bring to our society, and to our economy.

And that’s why the World Economic Forum has already ranked us in the top three countries worldwide for our technological readiness.

But we must also recognise that these waves of change will fundamentally alter our society in ways we must manage.

Whether that’s the changing face of crime, with the dramatic rise in cyber offences.

Or the big changes technological advances will mean to the way we work, and the jobs that we do. According to some predictions, for instance, almost two thirds of children entering primary schools today will work in roles that don’t currently exist.

And alongside that, one study estimates that over a third of all jobs in the UK are at high risk of replacement by tech in the next one to two decades, as AI and advanced robotics develop further. So we must be able to adapt.

To connect more people to the opportunities to up- and re-skill throughout their working lives.

To address the digital divide and help people adjust and take part.

And to give our young people the skills they will need to get ahead in tomorrow’s world. Whether that’s in terms of what they learn at school – and indeed, we were one of the first countries in the world to put computer coding on the national curriculum. The quality of technical skills they can develop. Or the way we help millions of people get on in their careers by doing apprenticeships that are really focused on the modern needs of our industries.

Conclusion

So in looking at just the three aspects of the UK’s future I have focused on today, what we can see is that there are some very real challenges ahead of us.

The hard work isn’t over when it comes to rectifying the UK’s public finances.

And on top of that, governments the world over will need to get to grips with some difficult long-term spending pressures, as well as handle widespread changes to the very fabric of our societies.

But just as we should be frank and realistic in facing up to these challenges…

…we should also be positive and optimistic about the opportunities we will seize to meet them.

Britain is a nation of shopkeepers and scientists. Coders and creators. Problem-solvers and innovators.

The spirit of 21st century Britain is not to oppose change, but to drive it. And it is by shaping and embracing the technological advances of our age, that we will set our course towards better public services, higher national productivity, and a wealthier, healthier, more prosperous society.

Thank you for listening and I look forward to hearing your questions.

News story: Primary Authority consultation to help all UK businesses grow

Changes are to be made to Primary Authority (PA), the gateway to better regulation through single points of contact in local authorities for assured regulatory advice.

From 1 October, 2017, when the Enterprise Act 2016 comes into force, Primary Authority will be open to any size of business, and pre start-ups, through an extension and simplification of the scheme, supported by an improved Primary Authority Register – an internet resource.

Regulatory Delivery, part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, is replacing the existing orders to implement the new regime and seeking views on:

- Listing the national regulators given the ability to support Primary Authority partnerships
- Simplifying the definition of an ‘enforcement action’
- Updating the definitions of relevant functions within scope of Primary Authority in Scotland and Northern Ireland
- Updating the requirements for an application for a determination by the

Secretary of State
- Moving to a system where a partnership covers all of the regulatory functions that a local authority can offer

The changes to the scheme are based on feedback from businesses and regulators already involved in the scheme, and are designed to make achieving prosperity and protection through Primary Authority easier for everyone.

The consultation Unlocking the Potential of Primary Authority is available to view now. Those with an interest in the scheme (businesses and business groups, local authorities, national regulators, etc) are invited to take part in the consultation.

A BEIS spokesperson said:

"Through Primary Authority, the Government is giving every business – and every person who wants to start a business – access to reliable, tailored regulatory advice. Building on the success of Primary Authority since 2009, we have been listening and have taken action, to ensure it works in the best possible way for everyone."

- The extension of Primary Authority will give every business, and every person who wants to start a business, access to reliable, tailored regulatory advice
- Having early access to regulatory advice helps businesses get things right first time, protecting consumers and allowing enforcing authorities to target their resources
- The Enterprise Act also brings national regulators closer to the scheme, giving them a role to play in the provision of advice
- These provisions will help Britain ensure its position as the best place in Europe to start and grow a business

Approximately 90% of businesses in Primary Authority are small and medium enterprises. It is estimated that over 250,000 businesses will benefit from Primary Authority as a result of these changes.

News story: UK Defence companies step up globally at Aero India 2017

Mrs Baldwin, the Minister for Defence Procurement, joins 20 UK companies at the aerospace exhibition held at Air Force Station Yelahanka. Showcasing some of the most innovative technology in the defence, aviation and security sectors, these cutting edge businesses will be forging long-lasting industrial partnerships and joint ventures with Indian companies.

The visit builds on the Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP) agreed in November 2015.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

> The UK and India have much to offer one another in defence: from manufacturing collaboration and simplified export controls, to military cooperation, training and research partnerships.
>
> As Britain steps up globally, we will work together with India to build knowledge, security and prosperity through a close industrial, military and economic partnership.

Mrs Baldwin is accompanied by the British High Commissioner to India, Dominic Asquith; Lieutenant General Mark Poffley, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for Military Capability; and Sophie Lane Regional Director for India in the Department of International Trade's Defence and Security Organisation (DSO).

The UK has a cutting-edge range of world class products across the air, land, maritime and security sectors, and Mrs Baldwin called on UK and Indian companies to develop and sustain long term industrial partnerships, to meet the challenges of the future and launch new products into the global marketplace.

Read Harriett Baldwin's speech to the 'Make In India' Conference.

Press release: Putting a stop to town hall boycotts

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (13 February 2017) unveiled further steps which seek to prevent councils from boycotting companies and countries if it is against the government's position.

The move aims to stop councils from introducing restrictions on the companies and countries they use – particularly by introducing boycotts on goods from Israel.

These latest plans would require local authorities by law to treat suppliers fairly and in line with the British government's policies. It would mean no council could boycott any country or industry unless restrictions have already been put in place by the government. This follows rules set by the World Trade Organisation requiring all member countries to treat suppliers equally and without prejudice.

Rules were introduced earlier last year which prevented councils from using local government pension policies to introduce boycotts. New Cabinet Office guidance was also introduced in February 2016, which govern the procurement of goods and services by public bodies.

Today’s announcement applies to councils, and would make following the British government’s foreign policies a legal requirement when buying goods and services – effectively outlawing locally-imposed boycotts.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

> We need to challenge and prevent divisive town hall boycotts which undermine good community relations.
>
> No council should be boycotting any company or country unnecessarily – instead their main focus should be delivering the value for money taxpayers rightly expect.
>
> We will clampdown on these inappropriate and needless boycotts once and for all.

Stopping boycotts which damage Britain

Councils also have a clear duty to make sure they deliver value for money for their residents and to maintain a high quality of service.

Mr Javid also confirmed that he would look to put government guidance published last February on a legal footing to make clear that councils should not introduce boycotts of countries or companies when making procurement decisions. Similar boycotts have led to the removal of Kosher food from the shelves of supermarkets, or calls for Jewish films to be banned.

This will mean public authorities have to treat suppliers equally, and not discriminate on geographical or other grounds when buying goods or services, unless they are in line with existing restrictions put in place by the government.

Further information

Public sector procurement law applies to central government, executive agencies, non-departmental public bodies, the wider public sector, local authorities and NHS bodies.

The best value guidance provides powers for the Secretary for State to intervene in a council if it is in breach of the regulations or statutory guidance.

These new measures are in line with the World Trade Organisation Government Procurement Agreement, which requires its members to treat suppliers from another member country no less favourably than its domestic suppliers.