

Spring budget and DWP funding

Spring Budget 2023

The budget claims to be designed to support people to: 1) enter work; 2) work longer hours; 3) extend their working lives. The following areas were considered: childcare, Universal Credit claimants, disabled people and those with long-term health conditions, older workers, migration, education and skills.

When announcing the budget, the chancellor said that *“we could fill half the vacancies in the economy with people who say they would like to work despite being inactive due to sickness or disability”*¹

The following measures can have a direct impact on interns and graduates.

Removing the Work Capability Assessment –the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) used to establish limited capability for work or work-related activity within the UK benefits system will be removed. According to a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) white paper², there will be *“only one health and disability assessment – the Personal Independent Payment (PIP) assessment”*. A new universal credit “health element” will be awarded to claimants of PIP. Work search requirements will be set through tailored conversations with Work Coaches.

Separate benefit entitlement from an individual’s ability to work – according to the chancellor, this means that disabled benefit claimants will be *“able to seek work without fear of losing financial support”*.³

Universal Support programme: this will match disabled and sick people in England and Wales who want to work with existing job vacancies, and ensure they are supported to succeed. There will be up to £4,000 spent per person to find them a suitable role and cater to their needs, supporting 50,000 places per year once fully rolled out.

Additional Work Coach Time – The government will expand an existing programme in Great Britain that provides tailored Work Coach support to help claimants of Employment and Support Allowance and the health component of UC to find suitable work. This includes voluntary Work Coach support for individuals who do not currently see Work Coaches.

Education and skills

An extremely important announcement is that the “department for Education will invest an additional £3 million over the next 2 years to pilot an expansion of the Supported Internships programme to young people entitled to Special Educational Needs support **who do not have an Education Health and Care Plan.**”

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/spring-budget-2023-speech>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transforming-support-the-health-and-disability-white-paper>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/spring-budget-2023-speech>

Timeframe ⁴

The Government has said it will take time to “carefully consider how best to implement these changes and give security and certainty to claimants”.

The proposals to remove the WCA and introduce a new universal credit health element will require primary legislation, which the Government said it will “aim to take early in a new Parliament, when Parliamentary time allows”.

Universal support is already available in a third of Jobcentres and is set to be available in around a further third of Jobcentres from Spring 2023, then nationally in 2024.

The Government will be extending the Work and Health Programme, which provides assistance to people who expect to find work within 12 months, to September 2024.

The government has a page detailing what supported internship is:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-internships-for-young-people-with-learning-difficulties/supported-internships>

DWP funding

Universal Support programme – the budget proposes to introduce the Universal Support programme detailed above in England and Wales “to match people with disabilities and long-term sickness with jobs and provide support and training to help them succeed. Spring Budget also introduces a suite of measures to address the leading causes of ill health related inactivity, including tailored employment support in mental health and musculoskeletal health services, and expanding access to digital resources and health checks.” ⁵

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spring-budget-2023-labour-market-factsheet/spring-budget-2023-factsheet-labour-market-measures>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spring-budget-2023/spring-budget-2023-html#policy-decisions>