

# DU Learning Guide

## Government Services

*"It saves queuing at the Post Office!"*

### What's it all about?

The Government wants people to use the Internet as much as possible for dealing with its various departments and agencies, and also with the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and with local councils. It's cheaper, which is good news for taxpayers, and it's easier for both sides.

There is a single website, Directgov, [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) that links you to all public services. You can use it to find information, but the most useful part is the ability to deal with central and local government online, whether claiming benefits, or paying taxes, or applying for a passport, or renewing your TV or Road Fund licence.

### Try this

There are so many things that you can do via the Directgov website that it is impossible to suggest an exercise other than to go to the site and look for the service you want.

- Type [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) into the address bar of your browser
- Press **Enter** to display the Directgov home page.  
(Note that the coloured items change frequently so it will not look exactly like this.)

The screenshot shows the Directgov website homepage. At the top, there is an orange header with the Directgov logo and the tagline 'Public services all in one place'. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. Below the header, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Home', 'Contacts', 'Do it online', and 'Newsroom'. The main content area features a large heading 'Directgov - the official government website for citizens' and a sub-heading 'Easy access to the public services you use and the information you need, delivered by the UK government'. There are several featured sections with icons and text: 'School break' (Activities and ideas for half term), 'DVLA prize draw' (You could win a car when renewing your car tax), 'Agency workers - know your rights' (Does your agency follow the rules?), and 'Looking for work' (Jobseeking, money, training and skills). Below these, there are four columns of links under the heading 'Straight to...': 'Motoring' (Car tax, Learners, MOT, Driving licence...), 'Parents' (Having a baby, Schools, Childcare...), 'Employment' (Jobs, Redundancy, Holidays, Pay...), and 'Young people' (Money, Work and careers, Leisure...). To the right of these columns is a section titled 'Let Directgov point the way' with links for 'Mortgage worries?', 'Struggling with debt?', and 'Need childcare?'. Further right is a 'In the news' section with links for 'Britain's heritage under threat', 'Civil servant hospitality details', 'New strategy for children's services', 'New British Monarchy website', and 'Severn tidal power'.

- If you move your mouse pointer over the page you will see that it changes to a hand as you move it over most of the words. They are all links to other pages.
- Place the mouse pointer on the one that you want to find out more about and click once with the left mouse button.

## Local authorities

All local authorities have their own websites. To find yours:

- Go to [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) and click on **Contacts** at the top of the page.
- On the next page, click on **Local councils**.

## Local councils

Find principal local councils throughout the UK. Browse the A to Z lists, or browse by region or country. Includes county, city, borough and district councils and unitary authorities.



**Search for your local council in England**  
Search for a local council by postcode, street name, town or clickable map. This is for England only.

[Search for your local council in England \(opens new window\)](#)

- If you are in England, click on **Search for your local council in England**.
- A new window will be displayed.
- Type your postcode in the box.
- Click on **Go**.

### Find your local authority

To identify the appropriate local authority, please choose from the options below, enter your details and click 'Go'. This service is only available in **England**.

**Search by:**

Postcode     Street, Town  
 Local Authority

Please enter the postcode in the following style, including capital letters and a space:  
SW1A 1AA

- If you are in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, scroll down the **Local Councils** page to see the links to your local authorities.

## More websites to explore

**Department for Work and Pensions**  
[www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/penret/](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/penret/)

Information on benefits and services for pensioners.

**The Pensions Service**  
[www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/](http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/)

Detailed guides and forms to claim benefits.

**Help the Aged**  
[www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk)

To supplement the government sites, use the Help the Aged guide to claiming the benefits you are due.

See also **Claim your Benefits**.