**Tower Hamlets Welfare Rights Advisors Information Exchange – July 2017**

**Universal Credit Update**

       Attach a letter that I sent to MPs Jim Fitzpatrick and Rushnara Ali regarding problems we’ve identified with Universal Credit

Citizens Advice and CPAG are both campaigning on UC issues (pretty much same problems as we’ve identified see below)

**If you/your agency would like to add your name/organisation’s support to the campaigns/complaints please write/email them directly, the letter is from THCAN but if you want you can just say you agree/endorse it – Citizens Advice have asked for government to ‘pause’ the roll out of UC**

  [rushanara.ali.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:rushanara.ali.mp@parliament.uk)

  [jim.fitzpatrick.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:jim.fitzpatrick.mp@parliament.uk)

  or letter to House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

        Agencies are still referring clients who need help to claim Universal Credit to the JC Plus with attached referral letter, it’s having mixed results, some being helped, some not (this is one of the issues raised in MP complaint).  Also copy in to Hanshaw Stephen JCP HOXTON [STEPHEN.HANSHAW@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK](mailto:STEPHEN.HANSHAW@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK)  (not had any response from any we’ve sent though) also follow up what happens with the referral (if you want to email me a copy I’m trying to follow them up)

       Also if there are any other general complaints/problems email information to me and I’ll add to the ongoing DWP/ MP query/complaint/campaign, and don’t forget CPAG email advice [advice@cpag.org.uk](http://cpag-mail.org.uk/5MI-511E6-HILBJ-2P06VW-1/c.aspx) for UC issues

**Welfare Rights -  Free Training Session – NOTE TIME CHANGE – email me to book place if you want to attend**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Benefits and immigration status** | How immigration status effects entitlement to benefits, right to reside, EEA nationals, Habitual Residency Test, Genuine Prospect of Work  **Suitable for** basic session but suitable for anyone including benefit advisors who haven’t already carried out or want to review knowledge training | Island House,  Roserton Street,  E14 3PG | Thursday  10th August  10am to 1pm    Fatima Begum |

waiting for our day in court.

3.    **Referrals to Tower Hamlets Specialist Welfare Rights Caseworkers**

**Legal Advice Centre**: Only take referrals for appeals when got the appeal bundle, not Mandatory Reconsideration. Otherwise can be ‘signposted’ (i.e. send client to drop-in advice session) for assistance. Referrals can be emailed to [admin@legaladvicecentre.org](mailto:admin@legaladvicecentre.org) they will email back to confirm that clients have been booked – full guidance available on [www.thcan.org.uk/advice-agencies-information/](http://www.thcan.org.uk/advice-agencies-information/#_blank)

**Law Centre**: Chris Parsons, very limited capacity but to email or phone him, has no particular criteria [c.parsons@thlc.org.uk](mailto:c.parsons@thlc.org.uk)

**Island Advice**: Tower Hamlets clients only, limited casework and usually all appointments are taken up through our drop-in advice session clients but can try by email  [steph@island-advice.org.uk](mailto:steph@island-advice.org.uk)  or phone direct line 020 7538 0094 (phone number is for advisors only). Clients can ring 0207 987 9379

**CAB** advisor Eukay email [eukandu@eastendcab.org.uk](mailto:eukandu@eastendcab.org.uk). Also their full drop in services sessions are available on:  [www.thcan.org.uk/advice-agencies-information/](http://www.thcan.org.uk/advice-agencies-information/#_blank)

**Fixing Universal Credit – Campaign – Citizens Advice**

Since Universal Credit was launched, Citizens Advice has helped over 48,000 people with Universal Credit issues. Our data shows that Universal Credit is already failing many people. It is forcing people into debt and leaving them unable to make ends meet.

In October, the Government plan to dramatically increase the roll-out, putting hundreds of thousands more people at serious financial risk.

We want the government to pause the roll-out of Universal Credit, and fix 3 significant problems:

         People are waiting up to 12 weeks for their first payment without any income.

         Universal Credit is too complicated and people are struggling to use it.

         People aren’t getting help when the system fails them.

To achieve this, we need to take action now.

**How our campaign will work** We need MPs to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to share our evidence, and to convince the government to make changes to Universal Credit.

To get involved with this campaign, you can write to your MP, and contact local media.

The more local Citizens Advice that get involved, the more likely we are to achieve change.