**This is Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network’s welfare rights advisors monthly information exchange, it is sent to around 200 individuals and organisations with an interest in welfare rights in Tower Hamlets and is available to see on the** [**www.thcan.org.uk**](http://www.thcan.org.uk) **Up-to-date information on advice providers services and opening times are available on the website**

**Tower Hamlets Welfare Rights Advisors Information Exchange – July  2018**

**1.    NEXT Welfare Rights Advisors Forum Meeting –  20th September 2-4 pm venue to be confirmed**

Minutes of last Welfare Benefit Caseworkers not completed yet will send with next information exchange

**2.**      **Advice Worker Training Project   recruiting NOW –- information sessions start next week**

**See attached poster please display//refer/promote – course starts September – also if you are able to offer an advice work placement to a volunteer contact me**

**Recruitment/Information Sessions – just turn up   -  Email for application form and further information;****jo.ellis@island-advice.org.uk**

30th July 10.30am  - 12.30              Account 3  -  3 Birkbeck St, London E2 6JY  -

2nd August 2 – 4pm                          Bromley by Bow Centre -  Conference room, St Leonard's St, Bromley By Bow, E3 3BT

28th Aug 11am - 1pm                      Limehouse Project, St Anne Street, 789-791 Commercial Rd, E14 7HG

**3.    Welfare Rights -  Free Training Session  – email me to book place**

  No Training sessions until September

**4.    Other information / Services**

A)        We have recently had some issues with clients with fluctuating income difficulties with housing benefit –clients seem to be getting asked to provide their wage slips every time income changes (and with 0 hours contracts this can be every week) – it is possible for housing benefit to use an ‘average’ of past 5 weeks/2months or even13 weeks to avoid this and where clients are having problems due to fluctuating incomes client/advisor can ask for an average income to be used instead of weekly.  Clive Buckman has given guidance on

*‘We normally assess HB/CTR for working people based on their average pay over a 5 week or two month period. Regulations authorise us to use an average over a longer period if this gives a better reflection of the claimant’s wages. We usually ask claimants whose wages fluctuate to provide 13 weeks’ payslips every 3 months. It’s advisable for them to include a covering note drawing our attention to any weeks they have received  no pay and pointing out that they have not had a change in circumstance. It is important that people do not wait until they have 13 payslips before making a new HB claim as we cannot backdate for more than a month and can only backdate for that long when a claimant has good cause for their delay in claiming. Not having pay slips is not a good cause for a delay: the claimant can always submit a claim and provide payslips later’.*

B)      DWP newsletter June attached

**5.**    **Specialist Welfare Rights Workers Referrals for Tower Hamlets Residents**

 **Legal Advice Centre**: Only take referrals for appeals when got the appeal bundle, not Mandatory Reconsideration.  Otherwise can be ‘signposted’  (ie send client to drop in advice session) for assistance. Referrals can be emailed to 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

**Island Advice**: Tower Hamlets clients only, limited casework and usually all appointments are taken up through our drop in advice session clients but email  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    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)