**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**

**Welfare Rights Advisors Forum**   **NOTE date/venue  change** Thursday 4th July  2-4pm, Spitalfields Housing Association, 78 Quaker Street, E1 6SW

* Please send requests/suggestions for agenda / training / information items

**Free Training Sessions**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Advice Skills**One day training session | Introduction on key principles and skills for advice: policy and procedures, structure for initial interview, communication skills, case recording, letters, advice resources **Suitable for** new advisors/volunteers or supervisors who want to use information to deliver this advice skills training session for staff/volunteers | Island AdviceIsland HouseRoserton StreetE14 3PG | Jo Ellis6th June 201910am -4pm |
| **Appeals** ½ day training session | * Understanding procedure for Mandatory Reconsiderations and appeals
* how to set out an appeal submission; format, checking case law, presenting the case for your client
* **Suitable for** Benefit/advice workers with good knowledge of benefit system
 | Island AdviceIsland HouseRoserton StreetE14 3PG | Fatima Begum20th June 20191-4pm |
|  |  |  |  |

**Email** jo.ellis@island-advice.org.uk to book a place

**Benefit Up-dates**

1. Pension Credit

Info sent out in last welfare rights advisors information regarding, couples where one partner is aged above Pension Credit age and the other is aged under Pension Credit age, no longer be able to make a new claim for Pension Credit. Instead they will have to claim Universal Credit and will only be able to claim Pension Credit if both are over 65.

Further clarification from HB about this is

UC for Mixed Age Pensioner Couples

Currently couples where one partner is a pensioner and the other is below pension age are eligible to claim both Housing Benefit and Pension Credit

However, this will change from 15 May 2019 when these couples will not be able to make a new claim for either Pension Credit or Housing Benefit and will instead need to claim Universal Credit unless they were getting:

•             Housing Benefit or

•             Pension Credit or

•             both

These couples will continue to be eligible for HB and PC after 14 May 2019 unless there is a break in entitlement to both HB and PC on or after 15 May 2019.

HB exemption for supported and temporary homeless accommodation will also still  apply to these couples.

**Social Policy/Campaign Information**

* Amber our benefit advisor wants to find out if  anyone else has seen a rise recently with deductions being taken from benefit (specifically not UC) without the client receiving any decision notice for the OP and therefore not having chance to challenge? If so might be something THCAN could/should raise as an issue with DWP – please email Amber van Boost Amber.vanBoost@island-advice.org.uk

**Other Information**

* <http://thcan.org.uk/factsheets/>  Complaints to DWP has been updated again
* **Marriage Allowance Information (** taxcharities@taxvol.org.uk **) -** If you’re married and your income is low enough to mean you don’t pay tax, Marriage Allowance allows you to give away some of your tax allowance to your spouse – and that can save up to £250 tax in the 2019/20 tax year. Backdating of Marriage Allowance to earlier years is possible, and could generate an immediate tax refund of up to £900, the non-taxpayer  has to apply– but it’s a simple process either on-line at [https://www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance](https://taxaid.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c83a91c42984d9497adc9bc4f&id=51c7126acf&e=e21f9f1de3) or by ringing HMRC on 0300 200 3300.
* DWP Newsletter April 2019

**Vacancies**

**Information exchange/services**

* DWP Newsletter March 2019 attached
* Financial Health Centre – Universal Credit support and home visits services attach flyers