**DWP feedback on customers attendance in Job Centre and dealing with complaints**

Parvez/Stephen /Sam

Job Centre Plus are open for working age for both appointments and drop in.

CAB continue to assist with claims (see last WR advisors email on how to make a claim – it details the CAB and Tackling Poverty support, the CAB one is just the national phone number, TP has an on line referral from and is specifically for TH residents).

Complaints and problems

Parvez said that complaints can be sent directly to him, however advisors feedback was that we don’t get responses when we do that, advisors have details ofl Shaifur regarding housing costs but again no response has been received

* Parvez agreed to send a list of details of emails that can be used to make enquiries/complaints

**ACTION POINT PARVEZ SEND ME INFO**

* Parvez also asked for a list of complaints that have been sent that you haven’t had a response to – I’ve got one from Pauline if anyone else has any please send (Michelle and Maura? Think you both also said you had an outstanding ones)

**ACTION POINT SEND INFO ON ANY COMPLAINTS SENT THAT WERE NOT RESPONDED TO JO**

Sam is disability employment adviser in DWP hackney and has shared contact email for any problems to do with ESA/disability benefits

Gaskell Samantha DWP HACKNEY JCP SAMANTHA.GASKELL@dwp.gov.uk   hackneyjobcentre.customersupport@dwp.gov.uk

Stephen Hanshaw is leaving his post as partnership manager and will be replaced by Zakir Hussain

Syeda from Apasen stated she has had problems with ‘closed claims’ clients have had their claims ended and told they would be called back then don’t get a call back – Parvez states that clients should go into the office in person with id

**Martin Williams CPAG**

**Further info about escalating complaints/dealing with problems**

**Don’t use a complaints systems that don’t work use a legal remedy that does!!**

1. We should always remember that the staff in the DWP offices / front facing staff are NOT decision makers
2. We need to ascertain what has gone wrong
	1. A problem with the amount of or the award
	2. A problem with the claim

If there’s been a decision or an award that you don’t agree with the issue should be dealt with as a supersession/mandatory reconsideration or appeal

If there hasn’t been  decision, or there’s a delay, or a failure to implement a decision or you’re waiting for a decision – then use the complaints system and the most effective way of dealing with this is making a complaint by threatening to use Judicial Review (JR)

Complaints are dealt with by London Regional Complaints (address/email on the templates)

You need to email them using CPAG’s template which is threatening judicial review and listing all the factors that make the situation ‘unreasonable’ for your client (ie this could be that they have had no income for 6 weeks). Use the templates on CPAGs website – there’s lots of them and probably one that covers your case but if not ask Jess (the JR Project worker) to do a new one

Once you’ve done your template you can send it to Jess for checking before you send it to the DWP

<https://cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights/judicial-review/judicial-review-pre-action-letters>

JRProject@CPAG.org.uk

The most common one advisors were stating was delay in awarding/paying UC  <https://cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights/judicial-review/judicial-review-pre-action-letters/delays-decision-making>

THIS IS THE REMEDY FOR DELAYS – why bother chasing up complaints with DWP, this actually works, the DWP have a legal duty to pay money and deal with claims/problems/complaints in a reasonable time

Standard time limit for a response is 14 days, If for any reason it doesn’t get sorted through threat of JR then get onto CPAG – JRs are costly but they (and other law firms) can get legal aid to deal with it – so far they have NEVER had to go to JR

Don’t always get a response but ALWAYS get a result

Second question about 2 salaries under one pay – this situation has been agreed as ‘needing fixing’ by DWP but they just haven’t fixed it yet and there’s no clear guidance – test case plus template available

Also don’t forget that Island Advice, Legal Advice Centre, CAB and Law Centre all have specialist advisors who would be happy to help with these

**Agencies Feedback on Service Provision updates/problem areas and issues**

All advice agencies represented (IAC, BBBC, CAB, Toynbee, Apasen, Age UK, Tackling Poverty), continue to provide advice by phone/digitally however we are also (quietly!!) providing occasional client face to face appointments where it has been impossible to advise otherwise.  Some clients are so digitally excluded/difficult to advise without face to face that although we are not promoting it, a few clients are/have been given appointments

Agencies report that they are pretty much keeping up with demand, some waiting lists but not excessive.  Just length of time it takes to carry out some actions is greater and made more difficult due to the digital methods of advice.

Disability benefit forms have waiting lists for completion/taking very long time and poor decision making since ‘telephone medical assessments’ have been the norm