

Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network (THCAN) is a partnership of local advice centres that work together to ensure Tower Hamlets residents have access to free, high-quality advice and representation in social welfare law (welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment, immigration, etc) www.thcan.org.uk website has information on advice providers services, factsheets, contact details and a referrals portal.

sarah.sauvat@island-advice.org.uk register to use the portal
jo.ellis@island-advice.org.uk book training/send info for the mailout

1. Welfare Rights Advisors Forum
2. Training Information
3. Benefit Updates
4. New Projects, Services and Resources Information
5. Vacancies:
6. Advice Services Contacts (specialist advisors)

1. Welfare Rights Advisors Forum

Last meeting 25th April – Minutes on THCAN website – Next meeting will be in July, if you are not already on the invite list for these meetings and would like to attend, please email me. Also items for discussion from last meeting were untidy tenancies AND getting LCW assessment and problems additional money payments

2. Free Training

We are no longer funded to deliver our previous one-off training sessions; however we are delivering Advice First Aid and Learning to Advise we can also deliver tailored courses to organisations for a charge. DWP are delivering training sessions

✓ DWP Training Sessions

Carer's Allowance – Thursday 13th June 11:00am (1hr)

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 346 346 869 150

Passcode: QsUfFc

Universal Credit & JSA – Friday 14th June 11:00am (1hr30)

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 352 863 287 517

Passcode: UPAELK

Universal Credit & Housing – Friday 14th June 2:00pm (45min)

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 397 839 254 945

Passcode: v7Xv3y

PIP & ESA – Thursday 20th June 11:00am (1hr30)

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 321 517 221 327

Passcode: EuB22D

- ✓ **DWP upskilling training sessions** which will be held during July 2024 (document attached) further assistance or information, please contact: disabilityservices.advocacyteam@dwp.gov.uk

3. Benefit Updates (Information from articles produced by Citizens Advice / CPAG /LASA / Benefits and Work updates summary)

- ✓ **CPAG info: Underpaid UC: carer and disabled child elements** If a UC claimant is also getting carer's allowance, or if a child they're responsible for is getting DLA, then the chances are that they are entitled to extra UC elements. But these extra amounts are not paid automatically by the DWP. We (CPAG) regularly hear about claimants missing out on them for months or even years. This long-running problem was the subject of a [2022 Early Warning System briefing](#), and in 2023, CPAG raised the problem again in its [You Reap What You Code report](#). Unfortunately, since then, the case studies have kept coming in.

Please look out for these cases for your clients and request the element on their journal / get specialist help if not awarded.

- ✓ **Upper Tribunal decision about Housing Benefit (HB) passporting when a client has a 'nil award' of Universal Credit (UC)** When a client gets UC and HB at the same time due to being in temporary or specified accommodation, they are 'passporting' to full HB. This is because a client's income and capital is fully disregarded for HB when they are 'on' UC (which means being entitled to UC). This decision means that if a client's income in an assessment period reduces their UC to £0, the client is not passported to full HB. This is because a client in this situation has no entitlement to UC, so isn't 'on' UC. The financial conditions of entitlement to UC are only met in an assessment period in which the level of income results in a UC award of at least 1p. You can [read the full decision in Ipswich Borough Council v TD and SSWP \[2024\] UKUT 117 \(AAC\) on GOV.UK](#)
- ✓ **HALF OF MIGRATED UC CLAIMANTS HAVE FAILED TO MAKE A CLAIM** Statistics released by the DWP show that more than half of all claimants sent a UC migration notice between July 2022 and March 2024 failed to make a claim. They also show that over 20% of claimants who received a migration notice have had their claims stopped. According to the figures, out of 824,000 claimants who were sent migration notices, only 401,000 have since made a claim for UC. 184,120 claimants have so far had their claims closed.

NOTE it is essential that advisors ensure client claim within the deadline (or ask for an extension BEFORE the deadline has passed

- ✓ **Universal Credit identity verification.** Universal Credit no longer uses Government Gateway or GOV.UK for online verification. You can verify your identity by one or more of the following: online identity verification, face-to-face appointments, documentary evidence, biographical interviews, Online identity verification [How to verify your identity for Universal Credit - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/how-to-verify-your-identity-for-universal-credit)

- ✓ **Online voluntary National Insurance payments service launches** Clients can check for and fill any gaps in their National Insurance (NI) record to help increase their State Pension using a new digital service from the 29th April 2024. This is a joint service by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It has been enhanced to include a fully end-to-end digital solution. The service will show customers by how much their State Pension could increase and details of the voluntary NI contributions they would need to pay to achieve this. It allows most people under State Pension age to view gaps in their NI record and pay voluntary contributions to fill those gaps if it will benefit them. [Online voluntary National Insurance payments service launches - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/online-voluntary-national-insurance-payments-service-launches)

- ✓ **Information / factsheets attached**
 - DWP Guide to 3rd party support for those moving onto Universal Credit (document attached)
 - DWP Managed Migration – Help to Claim Service Information
 - Poplar HARCA tenants help with energy debt (information attached) **fund** will be open to support our residents - Support households with up to £1,000 towards existing energy debt (referral form attached)

4. New Projects /services, information, and resources in Tower Hamlets

- Information for people who present that they are homeless and cannot open bank accounts, <https://www.hsbc.co.uk/help/money-worries/no-fixed-address/> [How to open a bank account if you're homeless - Shelter England](https://www.shelter.org.uk/how-to-open-a-bank-account-if-youre-homeless)
- **Island House New drop in session for pensioners.** Support for pensioners with benefit checks and Pension Credit applications. Please feel free to signpost any of clients of pension age to check: PC and attendance allowance entitlement. Monthly (3rd Thursday of the month)
Island House, Roserton Street, E14 3PG
Thursday 13th June, 11th July 11.30 to 1.30

5. Vacancies

✓ Age UK East London are recruiting for 2x information/triage officers.
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/eastlondon/get-involved/careers/information-officer/>

6. Advice Services

Tower Hamlets Advice benefit advice services details [Advice Centres - THCAN](#)

Specialist advice providers All the advice providers listed on www.thcan.org.uk provide benefit advice and help with form filling.

Tower Hamlets Law Centre Employment Clinic advice services (leaflet attached)

Legal Advice Centre we have spare capacity concerning PIP appeals and Family Law matters. In terms of PIP appeals, we are happy to take on cases from MR stage. In terms of Family Law, we will take any matter, including non-molestation orders and Section 8 child arrangement issues. We will take such cases regardless of the clients income. For PIP, please use the following email

Benefits@legaladvicecentre.London

For Family Law, please use the following email

Familylaw@legaladvicecentre.London

Complex/appeal/specialist advice is available at the below organisations

Organisation	E-mail	Tel Advice
Citizens Advice Bureau	advice@eastendcab.org.uk	0203 855 4472
Island Advice Centre	admin@island-advice.org.uk	0207 987 9379 Tues & Wed 10am to 12
Legal Advice Centre	admin@legaladvicecentre.london	0203 606 0372
Tower Hamlets Law Centre	info@thlc.co.uk	0207 538 4909 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri