

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 to 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

Next meeting Thursday 25th July 2-3pm (zoom) – if you have not previously attended one of these meetings and wish to come please email me to be added to my list (minutes are available on the THCAN website)

- Introduction – Welfare rights issues and trends / information share / cases
- Getting Limited Capability for Work Related Activity, assessment, and additional money issues. Information (Chris Parsons)

2. Free Training

We are no longer funded to deliver our previous one-off training sessions; however. DWP are delivering training sessions.

✓ DWP Training Sessions

DWP's July's benefit awareness sessions. All you need to do is click the link to join on the day and as always please feel free to forward this, please ask everyone to arrive within 10 minutes of the session starting.

- **Pension Credit & Attendance Allowance - Friday 12th July at 10:00am.**

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 378 606 026 196

Passcode: R5GD6R

- **Universal Credit and JSA - Thursday 18th July at 10:00am.**

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 317 270 848 955

Passcode: pUMXgu

- **Universal Credit and Housing - Friday 19th July at 10:00am.**

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 367 031 953 29

Passcode: ck3hcM

- **Carer's Allowance - Monday 29th July at 10:00am.**

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 359 713 164 938

Passcode: SupcdM

- **elop Quick Connect sessions**

Hear about how we currently support LGBT+ people, referral pathways and professional development and training opportunities for your team. It's also an opportunity to connect with others attending and strengthen your local knowledge. Next dates available: To book your free ticket, please click on the relevant link and do please share this email with anyone you feel would be interested in attending.

Wednesday 26th June, 9.30am-10am

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/902818974857?aff=oddtcreator>

Monday 29th July, 12pm-12.30pm

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/elop-quick-connect-for-professionals-hear-about-our-services-and-training-tickets-929625744627?aff=oddtcreator>

Friday 30th August, 3pm-3.30pm

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/elop-quick-connect-for-professionals-hear-about-our-services-and-training-tickets-902849456027>

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

- **New statistics on the benefit cap and two-child limit**

New DWP statistics show that almost 78,000 households in Great Britain had their income reduced by the benefit cap as of February 2024. This is a 4% increase on the previous quarter. Figures show: 70% of affected households were single-parent families, of which more than half had a youngest child under the age of five 88% included children. You can [read 'Benefit cap: number of households capped to February 2024' on GOV.UK](#). Our Adviser Online article - [The Benefit Cap and Universal Credit — What you need to know](#) has been updated for 2024. It contains

advice about the benefit cap and tactics on exemptions and other help for affected claimants. According to the IFS, affected households will lose £4,300 per year, representing 10% of their average income and 22% of their average benefit income. The research suggests that removing the two-child limit would be a highly effective way of reducing child poverty. Statistics from the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) show that removing the two-child limit would immediately lift 250,000 children out of poverty and mean 850,000 children are in less deep poverty.

You can [read the IFS report on the two-child limit on the IFS website](#).

You can [read CPAG's briefing 'Six years in: the two-child limit' on the CPAG website](#).

- **Between July and November 2024, individuals who are above State Pension age and receive Tax Credits will begin receiving letters instructing them to apply for Universal Credit or Pension Credit.**

The benefits your client will receive depends on their work status. In general, if they receive Working Tax Credits and/or Child Tax Credits, they will transition to Universal Credit. If they only receive Child Tax Credits, they will move to Pension Credit. Your client will receive either a migration notice letter with the date they need to apply for Universal Credit or a tax credit closure notice letter with the date they need to apply for Pension Credit by. Your client must apply for Universal Credit or Pension Credit by the date in their notice letter. If they don't, they could lose transitional protection, which is extra money added to their benefit

- **Child Poverty Action Group**

Sign up for an organisational membership, newsletter (this is where a lot of the benefits information I share comes from). CPAG bookorders@cpag.org.uk

[Become a member of CPAG | CPAG](#)

[Welfare Benefits & Tax Credits Handbook, 2024/25 \(cpag.org.uk\)](#)

Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook is the must-have guide to the social security system. This handbook provides all the information you need to help you maximise income for your clients and to support with completing benefits checks, making claims and what to do when things go wrong. It is essential for welfare rights advisers, lawyers, local authority and housing association staff, social workers, union officials and benefit claimants.

- **RECORD BREAKING QUARTER OF A MILLION PIP CLAIMS**

The latest official statistics reveal that a record breaking quarter of a million new PIP claims were lodged in the three months to April 2024. This is an increase of almost half since April 2021. It means that there are now 3.4 million claimants entitled to PIP, an increase of 3% in just three months. Over one in three cases (36%) received enhanced for both components, the same proportion as last quarter. This huge increase in claims is the main reason why the DWP is failing to keep up with PIP reviews, even after taking on additional staff.

[Read More and Comment](#)

✓ **Information / factsheets attached**

- Attached DWP information on the State Pension
- Attendance Allowance DWP factsheet
- Pension Credit DWP factsheet
- DWP External Disability Advocacy sessions
- 2 X example Migration notices

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

- **Useful statistics for clients who are on the waiting list for moving into alternative social housing – 2023/24 average waiting time (in years)**

Priority band	Studio	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5+ Beds
Band 1	2	3	5	7	7	11
Band 2	5	6	7	12	12	No lets
Band 3	10	6	No lets	No lets	No lets	No lets

- **Island House Benefit Checks / 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: Pension Credit and attendance allowance entitlement. Or email Cathy Weir cathy.weir@island-house.org with the clients name, telephone number (and email address if they have one) and they will get a call back/telephone advice, Monthly (3rd Thursday of the month). **Next session; Thursday 11th July 11.30 to 1.30**
Island House, Roserton Street, E14 3PG

- **Tower Hamlets - Communities Keeping Well.**

This programme is funded by London Borough of Tower Hamlets public health and Integrated Care Board as part of Northeast London NHS. The next phase of this programme is a Working Together Workshop where we are inviting residents and local stakeholders to address some of these health and wellbeing issues. **Thursday 11th July 9:30am - 12:30pm at St Lukes Millwall, Alpha Grove, E14 8LH.**

5. Vacancies

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.

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

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

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