

# **Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network** **(THCAN)**

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](http://www.thcan.org.uk) website has information on advice providers services, factsheets, Referrals portal Sarah Sauvat [sarah.sauvat@island-advice.org.uk](mailto:sarah.sauvat@island-advice.org.uk) training bookings or want to share information for mailout contact [jo.ellis@island-advice.org.uk](mailto:jo.ellis@island-advice.org.uk)

1. Welfare Rights Advisors Forum: Provisionally proposed 23<sup>rd</sup> April 3pm zoom
2. Training Information
3. Benefit Updates
4. New Projects, Services and Resources Information
5. Vacancies: Law Centre
6. Advice Services Contacts (including specialist advisors contacts for referrals)

## **1. Welfare Rights Advisors Forum**

Proposed Next meeting date will be 23<sup>rd</sup> April 3pm, if you are not already on the invite list for these meetings and would like to attend, please email me. Island Advice new welfare benefit supervisor Atif Kaudri will be providing information on the proposed benefits changes. Housing Benefit presentation (TBC)

## **2. Free Training**

- **East London Benefit Awareness Sessions for April**

I have changed the format a little bit where you now must register to join the session, any issues please get in touch. **Harry McElwee** | Partnership Advisor - East London District | Department for Work and Pensions see attached

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

- **BENEFIT CHANGES SUMMARY/INFORMATION**

**What's changing, when - What is the Green paper?**

The Green Paper is the government's consultation document about changes it is considering making to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and universal credit (UC). It is possible that not all – or not any – of the proposals will actually become law. With many Labour backbenchers unhappy about cutting benefits, a lot will depend on how much of an outcry the proposals cause.

[You can download the Green Paper from this link.](#)

See attached factsheet for summary/further information – request to attend the next Welfare Rights Advisors Forum for discussion

- [NEW Welfare Benefits Handbook 2025/26 - ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY](#)



- **Updated guidance for the Household Support Fund for 2025/26** Please see the [Debt update](#).
- **Uprating of social security benefit and increase to earnings limit for Carer's Allowance (CA)**

From 7 April the earnings limit for CA is increased from £151 to £196 per week. You can also [read our updated Adviser Online article on the impact of uprating on managed migration](#).

- [Move to the UK if you're coming from Ukraine - GOV.UK](#)

**Harry McElwee** | Partnership Advisor - East London District | Department for Work and Pensions | Work and Health Services Group | District Office | 271 Mare Street, London, E8 1EE | 07554224835 | [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) Please consider the environment before printing.

- **Early Warning System eBulletin – March 2025**

The Early Warning System collects case studies from welfare rights advisers. We use this evidence in CPAG's campaigning, policy and legal work.

So far this year, we've heard a lot about managed migration.

#### **In this edition**

Incorrect entitlement: superseding instead of revising

Erosion of the transitional element

Getting the DWP to fix it

What is CPAG doing? [Early Warning System eBulletin - March 2025](#)

- **Incorrect entitlement: superseding instead of revising**

Unfortunately, it is a known issue for the DWP to incorrectly supersede awards when they should be revised. This causes financial loss to claimants because their correct entitlement is only paid from a later date, and this is particularly bad for those with a transitional element.

#### **Supersession vs. revision**

In brief, a revision changes a benefit decision that was wrong at the time it was made, and this revised decision takes effect from the same date as the original decision. On the other hand, a supersession changes a decision that was correct at

the time but has subsequently become wrong (e.g. you have had a change of circumstances affecting your entitlement); a supersession takes effect from a later date than the original decision.

A decision can be revised on any grounds within 1 month (13 months extended time), or on certain grounds, such as official error, at any time. The rules surrounding revisions and supersessions are covered in more detail in [Chapter 56 of the CPAG handbook](#).

We continue to hear reports that after claimants migrate to UC, for one reason or another, their initial award of UC is incorrect. When claimants realise their entitlement is wrong and notify the DWP, their awards are being superseded from a later assessment period rather than their original award being revised.

As long as the revision request is made within the prescribed period, why the mistake occurred is not important. For a more detailed discussion on 'any grounds' revisions, see: [Welfare Rights | Not finding fault: any ground revisions](#).

- **Erosion of the transitional element**

When claimants who migrated to UC have transitional protection, this DWP error causes further loss of income by incorrectly eroding their transitional element.

[Regulation 55\(2\)\(b\) of the Universal Credit \(Transitional Provisions\) Regulations 2014](#)

states that the transitional element is to be reduced by any 'relevant increases' *from the second assessment period*.

Due to the DWP incorrectly changing awards from the second assessment period (or later), any increase in the claimant's entitlement is treated as a 'relevant increase' and erodes their transitional element. If the DWP had correctly revised the original award, there would be no 'relevant increase' to cause erosion.

**Getting the DWP to fix it**

Underpinning this issue is [regulation 32 of the UC etc \(DA\) Regs 2013](#) which states that a decision that can be revised cannot be superseded.

Claimants in this position could, within 13 months, request an 'any grounds' revision of the decision to supersede their award (the payment statement that first included the correct entitlement). If outside 13 months, the claimant could request a revision on the specific ground of official error, arguing the DWP unlawfully superseded an award when they could have revised it (as per regulation 32).

If the DWP refuses to change its decision, claimants are likely to have appeal rights.

This can apply even where the DWP has refused to consider the revision request, but in this situation the rules can be complicated. See: [Chapter 57 of the CPAG handbook](#).

- **Pension Credit Claims Surge**

Nearly fifty thousand extra pensioners receiving vital Pension Credit support following surge in claims processed • Record high number of Pension Credit applications with updated online claim form taking an average 16 minutes to complete • DWP processing record number of claims a week, bringing down outstanding applications and giving the poorest pensioners vital support • Support comes as the State Pension is set to rise by up to £1,900 for millions thanks to the government's commitment to the Triple Lock The department has now processed a record number of claims, reducing the number of applications yet to be cleared from its peak of 85,500 to just 33,700 by 23 February, which is in line with normal levels of Pension Credit claims waiting to be processed.

- **RIP Tax Credits**

Tax Credits (TC) end for everyone on 5 April 2025. Most claimants will have moved to Universal Credit (UC) via managed migration except a small number who are excluded. The DWP's Move to UC Helpline will exceptionally be open on Saturday 5 April for those requiring assistance with their UC migration. All TC helplines (including the intermediary helpline) will remain operational after 5 April, but all TC digital services will close. You can [find contact details for the Move to UC Helpline on GOV.UK](#).

- **Reminder - most benefits will be updated from next week**

This can have an impact on timing a claim for UC made under managed migration. For more information you can [read our Adviser Online article on managed migration and updating](#).

- **Changes to the Child Benefit (CB) intermediary process**

Currently, form TC689 is used to authorise advisers to discuss CB and TC with HMRC. However, for CB only, TC689 is being replaced by form CH105. TC689 remains the correct form for TC enquiries. You can [find the new form on GOV.UK from 7 April 2025](#).

- **Third-party deductions from UC**

See the [debt section](#) for an update on the priority order of deductions from UC

- **Deployment of 1,000 work coaches to tackle 'economic inactivity'**

1,000 work coaches are to be deployed to deliver 'intensive employment support' to approximately 65,000 sick and disabled people as part of the government's Plan for Change. A DWP press release states: 'The additional help will be delivered by reprioritising work coach time so they can focus on tackling economic inactivity in order to make the welfare system more sustainable. The 1,000 redeployed Work Coaches are a "downpayment" on wide-ranging plans to overhaul employment support, which are set to be unveiled in just a few weeks' time.' You can [read the DWP press release 6 March 2025 on GOV.UK](#).

- **Periodic reviews for Universal Credit claimants**

In response to a written question in the House of Commons, Stephen Timms (Minister of State for the Department for Work and Pensions) has confirmed that Universal Credit claimants will be subject to periodic claim reviews from April 2025. The minister stated: You can [read the UK parliament written questions, answers and statements - 6 March 2025 on the parliament website](#).

- **Successful initial claim rate drops for Personal Independence Payment**

In response to a written question, Stephen Timms has revealed statistics that show that the success of PIP claims has fallen from 70% in 2016 to 55% in 2024. These statistics relate to initial decisions made on new PIP claims. In contrast, [tribunal statistics](#) show that 7 in 10 PIP decisions are changed, in favour of the claimant, at the appeal stage. These statistics suggest that claimants should be advised to appeal negative decisions made on initial claims as there is a good chance that this decision will be overturned at tribunal.

You can [read the UK parliament written questions, answers and statements - 3 March 2025 on the parliament website.](#)

#### 4. [New Projects /services, information, and resources](#)

- **Launch of Turn2us Benefits Calculator for Advisers**

##### **What is the Turn2us Benefits Calculator?**

The Turn2us Benefits Calculator is a simple online tool that helps people learn how much money in benefits they are entitled to. The tool is 100% anonymous and independent of the DWP and is updated by Welfare Benefits experts.

Like all the Turn2us tools, there is an adviser version of the Turn2us Benefits Calculator, specially designed to make it easy for advisers to help their clients maximize their incomes. The adviser version offers additional features like saving calculations made for clients and enabling advisers to compare scenarios for their clients to find out which scenario gives them the most income.

[www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)

#### 5. [Vacancies](#)

The Law Centre is now advertising on our web site for a full time temporary six month contract for a new benefits caseworker (see attached). I wondered if there any volunteers at IAC who have some experience with benefits issues and would be interested in moving to paid work? We will also consider applicants who can only work part time as well. <https://thlc.co.uk/jobs-2>

#### 6. [Advice Services](#)

**Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre.** We provide free tailored legal advice to members of the community on a wide range of legal issues. As you are experts in one of the areas we work in, we are reaching out to ask for your support in reaching clients who may need our help. We currently have availability around the following areas of law: Social Welfare Benefits Form Filling (Assistance with applications and mandatory reconsideration for Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit) please fill in our quick contact form: [Queen Mary Legal Advice Centre](#)

#### **First Love Foundation currently have availability to take on new referrals!**

If you have any clients in need of support of benefits applications and forms, DHP, RSS and other grants and scheme applications , we are ready to assist. Please refer cases to us directly, and we will ensure they receive the necessary attention. For referrals or more information, please contact us at:

[advice@firstlovefoundation.org.uk](mailto:advice@firstlovefoundation.org.uk).

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

Specialist advice providers All the advice providers listed on [www.thcan.org.uk](http://www.thcan.org.uk) provide benefit advice and help with form filling.

**Legal Advice Centre** PIP appeals and Family Law matters. For PIP, please use the following email [Benefits@legaladvicecentre.London](mailto:Benefits@legaladvicecentre.London)  
For Family Law, please use the following email [Familylaw@legaladvicecentre.London](mailto:Familylaw@legaladvicecentre.London)

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

Organisation	E-mail	Tel Advice
Citizens Advice Bureau	<a href="mailto:advice@eastendcab.org.uk">advice@eastendcab.org.uk</a>	0203 855 4472
Island Advice Centre	<a href="mailto:admin@island-advice.org.uk">admin@island-advice.org.uk</a>	0207 987 9379 Tuesday 10am to 12
Legal Advice Centre	<a href="mailto:admin@legaladvicecentre.london">admin@legaladvicecentre.london</a>	0203 606 0372
Tower Hamlets Law Centre	<a href="mailto:info@thlc.co.uk">info@thlc.co.uk</a>	0207 538 4909 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri