

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 website has information on advice providers services, factsheets, Referrals portal Sarah Sauvat sarah.sauvat@island-advice.org.uk training bookings or want to share information for mailout contact jo.ellis@island-advice.org.uk

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 23rd April – Minutes will be available on THCAN website <https://thcan.org.uk/advice-agencies-information/> – Next meeting will be in July/August and we are going to try and see if someone from DWP can attend (Harry will come but no response from others, especially from housing) if you are not already on the invite list for these meetings and would like to attend, please email me

2. Free Training

- Please see attached for some additional DWP disability benefit sessions for June **Harry McElwee** | Partnership Advisor - East London District | Department for Work and Pensions
- **Delivering High Quality Domestic Energy Advice: (e-learning)**

To help advisers to provide energy related advice and guidance that is consistent and accurate and which aims to meet customer's needs. To demonstrate how joined-up advice services can deliver outcomes that solve problems in a more holistic way. Please contact tracy.norris@nea.org.uk for further details.

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

- **REMINDER GREEN PAPER BENEFIT CHANGES - WHAT YOU CAN DO**

Visit our What You Can Do page for more information about actions you can take today to campaign against the Green Paper proposals. [Read More and Comment](#)

- **Underpaid state pension**

Government figures estimate that there is £1.5 billion owed to claimants from underpaid state pensions. These underpayments mainly affect women who retired before 2016. Some claimants will receive automatic payouts, but in many cases it will be necessary to contact the Pensions Service directly to make a claim. Money Saving Expert has produced a guide with more information to help those who might be affected. Due to the complexity of this issue, advisers are unlikely to be able to work out whether an individual client has been underpaid. Clients who think they might have been underpaid should contact the Pension Service directly.

You [can see the government figures on state pension underpayments on GOV.UK](#). You can [read 'Are you one of 200,000+ missing out on £1,000s of State Pension' on the MoneySavingExpert website](#). You can [contact the Pension Service on GOV.UK](#).

- **'Unfulfilled' benefit entitlement statistics**

The DWP have produced some new statistics that estimate 'unfulfilled' benefit entitlement. This is the amount of benefit entitlement 'lost' to claimants who receive benefit awards but who are being underpaid due to a 'failure' to update the DWP about their circumstances.

You can [see the government statistics 'Unfulfilled eligibility in the benefit system: financial year 2024 to 2025 estimates' on GOV.UK](#).

You can [read 'Missing out 2024: £23 billion of support is unclaimed each year' on the Policy in Practice website](#).

- **Deductions from Universal Credit (UC)**

A reminder that for UC assessment periods that start on or after 30 April 2025, the DWP will now only take a maximum of 15% of the standard UC rate in respect of deductions. Also, deductions for child support payments move up the 'priority order'.

You can [see our previous update on 2 April for full details of the changes](#).

You can [read the DWP press release on the 'Fair Repayment rate' on GOV.UK](#).

- **Personal Independence Payment (PIP) statistics**

In response to a parliamentary question, the government has provided figures for how many people (in relation to various health conditions) do not score at least 4 points in one daily living activity of PIP. This is in response to the recent Green Paper proposal to limit eligibility for the daily living component of PIP to those who score at least 4 points in one activity area.

You can [read the figures on the parliament.uk website](#).

- **Housing Benefit (HB) guidance on neonatal care leave/pay**

Consequential benefit amendment regulations, effective from 6 April 2025, were issued following the introduction of neonatal care leave and pay under the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023. Guidance for HB decision-makers has now also been issued - it's expected that further guidance for other benefits will follow. You can [read about the Neonatal Care \(Leave and Pay\) Act 2023 in our update on 9 April](#). You can [read The Neonatal Care Leave and Pay \(Consequential Amendments to Subordinate Legislation\) Regulations 2025 on legislation.gov.uk](#). You can [read the HB guidance in HB Circular A6/2025 on GOV.UK](#).

- **Extend Child Benefit Payments**

If your client's child is 16 or over and staying in full-time education or approved training, they will need to tell HMRC by **31 August 2025** to continue getting Child Benefit payments. If they don't their Child Benefit will stop. They can extend their claim [online using the GOV.UK website](#), or on the [HMRC app](#).

- **Work and Pensions Committee calls for a pause to reforms of incapacity and disability benefits**

The chair of the committee has written to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions concerning some of the benefit reforms set out in the Pathways to Work Green Paper. [Read the 'Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper' on GOV.UK](#).

- **Targeted case reviews for UC have saved more than £1 billion**

The DWP has nearly doubled the number of people working in its UC Targeted Case Review team to nearly 6,000 since July 2024. This has helped to achieve savings due to identifying fraud and error of over £1 billion since 2022. The number of claim reviews will continue to 'ramp up' with projected savings of £13.6 billion by 2030. You can [read the DWP's press release on GOV.UK](#).

- **DWP pays £104 million in underpaid state pension due to historical failure to record home responsibilities protection (HRP)**

You can [read the report on GOV.UK](#).

- **Case Law update**

In *LB v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions* [2025] UKUT 132 (AAC) the First-tier Tribunal (FtT) dismissed the client's appeal against failing a work capability assessment for new style employment and support allowance (ESA) - [read the case on The National Archives website](#). The hearing was held by telephone. Having listened to an audio recording of the hearing, the upper tribunal decided that the appellant clearly had difficulty in hearing and understanding questions put to him, which was not dealt with by the FtT. This affected the fairness of the hearing, even though the appellant had a representative, and was an error of law. The FtT had also erred in law by failing to explain how it had applied the 'exceptional circumstances' test. Finally the judge comments on the FtT referencing the incorrect law, in this case the 2008 ESA regulations rather than the 2013 regulations. Although that did not amount to an error of law in this case, it may do so for others.

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

- **Ban the Bailiffs campaign**

New report, [Ban the Bailiffs](#), published today by Debt Justice. We're calling on the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to: **Ban the use of bailiffs** for council tax collection by revoking section 45 of the Council Tax Regulations 1992 Introduce a new **duty of care** that prioritises harm reduction in debt enforcement

Please sign the petition: calling for a ban on bailiffs: <https://tinyurl.com/y32javyz>

- **School Clothing Grants**

Your client might qualify for a £150 School Clothing Grant to help with the cost of school uniforms for children aged 11 who are starting secondary school. You need to apply by 30 September 2025: visit <https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/scg>

- **The Food Pantry**

supports older residents (65+ years or 50+ years with a disability) who live in E3 or E14 who are struggling with money/the cost of food. The pantry offers six months membership which includes access to low-cost food, support from one of our Social Welfare Advisors and wraparound support: <https://www.bbbc.org.uk/services/food-pantry/>

- **Might be useful for some clients**

[Childcare support available | Childcare Choices Homepage | Childcare Choices](#)

5. **Vacancies**

- **Energy Efficiency Adviser/Caseworker**

Contract: Part-Time (21 hours per week, 3 days), Fixed-Term until 31st October 2026 **Salary:** £19,530 per annum (including London Weighting)

Location: Limehouse Project, Unit 2, 789 Commercial Road, London E14, and outreach locations across the borough. **Interested applicants should send their CV and a personal statement to:** recruitment@limehouseproject.org.uk

Closing Date: Monday, 9th June 2025 at 9:00 am

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.

Legal Advice Centre PIP appeals and Family Law matters. 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 Tuesday 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