

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: 16th July
2. Training Information
3. Benefit Updates
4. New Projects, Services and Resources Information
5. Vacancies: Qualifying Work Experience (IAC Law Students volunteer project)
6. Advice Services Contacts (specialist advisors)

1. Welfare Rights Advisors Forum

Last meeting 16th July – minutes available on THCAN website

Representatives from DWP attended and answered a number of questions regarding benefit issues.

2. Free Training

- ✓ **Looking To Work In The Immigration Sector Or Support Clients As An Advisor? Study Online With E-Learning Modules**

Our training program is designed to assist you in getting ready for a profession in the Immigration Industry. It will also provide you with the necessary confidence to meet the IAA Level 1 prerequisites, ensuring you are fully prepared for your examination.

[View Course](#)

- ✓ **Supporting homeless migrants training package**

Funded training for frontline staff and volunteers Supporting Homeless Migrants is a new national training programme funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and free to eligible organisations. Developed in partnership with leading migrant support sector experts [Praxis](#), the training covers critical immigration, housing, welfare benefits and access to public service topics. The [Supporting Homeless Migrants](#) (SHM) programme will be delivered through a flexible range of digital tools, elearning courses, Q&A modules and live events. Look out for further emails regarding new SHM programme releases.

Please note: All elearning modules can be accessed freely, at your own pace, and in any order to suit your learning journey.

✓ **Housing Free training webinars: August - November 2025**

At Shelter, Our wide range of funded, 90-minute webinars can help you gain useful insights, find clear answers, and feel more confident in your work. Attendance is free for staff from [eligible organisations](#). How to book places - login to the [training portal](#), If you have not booked with us before you can find out how to set up a training portal account on the [how to book](#) page

- Barriers to homelessness advice and support
Eligibility for housing assistance (EEA Nationals)
- Understanding homelessness vulnerability
- Suspending a warrant
- Understanding suitability of accommodation
- Understanding tenancy deposits

✓ **Solidarity not Strangers email course**

For decades, the government has used migrants & refugees as scapegoats. Each time, reaching new lows of cruelty to keep up with the hysteria that they've created.

The result? **Today, misinformation about the reality of being a migrant in the UK is incredibly deep-rooted** and far-right views are becoming increasingly normalised. To fight back **we must act locally**. That's why we've create a **brand-new email course packed full of simple but powerful actions** for you to take in your community. [It's free and full of expert information. Sign up now, Jo >>](#)

[Sign up to free email course](#)

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

✓ **DWP confident that delays in paying the Limited Capability for Work Related Activity (LCWRA) element in UC have ended**

Citizens Advice and others highlighted a problem with claimants not receiving the LCWRA element by the end of their first assessment period. DWP has now acknowledged that this should not happen and taken remedial steps to ensure that payments will be made following the first assessment period. They've put additional resources in place, implemented checks earlier in the process and are working to increase the number of claimants who can have their identification verified by phone rather than at an in-person meeting.

DWP has said it is confident that the backlog of cases that contributed to the delay has been cleared, but encourages anyone still experiencing delays to bring them to their attention using the usual escalation routes.

✓ **Upper tribunal decides that tribunal erred by not considering whether earplugs could be an aid for Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**

In [KW v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions UA-2025-000283-PIP](#) the claimant had several conditions including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a personality disorder and hyperacusis, a condition where everyday sounds are perceived as uncomfortably loud

or painful. He claimed a need to wear earplugs so that he could cook and wash himself. The tribunal did not award points for needing to use an aid for daily living activities and awarded only 2 points for engaging with other people. The upper tribunal allowed the appeal and set aside the decision. The decision involved multiple errors of law, including about the appellant's use of earplugs. As he has to wear earplugs to carry out the activity of cooking and washing, it was unclear why no points were awarded for requiring an aid. The tribunal failed to address this in their reasons and did not make findings of fact about the level of pain that the appellant experienced while cooking and bathing as a result of noise. The Judge also found that it erred when deciding to award only 2 points under activity 9 - engaging with other people, because he did not have a diagnosed mental health condition

4. **New Projects /services, information, and resources**

✓ **Concerns about anti-migrant hostility: Support and resources - Google Docs**

✓ **LinkAge Plus (Members of the Referral site : Wellbeing Activities)**

Linkage Plus is an innovative project for people over 50 living in Tower Hamlets. Borough-wide, it is based out of five hubs – Age UK East London, Neighbours in Poplar, Peabody at Sundial, Sonali Gardens and Toynbee Hall. Linkage Plus works with older people to improve their wellbeing and increase their social networks and tackle isolation.

Our services include:

- **Fitness sessions** e.g. Yoga, Line Dancing, Seated Exercise, Tai Chi, English National Ballet
- **Social & learning activities** e.g. Bingo, Singing, Darts, Pool, Arts & Crafts
- **Healthy living workshops** on topics like diabetes, diet & nutrition, falls prevention
- **IT & Digital** support
- **Celebrations and events** throughout the year
- **One-to-one support**, in-person at one of our hubs or over the phone, to help access services in the borough and find the information you need on a range of issues (e.g. Blue Badge, Benefits)
- **Have your say** about local issues through the [Older People's Reference Group](#)

Address see leaflet for various locations: (leaflet attached)

Website: <https://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/linkage-plus/>

Please read before making a referral: <https://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/LinkAge-Plus-Information-Referral-Process-2025.pdf>

Please see updated details on LinkAge Plus – find out what we offer and how to make appropriate referrals for people aged 50+ living in Tower Hamlets:

<https://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/LinkAge-Plus-Information-Referral-Process-2025.pdf>

✓ **A Migrant's Guide**

Is now available to order in **English, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Spanish, Farsi and Pashto** - for just £3 per copy. Created by migrants, for migrants, this interactive guide connects people to essential services, offers practical advice, and helps them to take care of themselves before and after securing immigration status.

Already being used across the country - by homelessness teams in hospitals, City of Sanctuary groups, local councils, housing associations, churches, and grassroots organisations - A Migrant's Guide is making a real difference. Our goal? Get the Guide in every library, every community centre, every local council.

If your work or community would benefit from having copies of A Migrant's Guide, please do get in touch. For bulk orders use our form [here](#) or for **orders of less than 50 copies please migrantsguide@praxis.org.uk.**

Watch short video: [A Migrant's Guide - an interactive guide for migrants, by migrants.](#)

5. **Vacancies**

✓ **Law Students – Qualifying Work Experience Volunteer Project**

From September 2025, the Island Advice Centre in collaboration with University House will be offering a limited number of 6-month internships to law graduates.

These internships will accrue valuable Qualifying Work Experience (QWE) and will be signed off by one of the University House project solicitors.

Our partnership are not-for-profit legal advice providers. Internships will be offered in single subjects only, covering Welfare Benefits or housing.

You would have to commit for a minimum of 2 days per week as a volunteer, but the more hours you do the greater the QWE you will accrue.

As well as meeting QWE relevant to qualifying as a solicitor, our internships will also serve as an important introduction to the not-for-profit legal advice sector

Work will involve interviewing clients, assisting with welfare rights and housing enquiries, doing follow-up letters and casework.

Travel expense of £7 per day and lunch expense of £4 per day will be re-imbursed upon receipt

All the work is supervised and there are some training sessions available.

To qualify for one of these internships,

- Be a graduate in Law.
- You must be available for 2 full-day per week minimum for a minimum of 6 months .

To apply please complete the application form and return it to jo.ellis@island-advice.org.uk by 10th September 10am

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