

# BenefitsBulletin

Aberdeen City & Shire Advice Forum is a local network for people working in advice services to share information and experiences. The Forum meets quarterly throughout the year.



## Much faster new DWP system for direct Universal Credit payments to Landlords

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has now launched a new online system to allow rent payments, from tenants in receipt of Universal Credit, to be paid directly to Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlords.

The new system for arranging these [Alternative Payment Arrangements](#) replaces the two existing UC47 forms cutting the processing time down from in excess of three weeks to just two hours in some cases.

## Personal Independence Payment: Written question - 43839

**Q.** Asked by **Sir Greg Knight** (East Yorkshire) Asked on: 06 May 2020  
To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to ensure that personal independence payments made following a decision by an Appeals Tribunal are automatically extended in line with other personal independence payments that are currently being automatically extended in cases where the decision to make an award was made by her Department; and if she will make a statement.



**A.** Answered by: **Justin Tomlinson** Answered on: 14 May 2020

Since 24 March the Department has been extending awards of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) due to end from that date onwards, regardless of whether the final decision on the award was made by a Case Manager or a Tribunal.

## DWP ANNOUNCEMENT



People can now access for the most up-to-date benefits and support information via their smart phones, using WhatsApp.

The service, which can be accessed by sending 'Hi' in a WhatsApp message to **07860 064 422**, has been launched to help combat the spread of incorrect information and to make the correct information easily accessible.

DWP is one of the first government departments to provide information via the service which includes information on benefits support available, how to check if you are eligible and how to apply.

## Update to guidance for stakeholders and claimants

Universal credit claimants should now apply for new-style employment and support allowance (ESA) [online](#) or by phone **instead** of through their online account, according to updated DWP guidance.

In 'New Style' Employment and Support Allowance: detailed guide', the DWP confirms that -

You can apply for New Style ESA online. You'll need:

- ⇒ your National Insurance number
- ⇒ your bank or building society account number and sort code (you can use a friend or family member's account if you do not have one)
- ⇒ your doctor's name, address and telephone number
- ⇒ details of your income if you're working
- ⇒ the date your Statutory Sick Pay ends if you're claiming it

You must apply by phone if you're an appointee applying on behalf of someone else.

For more information, see '[New Style' Employment and Support Allowance: detailed](#) guide from gov.uk.



## Households worse off on Universal Credit win Court of Appeal Test Case

Application of universal credit transitional provisions breached claimants' human rights

Two disabled households who were left worse off after they were forced to move to universal credit (UC) because their existing benefits were wrongly stopped by the DWP today won a breakthrough case in the Court of Appeal.

The result means that depending on what remedy the DWP chooses, the two households – and potentially thousands like them subject to wrongful decisions by the DWP – will be able to return to their previous benefits or have their UC awards topped up to the level of their previous benefits.

Today's judgment is [here](#)



## Summary of a few key changes to PIP that have been made as a result of the crisis

- ⇒ New claims continue to be processed.
- ⇒ We have extended the deadline to return the PIP2 to three months.
- ⇒ Change of circumstances continue to be processed. If someone has a change in their needs, they should notify us immediately so that we can ensure that they have the correct level of award.
- ⇒ All face-to-face assessments have been suspended. Where possible and in line with usual processes, a paper-based assessment will be undertaken. If needed, a telephone-based assessment will be conducted. Both providers have been conducting telephone assessments for the last few weeks.
- ⇒ It is now possible for individuals to receive and return the PIP2 form electronically after the initial call to the Department. Supporting evidence can also be submitted electronically, at the same time as the PIP2.
- ⇒ All awards that are coming up for a review soon will be automatically extended. Payments will continue and we will be in touch about a review in due course.
- ⇒ For anyone who is currently claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and who has been invited to claim PIP, no action is needed now. DLA payments will continue and we will be in touch in the future to discuss the claim to PIP.
- ⇒ Finally, we are particularly keen to gather any feedback on the telephone-based assessments to understand how it is working in practice. Next week we plan to send out a short, informal survey asking for views. It would be immensely helpful if you're able to share any insight with us please.



DWP | PIP Stakeholders | <http://www.gov.uk/dwp>

### Entitledto

We help people in financial need by providing clear entitlement information from our [calculators](#) & online resources.

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[Some tips for Universal Credit claimants entitled to the self-employment income support scheme](#)

The government's surprise announcement that payments from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will be made early is welcome but it also has important implications for some Universal Credit (UC) claimants.

### Second Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill

Emergency measures to protect people facing financial hardship and allow public services to operate effectively are among the provisions in the second Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill, now introduced to Holyrood. The bill proposes an additional £19.2m investment in carer's allowance supplement, the introduction of notice to leave periods to allow students to end a tenancy of purpose-built student accommodation and halls of residence, and additional protections for those facing bankruptcy.



It would raise from £3,000 to £10,000 the minimum debt level that an individual must owe before a creditor can make them bankrupt, and raise the upper threshold for the availability of the minimal asset process (MAP) from £17,000 to £25,000, enabling more people to avoid a costly and lengthy bankruptcy process. The first [Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act](#) made provision for a six-month [moratorium](#) against certain debt enforcement measures to allow people time to think through their options.

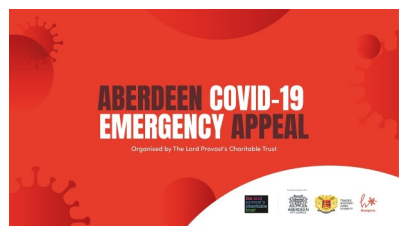
Householders who bought a property between 24 September 2018 and 24 March 2020 and have had to pay the additional land and buildings transaction tax as second home owners, will have an additional nine months to sell their previous property and reclaim the additional amount.

Electronic signatures will be permitted for documents requiring to be registered or recorded in the Register of Inhibitions. Electronic service will be permitted of documents under the [Bankruptcy \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#).

[Click here to access the bill and related papers.](#)

### Aberdeen Covid-19 appeal to give thousands of pounds to local charities

Within 2 weeks of being created, the Lord Provost's Charitable Trust Hardship Fund is set to disburse £161,596 to help citizens experiencing severe financial hardship. View [here](#)



### CPAG Early Warning System

We're closely tracking social security issues emerging during Covid19. This weeks Early Warning System summary highlights some PIP awards stopping due to assessment delays, as well as real issues for carers of people who are shielding.

Read it [here](#).

[The Third Sector Resilience Fund](#) (TSRF) is a £20m emergency fund for charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations working in Scotland. The fund supports organisations that already deliver services and products but find themselves in financial difficulties directly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.



The primary intention of the fund is to help third sector organisations to stabilise and manage cash flows over this difficult period.