

# 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.




Next Advice Forum meeting - Wed 21st October 2020. 10:00-12:00 via Microsoft Teams

## Social Security Scotland

want to make sure that the people who are entitled to receive our benefits are aware of what help there is and how to apply.





We have resources in a range of languages and formats, including [BSL](#), which can be found [HERE](#)


**Mental Health & Debt**  
[Free PDF booklet to download](#)  
 No debt problems are unsolvable. It might not be easy or quick, but there's always a route. When mental health problems are involved, some special solutions apply.

**Social Renewal Advisory Board**  
 In Local Authorities all across Scotland, Community Listening Events are taking place to learn directly from those in our communities about what matters to them. Findings will help inform the work of the Social Renewal Advisory Board.  
[Social Renewal Advisory Board meeting: 5 August 2020](#)


**The Social Renewal Advisory Board**  
 is focussing on delivering equality and social justice to create a fairer Scotland

EU nationals in UK already facing difficulty with digital-only status amid warnings of 'crisis' ahead  
 The government's decision not to provide physical proof of settled status has already left EU citizens in the UK facing difficulties proving their post-Brexit immigration status, as campaigners warn this is only the "tip of the iceberg".  
 Read the Independent article [HERE](#)

In the second in our series of short videos to help Scottish consumers recognise and avoid energy scams, [@HomeEnergyScot](#) explain how you can find funding to help cover the cost of making energy up-grades to your home  
 Play here.... 

An exciting opportunity has arisen to join Aberdeen's Third Sector Interface (TSI), ACVO as Communications Officer.  
 See here for the [job description](#) and [application form](#).  
 If you have any questions please get in touch with Claire Spence, Support Services Coordinator, at [claire.spence@acvo.org.uk](mailto:claire.spence@acvo.org.uk)



**Are you a young carer in need of a break?**  
 Get in touch with us today to find out how a **Time to Live** grant could help you get some time for yourself.  
 Find out more <https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/shortbreaksfund/timetolive/>

**SHARED CARE scotland**  
 Young Carers can apply for a small 'Time to Live' grant to help them get the break they need?  
 It doesn't have to be a break away: grants can be used for a break at home like buying art equipment, music lessons or even subscriptions. More [HERE](#)





Rightsnet have now published more than 500 'open access' social welfare law updates over the period of the COVID-19 lockdown.  
 Spread the word [rightsnet.org.uk/news-and-caselaw](https://rightsnet.org.uk/news-and-caselaw)



## POVERTY IN THE PANDEMIC: THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Based on an online survey of 285 low-income families and in-depth interviews with 21 of these families between May and August 2020, this report offers an important insight into the day-to-day struggles that families have been dealing with, as well as their strength and resilience in managing such an array of challenges on a limited income.

It looks at the financial and non-financial impacts as well as the sources of support families had, and makes the following recommendations:

- Child benefit should be increased by at least £10 a week and an extra £10 a week should be added to the child element within universal credit and child tax credits.
- Free school meals should be extended to all families who are in receipt of universal credit or tax credits, with a view to introducing universal FSM for all children in the longer term.
- The benefit cap should be abolished, or at least suspended for the duration of the pandemic.

[Read the report](#)

[cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/Poverty-in-the-pandemic.pdf](http://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/Poverty-in-the-pandemic.pdf)

## Pension Credit – current issues

Looks at some of the issues currently raised in connection with Pension Credit



Read - [Pension Credit - current issues](#)

[Pension Credit](#) is the main means-tested benefit for pensioners.

For people reaching State Pension age before April 2016, it has two parts:

- ◆ Guarantee Credit, which provides financial help for people aged over the “qualifying age” for Pension Credit (linked to the State Pension age) whose income is below a set amount; and
- ◆ Savings Credit is an extra amount for people aged 65 or over, who have made some provision for their retirement (such as savings, or a second pension) ([State Pension Credit Act 2002](#), s 2-3).

Savings Credit was removed for people reaching State Pension age from 6 April 2016, as part of the Coalition Government’s State Pension reforms. The rationale was that, because the new State Pension would be set above the basic level of means-tested support, there would “no longer be a need for a complex savings reward under single tier.” ([Cm 8528](#), Jan 2018, ch 2).

The qualifying age for Pension Credit is the State Pension age ([State Pension Credit Act 2002](#), s 1; [Pensions Act 1995](#), Sch 4). Whereas in the past, ‘mixed age couples’ (with one above and one below qualifying age) could opt to claim Pension Credit (rather than a working age benefit), from 15 May 2019, both need to have done so. There is transitional protection for mixed age couples entitled to Pension Credit or Housing Benefit for People over Pension Credit qualifying age at the date of change, while they continue to be entitled to either benefit ([SI 2019/37](#); [Gov.UK -Pension Credit/eligibility](#)).

In February 2020, there were 1,532,500 claimants of Pension Credit in Great Britain and 1,797,000 beneficiaries (i.e. including partners) (DWP, stat-explre). In 2017/18, some 6 out of 10 of those entitled to Pension Credit, claimed it. Up to £2.5 billion of available Pension Credit went unclaimed. On average, this amounted to around £2,000 per year for each family entitled to receive Pension Credit but not claiming (DWP, [Income-Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up](#), Feb 2020).

This note aims to give an overview of the main issues currently raised in connection with Pension Credit. For more on the background, see Library Briefing Paper CBP-01439 [Pension Credit – background](#) (2011) and 02/19 [The State Pension Credit Bill \[HL\]](#) (March 2002).

## Fraser of Allander Institute

Are we making progress on child poverty? Published August 25, 2020

Last week the delayed second year child poverty progress report, due under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 was published. This statutory report has two required elements: firstly, to assess progress towards meeting the child poverty targets (aka never seen before reductions in child poverty to all but eradicate it) and secondly to report on progress made in implementing policies set out in the ‘relevant’ delivery plan – in this case this refers to the 2018 ‘Every Child Every Chance Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018 – 2022’.

Read article [HERE](#)

## ESA case law relating to requirement for DWP to provide tribunals with evidence of work-related activity available in area where claimant lives applies equally to universal credit

[2020] UKUT 215 (AAC)

### Background

The Secretary of State supported the claimant's appeal to the Upper Tribunal on the basis that the tribunal hearing his universal credit appeal had failed to adequately consider whether schedule 9(4) to the *Universal Credit Regulations 2013* applied.

NB - under schedule 9(4) a claimant is treated as having limited capability for work and work-related activity (LCWRA) if, due to a specific disease or bodily or mental disablement, there would be a substantial risk to the health of any person if the claimant were found not to have LCWRA.

Decision in full [CUC/2777/2019](#)

### Homelessness statistics

The annual update on homelessness statistics covering 2019-20 has been released by Scotland's Chief Statistician. Findings for that period show:

- There were 36,855 applications for homelessness assistance. This was an increase of 84 (0%) compared with the 36,771 applications made in 2018/19.
- There were 31,333 households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. This is an increase of 1,097 (4%) compared to 30,236 in 2018/19.
- These households contained 51,365 people, including 35,654 adults and 15,711 children.
- There were 11,665 households in temporary accommodation at 31st March 2020, an increase of 676 (6%) compared to 10,989 at 31st March 2019.
- There were 7,280 children in temporary accommodation at 31st March 2020, an increase of 485 (7%) compared to 6,795 at 31st March 2019.
- Homelessness applications that closed in 2019/20 that used temporary accommodation spent 184 days in temporary accommodation on average.
- There were 4,595 cases of homeless households not being offered temporary accommodation in 2019/20. 3,835 of these were in Glasgow.
- There were 500 breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order in 2019/20, compared to 645 in 2018/19. 375 of these were in Edinburgh.
- Of homelessness cases that closed in 2019/20, 82% (20,806 out of 27,002) of homeless households secured settled accommodation in 2019/20, increasing from 63% in 2002/03. Other outcomes included 'Other' (8%), 'Returned to previous/present accommodation' (5%), 'Moved in with friends/relatives' (5%) and 'Hostel' (1%).



The full statistical publication is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

In new guidance for local authorities, the DWP has highlighted that it is still experiencing problems in dealing with claims for legacy benefits from claimants in receipt of a severe disability premium (SDP) as part of a housing benefit claim.

As a result of the ongoing problems - and while it says that it 'fully appreciates' that local authorities have limited resources available and some existing communication methods are currently unavailable - the DWP advises that a new process is to be put in place -

'As from 31 August 2020, a new SDP confirmation template (SDP confirmation of payment in HB template attached as a separate Appendix) is being introduced. It will be sent to local authorities from the ESA team to the same email address which DWP use for SDP reinstatement templates.

This should remove the need for phone calls to local authorities from the DWP legacy team and requests made to the claimant to provide this information direct.'

[LA Welfare Direct lite 8/20](#) is available from gov.uk

### Councils failing to allocate welfare fund cash

Scotland's local authorities are not making full use of Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) money provided by the Scottish Government to alleviate extreme financial hardship, according to a new analysis published today (Monday) by the Poverty and Inequality Commission.

The Commission, an independent body charged with scrutinising Scotland's progress towards tackling poverty and inequality, found that there had been a total of £8.6 million of SWF spend in April, May and June this year, when hardship during lockdown would have been at its height. This represented 15% of this year's SWF budget of £57.6 million.

Read report [HERE](#)

### Virgin Media has announced a new broadband service targeted specifically at customers facing financial difficulty and uncertainty in these challenging times.



The broadband-only plan, called "Virgin Media Essential Broadband", will be available to those receiving Universal Credit and will come with a speed of 15 Mbps and a fixed price of £15 per month, with no fixed-term contract length and no price changes while benefit payments are being received. The service will launch in the Autumn.

Available initially for existing Virgin Media customers, they will be able to take the new service by simply filling out an online form and providing proof of their Universal Credit status.

Details [HERE](#)



Please SHARE!

To sign up to our Naloxone Training, email [in-fo@alcoholanddrugsaction.org.uk](mailto:info@alcoholanddrugsaction.org.uk), stating which session you'd like to attend.

You will receive the Zoom ID as confirmation of your attendance



## Naloxone Training

Monday 31st August 09.00-10.00  
Monday 31st August 10.30-11.30  
Thursday 3rd Sept 09.00-10.00  
Thursday 3rd Sept 10.30-11.30



Naloxone is a medicine that can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose until further emergency help arrives. These sessions are for:-

- Professionals and volunteers
- Individuals using opiates
- Family members or anyone that may witness an opiate overdose

The sessions will give you further information on Naloxone, how and when to use it. You'll be able to recognise the signs and symptoms of an opiate overdose. You will receive a Naloxone kit delivered straight to your door by our Sharp response service if you live in Aberdeen or by post to anyone out with the city.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE UPDATE:

Central Library and Tillydrone Library will open for limited browsing and computer access on Monday 31 August.

Opening hours 10am - 1pm (Mon-Sat) & 2pm - 5pm (Mon-Fri) with the exception of the Media Centre, open 10am-5pm (Mon-Fri) & 10am-1pm (Sat only).

News article [HERE](#)



### EU Settlement Scheme rejects majority of Zambrano carers

Article dated 27th Aug 2020

The Home Office has so far rejected the majority of EU Settlement Scheme applications that rely on Zambrano rights. New figures show that 770 of the 1,260 Zambrano carers applying for leave to remain under the scheme have been rejected (61%).

A non-EU citizen who is the primary carer of a British citizen may have a right to reside in the UK under EU law, relying on the judgment in case C-34/09 *Zambrano*. As Luke Piper of campaign group the3million puts it, Zambrano carers are "usually single mothers with small British children fleeing domestic violence", often poor and vulnerable.

Read [Freemovement's](#) article [HERE](#)

**A 'Zambrano' carer is a person from a non-EEA state whose residence is required in order to enable a child or dependant adult who is British to live in the UK (or the rest of the EEA).**

If the child/dependant is a UK citizen, a parent/carer or parents/carers with sole care of the child/dependant also have a right to reside and work in the UK. This is known as a Zambrano right after the case that established it and it is now included in the EEA regulations (Regulation 16(5)): see the [Home Office guidance](#) on how these are applied.

A Zambrano right is granted to a non-EEA parent/carer of a child/dependant who is a British citizen if it is the only way to guarantee the right of the child/dependant to live in the UK (or the rest of the EEA). But it is not issued where another carer may be available for the child/dependant (e.g. the other parent). Domestic violence may, of course, affect the likelihood of this, and parents in this situation should get expert legal advice. Although a Zambrano carer has the right to live and work in the UK they are not entitled to means-tested benefits. In some cases it may be possible to apply for leave to remain on the basis of family or private life, and also to ask for such leave to allow recourse to public funds. It is important to get expert legal advice about which of these options is suitable for each case as this is a developing area of law.

Although a Zambrano carer is not entitled to benefits in Scotland they are able to apply as homeless and for a housing allocation. If they need help with daily living expenses or to pay rent they can apply to [social work](#) if they cannot accommodate or support themselves. Applicants in this situation are often asked to prove that they are destitute: in fact, since they have a right to reside, the law does not require this and they need only ask for help, under the Children (Scotland) Act or the Social Work (Scotland) Act if caring for a vulnerable adult. It is helpful, when approaching social work, to have good quality proof of the fact that no-one else is available to care for the British citizen child or dependant adult, since that is the essential condition for this right to reside.

[EU Settlement Scheme: person with a Zambrano right to reside](#)

Today we are publishing the [second version of our Finding Furniture Guide](#) – this one is aimed at people looking for furniture for themselves.

As with our first guide for support workers, we hope people find this guide useful and we welcome any feedback or corrections, or details on any new funds or sources of support that we can include which may be able to help people in Furniture Poverty.

## END FURNITURE POVERTY