

## Stay Local - stay safe

With Spring in the air and the imminent relaxation of some Covid 19 related travel restrictions, North east residents are being urged to use the roads safely when they return to making longer journeys.

As of this Friday (**April 2**), the 'Stay at Home' regulations will be lifted and replaced with guidance to 'Stay Local' which will enable residents to leave their homes, however they will be asked not to travel beyond their own local authority boundary for non-essential reasons.

This change will remain in place for three weeks and on Monday, **April 26** wider travel across Scotland will then be permitted.

<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/apps/news/>



Mon 05th April 2021 - Issue.39 (Fortnightly)



### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **17th May @ 10am - What Went Wrong? COVID-19, Accountability and Building Back Better.**

## 'THESE HOMES' – Live from March 22nd

Castlehill is excited to announce that we are working in partnership with another six landlords from around Scotland to deliver a new online Digital Lettings Service - **These Homes**.



This service will replace the Homehunt system we currently use to allocate and relet our properties. In the North East **These Homes** will be operated jointly by Castlehill, Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association and Hillcrest Homes. These landlords will advertise all available properties on the **These Homes** website every two weeks.

### New changes include:

- Priority Passes are now included during the registration process to ensure we capture all of your needs
- Customised searches – available properties can now be filtered to display your preferred property type and location automatically
- Text alerts – you can set up your account to send you text alerts if a property that matches your preferences is listed

Castlehill will switch over to These Homes on March 22nd 2021. Those currently registered have been sent a letter at the start of March to explain more and about what they need to do to ensure their application remains live with us.

### If you are assisting applicants....

They will need to register with These Homes by going to [thesehomes.com](https://thesehomes.com) and completing an online application. If they are already registered with Homehunt they will need their Homehunt registration number to complete their registration. This is so they can keep their original registration date and means that we can transfer any priority from the Homehunt account to the new These Homes account.

**Registration must be completed by 16 April 2021 to avoid losing original registration dates and Priority Pass award dates.**

Castlehill will stop advertising homes on Homehunt on 15 March 2021 and will resume advertising on These Homes from 20 April 2021. If the registration process is not completed by 16 April 2021 you will lose your original registration date. This could affect when you may be offered a property with us.

If you have any queries or need support to complete the registration process you can contact us on 01224 628119 or [TheseHomesNES@castlehillha.co.uk](mailto:TheseHomesNES@castlehillha.co.uk)

Don't worry if you're also registered with other landlords who still use Homehunt – your registration with them will not be affected.



### Linking Scottish Child Payment applicants with other eligible benefits

Consultation with more than 300 parents, charity workers, support workers and welfare officers led to the application process for Scottish Child Payment providing the option of linking into one form that can include Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods.

Feedback highlighted that people wanted more help in being told what additional support was available to them. This change was introduced after concerns were raised that people could potentially miss out on benefits they were entitled to.

By combining the applications, what was available was clear from the start and people did not have to spend time researching everything that is available to them. One research participant said of the process: "I like this. It's so you don't miss out."

### Enhanced local delivery system

An enhanced local delivery system will be trialled as part of the Child Disability Payment pilot when it opens for applications in the summer.

User research, with clients who currently receive Disability Living Allowance for Children, and client support advisors, has highlighted the importance of flexibility in the completion of the application form.

Parents and carers feedback raised awareness of the advantage in returning to questions at a later point, as opposed to following a fixed order of completion. Client support advisors also saw the application process as a non-linear conversation, as people may not necessarily recall important information in the order suggested by the form.

These findings led to the implementation of an 'application hub' to allow easy navigation between sections. They have also informed completion state labels, such as 'not started', 'not complete', 'complete', to provide an effective overview of outstanding sections of the form.

### Designing Adult Disability Payment application forms

User research has shown that adults applying for disability payments do not always inform Social Security Scotland of aspects of their lives that they have come to normalise. This is important to enable the best and most informed decisions in relation to their application.

To address this, prompts are being tested that help to gain fuller answers and establish a more complete picture from an early stage.

This includes the use of images to introduce each of the functional questions and to help people prepare for what will be asked as part of the application for Adult Disability Payment.

It is hoped this will be of particular benefit in establishing equipment, aids and additional resources a person uses. People can forget to include things like a chair in the kitchen, a grab rail, or someone who assists them. Images are also being tested that illustrate the differences between some descriptors, for example the distance a person is comfortable walking. Images such as buses, football pitches and other of widely recognised distances are currently being worked on.

This is a work in progress and the user research being undertaken will help test concepts before anything makes its way into the final design.

### Experience Panel Publications

Reports have recently been published covering areas such as:

- Experiences of ethnic minorities in accessing support
- Experience Panel demographic information
- Ways Social Security Scotland can support clients' accessibility, disability and other needs
- Panel members' experiences of accessing the benefit system
- The appointees process and ways Social Security Scotland checks whether someone is an appropriate person

Copies of the research can be obtained at the [gov.scot](https://gov.scot) website

### Redeterminations and Appeals Form improvements

User research has been an important tool in refining the Redeterminations and Appeals Form for Personal Independence Payment.

The work set out to ensure applicants or their appointees can understand how to request any redetermination or appeal.

Experience Panel members were able to help with issues including:

- Improving the clarity of labels on the index page
- Refining structure and content in relation to Short Term Assistance, a service available whilst re-determination and appeals processes are ongoing

Information around supporting information and timeframes for submitting a request following a decision

## Medical Examinations in UC and ESA and Consultations in PIP



### New DWP Guidance

#### ADM Memo 4/21

From 25 March 2021, the new regulations enable medical examinations and consultations to be conducted between a claimant and an assessor approved by the Secretary of State either in person, by telephone or by video as part of the process for determining entitlement to employment and support allowance (ESA), universal credit, personal independence payment (PIP) and industrial injuries disablement benefit.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic claimants with health conditions and/or disabilities applying for UC, PIP and ESA were required, in most circumstances, to attend a face-to-face medical examination (UC/ESA) or consultation (PIP). The regulations confirm that medical examinations and consultations can be undertaken through a number of channels.

- **For UC**, the amendments coming into force on 25.3.21 confirm that medical examinations conducted by a HCP approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of determining whether the claimant has LCW or LCWRA, may be conducted in person, by telephone or by video
- **For PIP**, the amendments coming into force on 25.3.21 confirm that consultations conducted by a person approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of determining whether the claimant has limited or severely limited ability to carry out daily living or mobility activities, may be conducted in person, by telephone or by video
- **For ESA**, the amendments coming into force on 25.3.21 confirm that medical examinations conducted by a HCP approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of determining whether the claimant has LCWP 1P or LCWRAP 2P, may be conducted in person, by telephone or by video

## Decision makers' guide: Vol 1: Decision making and appeals: staff guide

Guidance for DWP decision makers on decision making and appeals.

Last updated: 25 March 2021

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/  
decision-makers-guide-vol-1-decision-making-  
and-appeals-staff-guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/decision-makers-guide-vol-1-decision-making-and-appeals-staff-guide)

## New Plan for Immigration

The New Plan for Immigration policy paper was published on 24 March. The paper sets out the Government's intention to build a fair but firm asylum and illegal migration system and includes a consultation which runs until 6 May 2021.

Please consider highlighting this consultation through your networks.

For more information see [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

## How the deductions from benefit scheme works: guidance for creditors or suppliers

Last updated: 26 March 2021

Guidance for current creditors or suppliers, for example, utility suppliers and landlords, on how the deductions from benefit scheme works.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/  
how-the-deductions-from-benefit-scheme-  
works-a-handbook-for-creditors](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-the-deductions-from-benefit-scheme-works-a-handbook-for-creditors)

Guidance

## Carrying out a face-to-face health assessment during COVID-19: guidance for assessment providers

Published: 29 March 2021

Guidance on carrying out a face-to-face health assessment for a Work Capability Assessment, Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit and Personal Independence Payment.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/  
carrying-out-a-face-to-face-health-  
assessment-during-covid-19-guidance-for-  
assessment-providers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/carrying-out-a-face-to-face-health-assessment-during-covid-19-guidance-for-assessment-providers)

## Hundreds of free qualifications on offer to boost skills and jobs

Launch of free qualifications marks a major milestone in government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee. An estimated 11 million adults now have the opportunity to gain a new qualification for free, designed to help them to gain in-demand skills and secure great jobs.

Almost **400 qualifications** are available to take from today (1 April) - backed by £95 million in government funding in 2021/22 - as part of the government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

The qualifications on offer range from engineering to social care to conservation and are available to any adult who has not already achieved a qualification at Level 3 (equivalent to A-levels).

[www.gov.uk/government/news/hundreds-of-free-qualifications-on-offer-to-boost-skills-and-jobs](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hundreds-of-free-qualifications-on-offer-to-boost-skills-and-jobs)

## Policy paper Benefit and pension rates 2021 to 2022

A list of the benefit rates and pension rates for 2021 to 2022.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-and-pension-rates-2021-to-2022](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-and-pension-rates-2021-to-2022)

Guidance

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[www.gov.uk/government/publications/attending-a-face-to-face-health-assessment-during-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/attending-a-face-to-face-health-assessment-during-covid-19)

## What to do after a death in Scotland - practical advice for times of bereavement

General information on what to do after someone dies in Scotland and about succession and inheritance law. See <https://www.mygov.scot/bereavement-benefits/> for the latest information about benefits.

[www.gov.scot/publications/death-scotland-practical-advice-times-bereavement-revised-11th-edition-2016-9781786522726/](https://www.gov.scot/publications/death-scotland-practical-advice-times-bereavement-revised-11th-edition-2016-9781786522726/)

## Touchbase reader survey – final call



We are currently re-viewing the way we communicate with our partners and stakeholders about our policies and services.

If you have not done so already, we would be grateful if you could complete this short survey to help us measure and continue to improve the way we communicate with you. As a valued subscriber your views are important to us.

The survey should take no longer than a few minutes to complete. Thank you.

### Complete the survey now

The survey will close on **Wednesday 7 April 2021**

## Landlord video

A new [video for Private Rented Sector Landlords](#) has been developed with Private Landlord Representatives and published on the Understanding Universal Credit website.

## Private Rented Sector landlord and claimant journey

A new pictorial communication has been developed for Private Rented Sector Landlords to help them understand the landlord and claimant journey. This can also be found on the [Understanding Universal Credit website](#).





<http://citizensrightsproject.org>



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Company limited by guarantee in Scotland, company number SC561815  
Regulated by the OISC Ref No. N201900077  
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## UK Regional Immigration Advice Survey



Please help us to map the availability of free immigration legal advice across the UK, we're trying to understand demand for and supply of advice region by region, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We're keen to hear from as many organisations as possible from across the country, from OISC level 1-3 advisers as well as legal aid contract holders, about the number and type of cases they do (or don't do) and the number of people who are turned away, for whatever reason. We also want to understand the referral routes, practice networks and triggers for people seeking advice. We're also interested in the views of community groups which try to help people access free advice, but don't give immigration advice themselves.

The **survey** is set up so that you don't have to answer every question, so please feel free to scroll through and skip some if you haven't got time for all of them. Any data or information you can give us is useful. If you prefer talking to a human instead of filling in a survey, there's an option to just put in contact details and we can set up an interview.

The research will inform Refugee Action's strategy for **supporting the sector**; we will also publish a report and aim to create a software tool that enables this research to be regularly updated and made available to organisations, stakeholders and funders.

[Take survey now](#)

## There are only 100 days left to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme!

As the deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme approaches fast, it is even more important that those who are eligible to apply do so as soon as possible.

Therefore, we are calling everyone to join our effort in informing everyone that might have not yet applied, to do it as soon as possible. There is a way to go around the lack of ID documents or proof of residence. Any missing documentation can be added once the application is submitted. However, not applying before 30 June 2021 will mean that those people will fail to secure their right to live in the UK.

If you need help with raising awareness in your local area or organisation, please **contact us** and we will be more than happy to organise an information session, answer queries or help with any other kind of activities. Alternatively, click the button below to check our resources to raise awareness about the scheme (all free to download!).

[Access Resources](#)

## We won't stop supporting vulnerable EU citizens!

We are pleased to inform that the Scottish Government has extended our funding to provide information, advice and support to vulnerable EU/EEA/Swiss citizens and their family members until the end of September 2021.

Like many organisations working to assist EU/EEA/Swiss citizens, we are increasingly concerned at the numbers of vulnerable citizens who have not yet obtained settled or pre-settled status. There are many people whose vulnerability can affect their ability to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. Some examples which we have come across are homeless people, victims of domestic violence, people with mental health problems, children in care, prisoners and ex-prisoners. Of course, there are many other cases and vulnerabilities.

Thanks to this new grant, we will be able to support those in need in these crucial incoming months. We provide FREE multilingual online and face-to-face support and collaborate with organisations that can provide support with more complex cases. Please, spread the word about our services.

[Contact us](#)



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## New strategy to support Migrants facing destitution

The Scottish Government and COSLA are today (Wednesday 24 March) publishing a new strategy to support people living in Scotland who are at risk of homelessness and destitution due to their immigration status under UK legislation.

**Ending Destitution Together** is the first strategy of its kind and will set out ambitious work over the next three years to assist people with No Recourse to Public Funds, who can't access most mainstream benefits, local authority housing or homelessness services due to stringent UK Government immigration rules.

Working together, the Scottish Government and local authorities have agreed to take action that will strengthen protection for families with children and vulnerable adults who can be at risk of extreme poverty, exploitation and abuse because of the NRPF policy.

Work will also be undertaken with charities and community groups to provide services for people in crisis. There will be a focus on ensuring people have safe accommodation, dignified access to food and other daily essentials as well as specialist legal and welfare advice to resolve their situation.

The strategy has been informed by the testimony of people who have experienced destitution because of their immigration status, as well as the knowledge of local authorities and third sector organisations providing frontline support.

**[www.cosla.gov.uk/news/2021/new-strategy-to-support-migrants-facing-destitution](http://www.cosla.gov.uk/news/2021/new-strategy-to-support-migrants-facing-destitution)**



**MIGRATION  
SCOTLAND**

## Social workers can get settled status for EU kids in care without parental consent



Here on Free Movement we have been repeating until we are blue in the face that the deadline for EU Settlement Scheme applications is 30 June 2021. Regular readers may by now feel rather bludgeoned over the head with this fact, but it remains a vitally important message given that even a tiny rate of non-applications amounts to many thousands of people becoming unlawfully resident overnight.

Among the groups of people radically unlikely to have picked up on the official messaging about immigration status deadlines is EU citizen children in care. The Home Office has already **published guidance** on the responsibilities of social workers in getting applications lodged on behalf of such children, but a **survey** in late 2020 found that only around half the 3,300 eligible kids in care had applied so far. And so the Family Division of the High Court has now weighed in on the issue, in an important judgment issued yesterday: *W and Re Z (EU Settled Status for Looked After Children)* [2021] EWHC 783 (Fam).

Read full article on FreeMovement's website **[HERE](#)**



<http://citizensrightsproject.org>



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## What Went Wrong? COVID-19, Accountability and Building Back Better, 17th May @10am

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a crisis, not only of public health, but also of human rights.

You are invited to this interactive event, organised by Amnesty International in Scotland and the Human Rights Consortium Scotland, to reflect on the experience of human rights during the pandemic in Scotland. It will also address the future – what should COVID recovery look like if human rights protection is central to this? What about human rights accountability?

This event will include the launch of a new report titled 'A survey of public authorities, human rights and COVID-19'.

Speakers include experts from across the UK and Scotland, including civil society experts 'on the ground', including:

- Adam Wagner, the founder and Chair of EachOther, barrister specialising in human rights law and well-known for his expertise around communicating on human rights. Adam is also the Specialist Advisor to the Joint Committee on Human Rights' new Inquiry into the UK government's Covid-19 response.
- Naomi McAuliffe, Programme Director of Amnesty International in Scotland
- Mhairi Snowden, Director of Human Rights Consortium Scotland

[Click here to register via Eventbrite](#)

**We want this event to be accessible to all.** If you have any particular accessibility requirements, please let us know as soon as you can so that we can make any arrangements required.

BSL Interpretation will be available – please could you let us know by **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May** if you will use the BSL Interpreters. After this date, we will do our very best to provide BSL Interpretation but cannot guarantee it.

[hrcscotland.org/2021/03/24/what-went-wrong-covid-19-accountability-and-building-back-better-17th-may-10am/](https://hrcscotland.org/2021/03/24/what-went-wrong-covid-19-accountability-and-building-back-better-17th-may-10am/)

**17th May  
@10am**



## Encouraging foreign nationals to register to vote in the Scottish elections.

On 6 May 2021 Scotland will hold the next Scottish Parliament elections. Foreign nationals are also eligible to **register to vote**, but many of them might not be aware of this fact. Please help us to raise awareness about their right to vote.

On our latest **blog post**, we explain the registration process. You can help us to spread the word about such an important right by sharing the post. You can also visit the **Right to vote** section on our website for more resources



## Proving your status under the EU Settlement Scheme

### Getting settled status is not the end of story

Although our primary concern is to ensure that all those eligible to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme do so on time, we must remind everyone that once they are granted their settled or pre-settled status they must also know how to access their status, prove it and keep it up-to-date. Many, as we have witnessed with some clients, struggle with this.

To help minimising this barrier, we have created multilingual video presentations explaining the process of proving and updating the status using the EUSS digital profile. Videos have been recorded in several EU languages and we will keep adding more.

You can find all video presentations in our **[Vimeo channel](#)**.



## Advice for people with pre-settled status following the judgment of the Court of Appeal – updated 08/03/2021

This note explains what advisers should do to protect the rights of claimants with pre-settled status and no other qualifying right of residence following the Court of Appeal judgment in R(Fratila and Tanase) v SSWP and AIRE Centre [2020] EWCA Civ 1741



### Background

#### What did the Court do?

The Order of the Court of Appeal “quashes” (i.e. deletes from the law) those bits of the right to reside test which provide that having a right to reside because you have “pre-settled status” (that is limited leave to remain granted under Appendix EU to the Immigration Rules) is not a sufficient right to reside to meet the test for the benefits listed above. This is because the Court of Appeal, in its judgment has held that the exclusion of those with “pre-settled status” a right to reside granted under UK immigration law is contrary to article 18 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of nationality against EU citizens.

Because those bits of the law have been quashed, the effect is that anyone with pre-settled status satisfies the right to reside test for access to any of the benefits listed above (including non EEA citizens such as third country national family members).

The Order also gave the Secretary of State a “stay” in implementing the judgment until 26 February 2021 to allow the Secretary of State to make an application for permission to the Court of Appeal.

#### What is happening with the case in the Supreme Court?

The Secretary of State made an application for permission to appeal and on 22 February 2021, the Supreme Court granted permission to appeal and also ordered that the stay continue in force until it decides the appeal. That means that until then decision makers, at least for the benefits directly affected by the judgment do not have to make decisions according to the law as declared by the Court.

The Supreme Court will hear the appeal on **18 and 19 May 2021**.

#### Advice for claimants making claims from 01 January 2021 and those who have awards ended after that date

Claimants with pre-settled status who have not yet made a claim Claimants with pre-settled status who have not yet made a claim for benefit should claim benefits to which they think they are entitled as a result of the judgment as soon as possible.

If they are refused benefit they should seek a mandatory reconsideration as set out above.

#### Claimants with pre-settled status who have made a claim but not yet had a decision

The decision maker should decide these claims in the claimant’s favour if the claimant has a qualifying right to reside for the benefit claimed other than pre-settled status.

If a decision is made refusing the claim then see the advice immediately below.

#### Claimants with pre-settled status who are now or have been within the last 13 months refused benefit

This section applies where:

- a decision refusing (or ending entitlement to) one of the benefits above, because they are said not to have had a sufficient right to reside, has been made on or after 01 January 2021; and
- at or before the date of that decision the claimant had been granted pre-settled status

A claimant to whom the above two points applies should now take the following action:

- If the decision was made within the last 13 months and was about entitlement to housing benefit (where mandatory reconsideration does not apply) or did not state that a right of appeal would only arise once a request for revision had been refused then the claimant should immediately
- appeal. If the appeal is being made more than one month after the decision then reasons for
- lateness should be given- these could include that the claimant was unaware they had a case until they or their adviser became aware of this judgment.



- If the decision refusing benefit has not yet been challenged and was made within the last 13 months (or for tax credits 30 days plus 12 months), they should immediately apply for a “revision” of the decision (i.e. a “mandatory reconsideration”).
  - ◊ They can do this over the phone, in writing or, if the benefit is universal credit, by posting a note on their online journal (if they have no online journal as their claim was refused and they have not reclaimed they can make a new claim and then when the new journal is created make an entry on this requesting a mandatory reconsideration of the decision refusing their previous claim.
  - ◊ Where the decision being challenged was made over 1 month ago but still within the last 13 months then the mandatory reconsideration note should explain why they could not bring the application earlier: one reason might be that it was only the result in this case which made them aware that they could do so.
  - ◊ It is important that if the claimant also has an alternative qualifying right to reside they
  - ◊ additionally refer to this in any mandatory reconsideration request.
- If the claimant has sought a mandatory reconsideration and it has been refused and the claimant has not yet appealed to the First-tier Tribunal then they should immediately appeal against the decision. The ground of appeal can be simply that the decision was wrong as at the time it was made they had pre-settled status which Fratila shows was a sufficient right to reside for them to obtain benefit.

**Note:** Once the claimant appeals (or if they have already done so) then the First-tier Tribunal could decide to “stay” its consideration of the case pending the result of the Secretary of State’s appeal to the Supreme Court against the Court of Appeal decision in Fratila

### **Stockpiling**

Social security law (section 25 Social Security Act 1998) allows the Secretary of State’s decision maker to “stockpile” cases where there is an ongoing test case rather than make a decision applying the judgment.

However, the Secretary of State has taken the view that the judgment and Order in Fratila do not apply to cases where the claim for benefit or decision is made after 31 December 2020. That view is set out in the Advice for Decision Making memo: ADM 02/21 at §20:

“20. Although the decision of the Court of Appeal in Fratila quashes the amendments made to the regulations for income-related benefits by the 2019 Regulations, this only has effect up to the end of the transition period. Therefore, the grant of a stay of execution on the quashing order means that decisions from 1 January 2021 can still be made relying on the 2019 Regulations.”

CPAG’s view is that this is wrong and that the Order of the Court still affects cases from 01 January 2021. That is because a quashing order has the effect that it is as if the amendments which were quashed had not been made. Without a change to that Order or new legislation governing periods after 31 December 2020, then there is no law which prevents pre-settled status from being a sufficient right to reside to obtain benefits.

In practice, what the refusal to stockpile such cases does is mean that some claimants may have negative decisions and not realise they could challenge them on the basis of Fratila. If instead of making negative decisions, decisions in such cases were stockpiled, then there would be no risk of claimants losing out in the event that the Secretary of State’s appeal fails in Fratila.

All stockpiled cases could then be allowed at that point whereas in the absence of stockpiling some claimants may not challenge their decisions and could lose out even if the Court of Appeal judgment is upheld as their incorrect decisions will remain in place. This makes it even more important that advisers flag up the need for claimants to challenge decisions as set out above.

### **Cases arising prior to 01 January 2021**

The Secretary of State accepts that the Order in Fratila does apply to decisions in respect of periods prior to 01 January 2021 and has directed decision makers to “stockpile” such cases. Nonetheless, there are probably many cases where decisions have already been made and not stockpiled. In these cases then challenges still need to be made as discussed above.

The guidance suggests decisions on such cases should be stockpiled pending the result in Fratila: ADM 02/31.



## Project to tackle homelessness among care leavers launched

Second phase is rolled out

The latest phase of a homelessness prevention project for care leavers has been launched by a coalition of charities.

After the successful roll-out of the first **Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway** for care leavers, the **A Way Home Scotland Coalition** has developed a second youth homelessness prevention pathway for all young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Scotland.

The Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathway for all young people sets out practical and achievable goals that are based on working in partnership across sectors, moving away from the idea that homelessness is a housing problem, and placing the experiences and needs of young people at the core of all activities.

Despite progressive legislation and strong leadership, young people aged 16-25 continue to be disproportionately represented in the population experiencing homelessness.

[tfn.scot/news/project-to-tackle-homelessness-among-care-leavers-launched](https://www.bigissue.com/latest/housing-first-is-set-to-tackle-homelessness-across-scotland/)

## Housing First is set to tackle homelessness across Scotland

A newly published 10-year Housing First plan will help councils end homelessness for good. Homelessness could become a thing of the past in Scotland as experts, frontline workers and politicians join forces to expand the hugely successful Housing First scheme across the country.

Around 3,560 people could be helped by the innovative **Housing First** model per year, according to new research, taking into account people already in the homelessness system and those forecast to be in need over the next decade.

With the Holyrood-backed launch of a **new 10-year framework** to help local authorities start or scale up their efforts, it's hoped the heralded model will transform the lives of people experiencing homelessness for good. Nearly every council in Scotland plans to ramp up their Housing First work in the next year.

[www.bigissue.com/latest/housing-first-is-set-to-tackle-homelessness-across-scotland/](https://www.bigissue.com/latest/housing-first-is-set-to-tackle-homelessness-across-scotland/)

## Committee learns about support for third sector

Members of the Education and Children's Services Committee heard how the council's Community Learning and Development (CLD) service plans to offer financial and practical support to the third sector in Aberdeenshire.

The service has offered the third sector financial assistance through grants for a number of years. Organisations such as Aberdeen Foyer, the Workers Educational Association and Linking Education and Disability have all received grant funding from CLD.

Whilst CLD is continuing to provide funding for these organisations as well as other support such as delivering English as a Second Language (ESOL) and SQA accredited learning courses, the service is exploring financial assistance to help local groups that have formed to lend a hand to communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The CLD service plan includes a target to support local groups and initiatives so that communities can recover from the impact of the Coronavirus. The funding will support the third sector groups with providing services to assist young people and provide opportunities for adult learning which will strengthen communities.

The report is available in full by visiting: Aberdeenshire Council's Committees and Meetings [webpage](#).

You can also watch a webcast of Education and Children's Services Committee by visiting <https://aberdeenshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>



## Struggling to care

Why Scotland needs to reform the role of social workers.

The report looks at the recent history of social work in Scotland, how it has been stripped back, fragmented and undervalued.

Crucially, rather than this vision of working with people to create a better society for all of us it shows how instead social workers are now seen as 'firefighters', picking up the pieces when things go wrong or enforcing emergency action when there is an urgent need to protect vulnerable people. It argues that if instead we had 'community social work', embedded in communities and working with them in a care setting, it could transform so many of the social problems which blight our communities.

<https://commonweal.scot/policy-library/struggling-care>





## COVID-19 and the temporary transformation of the UK social security system

Article from Richard Machin, Senior Lecturer in Social Work and Health at Nottingham Trent University:

This commentary discusses the implications of the changes made to the social security system by the UK government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Until the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK government did not veer from its programme of welfare reform. However, emergency legislation made significant concessions including: an increase in the value of the UK's main means-tested benefit Universal Credit, more favourable eligibility rules for the self-employed, a reduced conditionality regime, and an increase in the level of housing support.

This paper argues that although the UK government's COVID-19 social security response was necessary, it did not go far enough. A temporary lifting of some prejudicial elements of the social security system was welcome but this still leaves an overly complex system characterised by unacceptable delays in payment, inadequate support for many vulnerable groups, and inconsistent experiences for recipients of different benefits.

More: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0261018320986793>



## Couple gets 'severe mental impairment' council tax discount backdated TEN years after appeal - how to fight for a backdated payment



A couple have received a £3,500 council tax refund after taking their local authority to a tribunal and forcing it to backdate a discount to 2009 - and their success story shows how others may be able to win refunds for previous years too.

In 2019, Alison (who asked not to give her second name), applied for a 25% council tax discount on her and her husband Colin's home in County Durham, due to Colin being severely mentally impaired after a stroke.

If someone is diagnosed as severely mentally impaired (SMI), they can be 'disregarded for council tax purposes' in England, Scotland and Wales. We've been campaigning to raise awareness of this discount for years, with our investigation in 2017 revealing that 10,000s could be missing out on up to £400 a year, and Alison found out about the discount after reading our site.

The couple's local authority – Durham County Council – allowed them to pay a reduced rate going forwards and said it would backdate the discount to 2013, but refused to backdate it further.

But Colin and Alison challenged the case at the Valuation Tribunal, and it ruled last year that the council hadn't taken reasonable steps to ascertain whether Colin and Alison were eligible for a discount. It found that as Colin's GP had certified that he was severely mentally impaired from 2009 and he was eligible for the care component of Disability Living Allowance, the discount should be backdated to then.

[www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2021/03/couple-get-severe-mental-impairment-discount-backdated-by-ten/](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2021/03/couple-get-severe-mental-impairment-discount-backdated-by-ten/)

## Poverty Alliance launch 'Everyone Aboard' campaign

Ahead of the Scottish Parliament election, a new campaign has today been launched, calling on Scotland's political parties to commit to extending free bus travel to everyone receiving Universal Credit (and other low-income benefits) and under 25s.

The Everyone Aboard campaign – coordinated by the Poverty Alliance and supported by a range of children's charities, anti-poverty groups, trade unions and environmental organisations – is launched at a time of growing hardship across Scotland.

Young people have been particularly hard-hit by job disruption as a result of the pandemic. Research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that under 25s, especially women, have been hit harder economically than any other age group. They have a higher chance of furlough, precarious employment, unemployment, and are the most likely to work in low-paid sectors such as hospitality and retail.

[www.povertyalliance.org/poverty-alliance-launch-everyone-aboard-campaign/](http://www.povertyalliance.org/poverty-alliance-launch-everyone-aboard-campaign/)



## Articles

### Laying the foundations for a Scotland without poverty

#### Key findings and recommendations

- The next Scottish Government will have to increase spending on social security to meet the interim child poverty targets and improve adequacy of support for families.
- The Scottish Child Payment (SCP) will have to at least double to show a credible route to the interim targets.
- Increasing the number of hours that parents work and lifting their wages can have a significant impact on child poverty rates but given our proximity to the interim target date the changes needed to do so are unlikely to be achieved in time.
- Affordable, and particularly social, housing is effective in stopping people being pulled into poverty, and efforts to maintain and increase the supply of social housing are vital. Some families in Scotland are in poverty because of their housing costs. To loosen poverty's grip, we need to increase access to social housing and reverse damaging impacts of UK social security rules like the benefit cap and two-child limit.
- The next Scottish Government's choices will be vital in laying the foundations for meeting the 2030 targets, and we need to make fundamental changes in our society, particularly to our labour market, starting in the next Parliament. Without broader action now to promote good jobs and keep housing affordable, we will leave ourselves a big social security bill and leave too many people adrift in the meantime.
- Starting that action immediately would put us on a path to deliver a Scotland where the quality of life for all our people is improved and where the experience of poverty is the exception, rather than the experience it is for one million people right now.

[www.jrf.org.uk/report/laying-foundations-scotland-without-poverty](http://www.jrf.org.uk/report/laying-foundations-scotland-without-poverty)

### A Scotland without Poverty

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's manifesto briefing for a prosperous and poverty free Scotland

[www.jrf.org.uk/report/scotland-without-poverty](http://www.jrf.org.uk/report/scotland-without-poverty)

**JRF**

JOSEPH  
ROWNTREE  
FOUNDATION

### 'Branching Out' will light the way for Housing First in Scotland

Branching Out: The National **Framework** for organisations and sectors starting or scaling up Housing First in Scotland, has been launched at **Scotland's Housing First conference**. The 100-page guide endorsed by the Scottish Government and COSLA lends its title to the online event.

The highly detailed yet easy-to-navigate guide sets out the context in which Housing First will be successfully delivered and draws on learning from existing programmes such as the **Housing First Pathfinder**. It is a 'how to and why' guide to planning, commissioning and delivering the approach locally and nationally covering community justice, housing and social care issues as well as local and national government.

[homelessnetwork.scot/2021/03/24/branching-out-will-light-the-way-for-housing-first-in-scotland/](http://homelessnetwork.scot/2021/03/24/branching-out-will-light-the-way-for-housing-first-in-scotland/)

### Aberdeen City Libraries are now offering access to free public computers at eight of the city's libraries



In line with recent Scottish Government guidance for public libraries in level 4 areas, computer access is now available at Airyhall, Bridge of Don, Central Library, Cove, Culter, Dyce, Mastrick and Tillydrone Libraries, along with the Libraries existing Click & Collect service.

A free, pre-booked appointment is required to use the library computers and customers wishing to book PC access can do so either by calling 01224 652500 or contacting their local library directly.

All PC sessions will be limited to 60 minutes to cope with demand. Social distancing must be observed, and face coverings worn for the duration of the appointment.

Following the latest Scottish Government update, further limited re-opening of Aberdeen City Libraries is expected on Monday 26 April, dependent on the move to protection level 3.

More information on how to book an appointment and all services and resources available at Aberdeen City Libraries during lockdown can be found on their website – [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/aberdeen-city-libraries-service-update](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/aberdeen-city-libraries-service-update)





## Articles

### Rent changes: April 2021

24 March 2021

**The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has worked with residents and social landlords to simplify the verification process for any April rent changes.**

Residents are not able to notify changes in advance but people with weekly tenancies should receive a 'to-do' in the online journal from the 5 April 2021. Monthly charged tenants will receive a to-do on 1 April. A **letter** has been added to the Landlord Portal page on the **Understanding Universal Credit website**. It gives landlords more information about the actions needed and includes screen shots of the to-do to help staff and residents prepare. Residents will have the option at the start to say that there has not been any change in the rent.

Many housing associations are already working with their residents to alert people to the importance of telling DWP about any change in rent. If residents do not respond to the to-do then they may not get the correct housing payments, so it's critical that housing associations support their residents to ensure that this doesn't happen.

DWP has said that, despite extensive testing, there will be no bulk upload of rent data from housing associations to DWP this year.

<https://www.housing.org.uk/news-and-blogs/news/rent-changes-april-2021/>

### Child poverty was on the rise in Scotland - and then the pandemic struck

New statistics published today by the Scottish and UK governments reveal rising child destitution across the country.

And that was before the devastating effects of Covid were felt.

In Scotland 260 000 children were living in poverty in 2019/20 (26% of all children), an increase from 23% (230 000) children in 2018/19.

<https://tfn.scot/news/child-poverty-was-on-the-rise-in-scotland-and-then-the-pandemic-struck>



### The Benefit Cap: What you need to know in March 2021

#### Background

#### What is the benefit cap?

The benefit cap ("the cap") was introduced in 2013, by section 96 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The cap can be applied to either Universal Credit (UC), or to legacy benefits through the client's housing benefit (HB) award. However, this article focuses specifically on the cap as it applies to UC.

The cap limits the amount of benefits each household can receive, and is calculated according to the difference between the total amount of benefits one household is entitled to\* in a monthly assessment period, and the cap figure that applies. The current cap figure is set out in s8 of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, which reduced the cap's limit to £1,666.67 per assessment period for families or lone parents (£1,916.67 for those in Greater London), and £1,116.67 for single claimants who are not responsible for a child or qualifying young person (£1,284.17 for those in Greater London)<sup>1</sup>.

<https://medium.com/adviser/the-benefit-cap-what-you-need-to-know-in-march-2021->



## Articles

### **DWP confirms timetable for resumption of face-to-face assessments for health and disability benefits**

rightsnet

In addition, DWP issues new guidance for claimants and assessment providers covering measures such as social distancing requirements, sanitisation, PPE and face coverings

Following their suspension in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the DWP says that, initially for those who it is 'unable to fully assess by other channels' -

- face-to-face assessments for personal independence payment and work capability assessments for universal credit and employment and support allowance will resume from May 2021.

The DWP says that it has worked with its assessment providers to ensure that assessment centres are fully compliant with Covid-19 safety measures and has published detailed guidance to support the safe resumption of face-to-face assessments. The new guidance, which covers measures such as social distancing requirements, sanitisation, PPE and face coverings, is available from gov.uk -

- for claimants: [Attending your face-to-face health assessment during the Covid-19 period](#); and
- for assessment providers: [Carrying out a face-to-face health assessment during Covid-19](#).

For more information, see [Face-to-face assessments to resume for health and disability](#)

### **Securing a living income in Scotland: Towards a minimum income guarantee**

This report marks the first of three, as part of our Rethinking Social Security programme. In this report we set a new direction for social security provision in Scotland, that sets our sights on securing a 'living income' for all, delivered through a minimum income guarantee, alongside action to deliver good work for more people and to reduce costs through stronger collective services.

We set out a proposal for realising a minimum income guarantee (MIG) for Scotland in 2030, and – just as crucially – some of the first steps that can be taken towards it in the next parliament. We outline three key features of a minimum income guarantee:

- an MIG is a universal guarantee, delivered through a targeted payment
- an MIG should aim to realise a minimum acceptable standard of living for everyone, recognising different needs
- an MIG should be designed to reduce poverty, inequality, and insecurity, as a payment people can rely on.

[www.ippr.org/research/publications/securing-a-living-income-in-scotland](http://www.ippr.org/research/publications/securing-a-living-income-in-scotland)



### **Debt 'roadmap' urgently needed for the 1 in 3 adults financially worse off as a direct result of Covid-19**

rightsnet

Money Advice Trust calls for action as polling also finds that more than 6 million people have had to use credit to pay for essential costs such as groceries, utility bills, and council tax

The Money Advice Trust (MAT) has called for the government, firms and regulators to work together to create a 'roadmap out of debt' for the one in three adults reporting that they are financially worse off as a direct result of Covid-19.

In a new report, [The Cost of Covid](#), the MAT sets out findings from a poll of more than 2,000 adults conducted online by YouGov and insight from the charity's National Debtline and Business Debtline services.

For more information, see [Britons worry finances will not recover as households count cost of Covid one year on](#).





## Coronavirus Acts extended



Earlier this month we advised that some of the temporary measures introduced due to the coronavirus had been made permanent through the [Bankruptcy \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2021](#).

We can now confirm that the remaining measures introduced due to the coronavirus have been extended by a further six months. This follows the Scottish Parliament's decision to extend both the Scottish Coronavirus Acts until 30 September 2021.

This extension applies to the minimum debt level for creditor petition which remains at £10,000, extends the period of any new moratoria to a period of six months, and removes the limitation that only one such moratorium can be applied for in any 12 month period. The ability to hold virtual meetings of creditors as an alternative to physical meetings will also continue.

These provisions will now expire on 30 September 2021.

Further information on the extension of the Scottish Coronavirus Acts can be found [here](#).

[www.aib.gov.uk/news/releases/21212121/0303/coronavirus-acts-extended](http://www.aib.gov.uk/news/releases/21212121/0303/coronavirus-acts-extended)

## BENEFITS



### DWP policy on direct deductions for fines is unlawful

This case law update looks at the decision of the High Court in [Blundell and others R \(on application of\) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions \(2021\)](#)

This judgment means UC claimants can ask the DWP to lower the amount deducted for court fine payments if they are facing hardship. The DWP can no longer operate a policy of making the maximum possible deduction in every case.

The DWP have appealed but in the meantime advisors and claimants can refer to the judgment when making requests for their fines deduction to be lowered.

<https://medium.com/adviser/dwp-policy-on-direct-deductions-for-fines-is-unlawful-2f576b96e483>

## Scottish income tax rates and thresholds confirmed for 2021/22: what do they mean for Scottish taxpayers?



Low Incomes Tax Reform Group  
A voice for the unrepresented

- [What are the rates and bands for Scottish income tax for 2021/22?](#)
- [What income do I pay Scottish income tax on?](#)
- [Am I a Scottish taxpayer?](#)
- [What are the key differences between Scottish income tax and UK income tax?](#)
- [What is the effect for those on low incomes?](#)
- [Who collects Scottish income tax?](#)
- [Why is it important to tell HMRC my correct address?](#)
- [Where can I find more information about Scottish income tax?](#)

[www.litrq.org.uk/latest-news/news/210401-scottish-income-tax-rates-and-thresholds-confirmed-202122-what-do-they-mean](http://www.litrq.org.uk/latest-news/news/210401-scottish-income-tax-rates-and-thresholds-confirmed-202122-what-do-they-mean)



## Scottish Parliamentary election 2021

Special measures will be in place at polling stations in line with current COVID-19 restrictions for the Scottish Parliamentary election, which will be held on Thursday 06 May 2021.

Information on the election including a special FAQs is available on the council [website](#).



Anyone who is 16 or over on or before Thursday 06 May 2021 who lives in Scotland can vote in the Scottish Parliamentary election, however if they are not already on the electoral register they must register to vote at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) by 11.59pm on Monday 19 April.

Voters who wish to apply to vote by post must apply at <https://www.grampian-vjb.gov.uk/electoral-register/absent-voting/> before 5pm on Tuesday 06 April.

Please note that the 6 April deadline for applying for a postal vote is before the deadline for registration.

Anyone who wishes to vote by proxy must apply at <https://www.grampian-vjb.gov.uk/electoral-register/absent-voting/> before 5pm on Tuesday 27 April.

Registered postal voters who have not received their postal vote should contact the council's Election Office on 01224 523501 or email [elections@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:elections@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Anyone registered to vote in the Scottish Parliament election who thinks they may not be able to return their postal vote in time should consider appointing a proxy voter and make an application for a proxy vote before the 5pm on Tuesday 27 April deadline. The deadline for an emergency proxy vote is 5pm on Thursday 06 May 2021.

<https://news.aberdeencity.gov.uk/scottish-parliamentary-election-2021-candidates-announced>

How will you vote at the elections in May?



The Electoral Commission

YOUR VOTE MATTERS  
DON'T LOSE IT

## When benefits fail to meet our basic needs

Readers respond to Frances Ryan's article about disturbing shortcomings in the benefits system which fail some of society's most vulnerable people

[www.theguardian.com/society/2021/apr/02/when-benefits-fail-to-meet-our-basic-needs](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/apr/02/when-benefits-fail-to-meet-our-basic-needs)

## DWP gives work coaches more resources to help the homeless

"We know that homelessness isn't inevitable and that a work coach asking the right questions can lead to someone getting the right support early enough to prevent them from losing their home."



People at risk of homelessness will receive better [housing](#) advice when visiting the Jobcentre, the Government has claimed, thanks to a "toolkit" for staff developed in partnership with frontline charities.

The Department of Work and Pensions said those facing or experiencing [homelessness](#) would receive information from work coaches backed by charities Crisis and Shelter to support them with housing need.

[www.bigissue.com/latest/dwp-gives-work-coaches-more-resources-to-help-the-homeless/](http://www.bigissue.com/latest/dwp-gives-work-coaches-more-resources-to-help-the-homeless/)



## Note to add onto Journal - Real Time Information (RTI) Dispute UC

An example for a client to add onto their journal for an **RTI** dispute when someone has 2 monthly payments paid within one month.

Dear case manager

I would like to request an RTI dispute on the earnings taken into account for the assessment period xxxxx to xxxxx.

I am calendar monthly paid from work however have had two wage payments fall into one assessment period, resulting in a dramatically reduced payment which will leave me struggling to buy food and pay bills this month.

I request that the new Regulation 61(6) be used to reallocate one of my wages to another assessment period. The legislation can be found here if you are unfamiliar with it-

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/1138/regulation/2/made>

If my issue cannot be remedied by the RTI team I request that my case be referred to a decision maker for a mandatory reconsideration.

I am able to supply evidence in the form of bank statements and/or payslips to support my dispute.

Kind regards

## Covid-19 likely to have 'lasting consequences' for spending on universal credit

rightsnet

Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) highlights implications of the pandemic on caseloads and awards, particularly in relation to the health-related elements of the benefit

Introducing its *Welfare Trends Report - March 2021*, published today, the OBR highlights that due to the demands created by the coronavirus pandemic, this year's annual report is shorter than usual and focuses on two areas - the nature of the sharp rise in spending on universal credit, and the medium-term implications of the pandemic for working-age welfare spending (and universal credit in particular).

Forecasting that spending on universal credit will rise by £19.5 billion in 2020/2021, the OBR says that this is based on -

- an increased caseload - expected to average four million through 2020/2021 and up 88 per cent on 2019/2020;
- the temporary £20-a-week increase in the universal credit standard allowance - estimated to have cost an additional £4.4 billion; and
- other pandemic-related policy changes such as raising local housing allowance rates - estimated to have cost £1.2 billion.

In addition, turning to the medium-term implications of Covid-19, the OBR says that -

'Our latest forecast assumes the pandemic will have lasting effects on the prevalence of benefit receipt that results in higher caseloads and awards .... These effects are largely confined to universal credit and are concentrated in the health-related elements of the benefit.'

Indeed, the OBR forecasts that while the coronavirus-related caseload (which peaked in June 2020 at 1.3 million) will fall back as unemployment falls, it will nevertheless stabilise at around 240,000 in 2025/2026 -

'This reflects the judgements we have made about the lasting implications of the pandemic for the labour market and for incapacity-related benefits. Our central economy forecast is predicated on higher labour market inactivity and a modestly higher equilibrium rate of unemployment in the medium term. Our universal forecast assumes that those effects translate into 240,000 more health-related cases and 55,000 more cases in the 'intensive work search' group.'

NB - in a section focusing on policy risks, the OBR highlights that in **last year's Welfare Trends Report** it looked back at how the large cuts to welfare spending announced in Summer Budget 2015 had fared in practice, concluding that the measures that were subsequently dropped, reversed or watered down were typically those that generated cash losers from one year to the next. The OBR adds that -

'This prompted us to flag the risks posed by ending the one-year £20-a-week boost to the universal credit standard allowance. As many expected, that measure was extended into 2021/2022 at the March 2021 Budget, but it has only been extended for half a year. This means the point at which millions of families will face cash losses has now moved to October of this year. In our central forecast, this coincides with the point at which unemployment rises most sharply as other support measures are withdrawn. The risk of further extensions to the £20 uplift therefore remains.'

For more information, see **Welfare Trends Report - March 2021** from obr.uk

## Universal Credit - Annual rent exercise - An important update!



Earlier this month I sent you a [bulletin](#) explaining how DWP expects, tenants of social landlords to report their April 2021 rent charge, even if there is no change to the amount.

Why is not clear, but for the first time, tenants who don't experience a change in rental charge, are being asked to confirm this by responding to an online "To-do".

Included in my note was a link to a DWP produced chart providing a [pictorial view of the Q & A's](#).

Shortly after it was circulated, I was contacted by one of my HA clients, who make rent adjustments on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March each year. As this was not covered in DWP's original circular, I sought its advice. The response I received stated:

*"In their case the tenants will still receive a 'To-do' in early April, asking if their rent has changed. If they have already reported this (as they should have done) then they can simply answer "NO" to the 'To-do' request and that should remove this from journal.*

*However if a tenant has **not** reported the housing cost change, effective from the 15th March, they must respond to the 'To-do' by saying "NO" to – **"Has your housing costs/Service charges changed on the 1st or 5<sup>th</sup> April?"** and input the effective date of change i.e. **15th March.**"*

Alternative dates, prior to 1st April, can use the same approach to effectively report the new rental charge and effective date.

You may recall, I also pointed to:

*"A welcome piece of good news is, DWP have agreed, that if your tenant fails to report, within 14 days of their Benefit Assessment Period ending, you are to receive your own **"To-do" via the Landlord Portal**, enabling you to report the rent & service charge figures, thus avoiding the possibility of your most vulnerable tenants losing out, as they have in previous years."*

Finally, there is no equivalent annual process for rent increases after April. For both social and private sector landlords, it's simply a case of the tenant reporting, ideally, via his/her journal, after the effective date (not during the BAP as it will be incorrectly rejected by IT system).

If, for any reason, the tenant fails to do so, and an APA is in place, you can and MUST report the change. See [DWP's website advice to landlords](#) (social & private)

At paragraph 10.2 of the landlords' Advice it states:

**"Whilst a MPTL is in place the landlord must notify the department of any changes which a landlord can be reasonably expected to know which might affect the claimant's entitlement to Universal Credit and the amount awarded."**

An increase or reduction in rental charge, is clearly a factor that must be reported and acted on, by a Decision Maker superseding the existing award to reflect the new charge.

To fully understand DWP's process, please examine both this and my earlier bulletin.

Bill Irvine  
UC Advice & Advocacy Ltd  
[www.ucadvice.co.uk](http://www.ucadvice.co.uk)

## Setting aside a bankruptcy petition

In [Ndyabakiha v Hitachi Capital UK Plc \[2021\] EWHC 633](#) (Ch) the High Court set aside a bankruptcy order based on a late and unevincenced offer. Previous cases suggest this should not succeed in court, so the case offers hope for clients and advisers.

<https://medium.com/adviser/setting-aside-a-bankruptcy-petition-654a15830f45>

MONEY  
ADVICE

