

Mon 14th June 2021 - Issue.44 (Fortnightly)

Self Neglect and Hoarding: Lessons from a Serious Case Review, Aberdeen



**Date and time: Wed, 23 June 2021.
11:00 – 12:30**

An opportunity to listen to a range of perspectives on addressing self neglect in Aberdeen, to hear about new guidance and to ask questions

(this Guidance applies to Aberdeen City only)

You are invited to an online session to launch Aberdeen Adult Protection Committee's Guidance on Self Neglect and Hoarding, aimed at multi agency partners and services.

The session will provide an opportunity to learn more about this complex topic from a range of speakers followed by a chance to ask any questions.

To register please click on the [View event details](#) once you have accessed link below.

Please ensure that you enter your correct email address so that an MS Teams invite can be sent in advance of the event.

Book here - www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/self-neglect-and-hoarding-lessons-from-a-serious-case-review-aberdeen-tickets-157933831341

Free Financial First Aid Workshops



Available dates and times are below.

- Tuesday 22nd June 10am-12pm
- Wednesday 23rd June 1pm-3pm
- Tuesday 29th June 1pm-3pm
- Thursday 1st July 10am-12pm
- Monday 5th July 1pm-3pm
- Friday 16th July 10am-12pm
- Wednesday 4th August 10am-12pm
- Friday 6th August 1pm-3pm

Further workshops will be scheduled for Autumn-Winter 2021.

This course is **FREE** to attend thanks to funding from Aberdeen City Council

To book a place: Contact Elaine WEA Education Co-ordinator stating your first and second choice dates. Email: e.morrison-jures@wea.org.uk

More details further on in this bulletin.



Jobs

- **Advocacy Service Aberdeen - [Mental Health and Learning Disability Advocacy Worker](#).**
Closing date: Friday 25th June 2021
- **Advocacy Service Aberdeen - [Administrator](#).**
Closing date: Friday 25th June 2021
- **Avenue - [Family Support Workers](#).** Closing date: Friday 18th June
- **SACRO - [Care Support Workers](#)**

<https://acvo.org.uk/vacancies/>

The Scottish Parliament has voted in favour of a motion that tackling child poverty and building a fairer, more equal country 'should be a national mission'.



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Read the Official Report [HERE](#)

Shared Accommodation Rate changes

DWP has implemented changes to the Shared Accommodation Rate that will help thousands of vulnerable care leavers access additional housing support. The changes mean that care leavers can now claim the higher one-bedroom rate for longer, as the maximum age limit has been raised to 25, from 22.

Also, anyone who has lived in a homeless hostel for three months or more, regardless of age, will now be able to claim the higher rate, as the age limit has been removed.

[Read the full press release](#)

Less than 30 days to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme

EU, EEA or Swiss citizens or their family members resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, now have less than 30 days left to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to ensure they can continue to reside, work, study, access free healthcare and benefits in the UK after 30 June 2021.

Please consider sharing this message in your social media channels to encourage everyone to apply without delay at: [gov.uk/EUSettlementScheme](https://www.gov.uk/eusettlementscheme).

Question for Department for Work and Pensions

UIN 7125, tabled on 25 May 2021

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the problem of claimants of universal credit

- having their application for that benefit delayed and
- being unable to make that claim as a result of their abusers withholding required documentation.

Answered on 7 June 2021 by Will Quince

Jobcentres have staff trained to support victims of abuse and can direct them to specialist organisations who can offer further support.

Claimants who are unable to provide documentary evidence can undergo a biographical test. Biographical questions are generated onto a BIO template (opens in a new tab) using information held on the Customer Information System (Searchlight). This can be done by telephone or in person at a Jobcentre, and it does not cause any delay as it can be done within the first Assessment Period.

In addition, the Flexible Support Fund can be used to support the claimant obtain new ID in the form of duplicate driving licences, birth certificates etc, and can help with opening new bank accounts if necessary.

Claimants can also receive an urgent payment of their estimated Universal Credit award if required, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-05-25/7125>

Minister confirms that DWP has resumed face-to face work capability assessments

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However, written answer in parliament also confirms that face-to-face appointments are initially limited to those who cannot be assessed by other channels

Responding yesterday to a written question in parliament, Mr Tomlinson said that - 'Following their suspension in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, from 17 May 2021 we have resumed face-to-face WCAs for employment and support allowance claimants, and for universal credit claimants who have reported a disability or health condition that affects their ability to work.

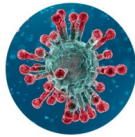
However, Mr Tomlinson added that - 'Initially they will only be for those who we are unable to assess by other channels, and are taking place alongside existing paper-based assessments, telephone assessments and a small number of video assessments where suitable.'

[Mr Tomlinson's written answer](#) is available from [parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk)





Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for local authorities on pandemic support payments



This guidance is to assist local authorities in delivering new Pandemic Support Payments announced as part of the 2021-22 Scottish Budget on 9 March 2021.

These payments comprise:

- **Two £100 Family Pandemic Payments (FPP)**, paid for each child of school age in receipt of Free School Meals on the basis of low income eligibility criteria. To be made in summer and winter respectively.
- **A £130 Low Income Pandemic Payment (LIPP)**, to be paid to households by the end of October 2021 who are either: in receipt of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) or are within agreed groups exempt from Council Tax or who have no liability.

Resource to facilitate delivery of these payments will be paid via a redetermination of General Revenue Grant in the last two weeks of March 2022 based on actual costs incurred for payments made and a fixed contribution to administration costs. Notional allocations have been confirmed to local authorities through correspondence.

This guidance is intended to support delivery of the above payments, and provides:

- background on the Pandemic Support Payments;
- guidance for the Family Pandemic Payments;
- guidance for the Low Income Pandemic Payment;
- reporting templates for completion and return to the Scottish Government.

www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-authorities-on-pandemic-support-payments/

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has called on the UK Government to extend the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) 'for as long as it is needed'.

Speaking ahead of a virtual summit meeting today between Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Ministers from each of the devolved nations to discuss the UK's recovery from the impact of Covid-19, Ms Sturgeon said -

'We have done everything we can with the limited powers we have to tackle inequality and mitigate the impact the pandemic has had on peoples' livelihoods, but we cannot allow that to be eroded as we enter the next phase of living with the virus. A return to the pre-pandemic austerity would be disastrous for jobs, for public services and for people and families across Scotland.

As the UK Government hold the key financial levers to help us recover from this, I will be calling on it to commit to maintain public spending during the period of recovery, and to extend the furlough scheme for as long as it is needed to protect businesses and people who have been required to stop working to protect others, and I will be emphasising that it is managed sensitively in a way that supports longer term recovery.'

In particular, in relation to the CJRS, Ms Sturgeon said that the UK government should -

- carry out an urgent review of the criteria of entry to the CJRS so that people who have started new jobs since 2 March 2021 can be furloughed over the summer if required;
- consider the impact of requiring employer contributions to the costs of furlough in July, August and September 2021; and
- consider extending the scheme beyond September if this is required.

In addition, the First Minister called on the UK Government to revise the entry criteria for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) to allow those who became self-employed more recently than 2019/2020 to access support; and to confirm the long-term approach to the Test and Trace Support Payment in England and any consequential funding for the devolved nations.

For more information, see [Financial clarity call ahead of summit](#) from gov.scot



<http://citizensrightsproject.org>



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- ⇒ The UK left the European Union on 31 January 2020
- ⇒ The post-Brexit transition period came to an end on 31 December 2020
- ⇒ Existing residents have until 30 June 2021 to apply for settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme.
- ⇒ Old EU residence documents such as permanent residence cards, UK residence cards and derivative residence cards continue to be valid only until 30 June 2021, when this “**grace period**” comes to an end. These documents have effectively been replaced by the newer pre-settled status and settled status, although these are not granted automatically and anyone who only has an old EU residence document should apply for a new status by 30 June.
- ⇒ As EU residence documents are issued in accordance with the EEA Regulations, they will no longer be valid when free movement law truly ends on 30 June 2021. After this date, holders of these documents will essentially be living in the UK unlawfully.

What if I want to stay in the UK?

- ⇒ Holders of EU residence documents who wish to remain in the UK should **apply to the EU Settlement Scheme** to regularise their stay before 30 June 2021.
- ⇒ Those who already have a permanent residence document can essentially swap it for full settled status. Residence card and derivative residence card holders will also be able to apply for settled status if they have been living in the UK for at least five years, and for pre-settled status if they have not yet reached five years' residence.

What will happen to those who don't apply?

- ⇒ When the grace period finishes on 30 June 2021 there will undoubtedly be thousands of EEA nationals and non-EEA family members who have not yet applied to the EU Settlement Scheme. It remains to be seen whether the government plans to address the problem of potential widespread illegality.
- ⇒ One solution could be to extend the validity of EU residence documents beyond 30 June to allow those affected more time to apply. But there is absolutely no guarantee of this happening and the government has insisted that the deadline is final.
- ⇒ So for any EEA nationals and their family members who wish to remain in the UK beyond 30 June and have not yet applied to the Settlement Scheme or for British citizenship, this is likely your final reminder.

Late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme

From 1 July 2021, EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK without having applied for pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme will be here unlawfully. The Home Secretary **confirmed** a few months ago that people can apply after that deadline, but they must have “reasonable grounds to apply late”. Clarity on what grounds might be considered reasonable was lacking until 1 April 2021, when the Home Office released guidance on how it will deal with late applications: pages 26 to page 44 of the **main caseworker guidance**.

Since the Home Office also requires those with pre-settled status to make a further application in order to upgrade to settled status, this guidance also applies to those who fail to upgrade before their pre-settled status expires. It also applies to family members joining an EU citizen sponsor via the family permit route, and to a few other scenarios.

Overall, the guidance reflects the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement and meets the majority of asks from the support sector — which raises the question of why it took so long to be produced.

www.freemovement.org.uk/eu-settlement-scheme-late-applications-euss/



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It is not enough to have rights – we need to be able to use them



With the deadline rapidly approaching on the 30th of June, it is crucial we ask all our EU citizen friends and neighbours if they have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme and encourage them to ask, in turn, their EU citizen friends

30 June 2021 is a significant moment. It does not only mean that some EU citizens will fall through the cracks of the Scheme, find themselves unlawful in the place they call home and need to make the case for late applications. After the deadline, EU citizens will need to prove their status at every step of their lives – when renting a property, opening a bank account, applying for a job or welfare support.

It is not enough to simply have pre-settled or settled status. One needs to be able to use their rights. For EU citizens, pre-settled and settled status are digital. There is no physical proof of status, despite organisations who work with migrants all providing evidence of the challenges this will pose to EU citizens, especially those who already struggled to get their status.

EU citizens can view and prove their status online by generating a 'share code' that can be accessed by those requesting such proof, such as landlords or employers. The Government also put the responsibility on EU citizens to notify the Home Office every time they change relevant details, such as when they renew their ID or passport or change their UK address.

<https://new europeans.uk/2021/06/02/it-is-not-enough-to-have-rights-we-need-to-be-able-to-use-them/>

EU citizens win right to access personal data held by Home Office

Appeal court ruling means people denied settled status or immigration visas can see records used in the case

EU citizens have won the right to get full access to records about them held by the **Home Office** or any other body after a legal battle by campaigners.

Three judges at the court of appeal unanimously overturned an **earlier high court decision** that their case had no legal merit and ruled the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) unlawfully denied them access to their data through an "immigration exemption" clause.

It brings to an end a three-year challenge by campaign groups the3million and the Open Rights Group.

The ruling means EU citizens who are denied settled status or future immigration visas can have full access to Home Office databases to see records used against them that could include social benefits, entry to the country records, criminal and civil offence records.

The lord justices Underhill, Singh and Warby **ruled on Wednesday** that the immigration exemption in the DPA was "non-compliant" with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the charter of fundamental rights of the EU.

www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/may/26/eu-citizens-win-right-access-personal-data-held-home-office





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High Court finds the EU Settlement Scheme rules for Zambrano carers unlawful

10th June 2021

In a welcome judgment handed down yesterday, *R (Akinsanya) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* [2021] EWHC 1535 (Admin), Mr Justice Mostyn found in no uncertain terms that Zambrano carers do not lose their EU law right to reside just because they have permission to remain granted under a route other than Appendix EU of the Immigration Rules. Up to now, the Home Office had been refusing to grant Appendix EU status to Zambrano carers who already had some kind of permission to remain (typically as a parent under Appendix FM)

If you're not already familiar, it can be difficult to understand Zambrano carers from a standing start, but here goes. Following the [landmark Zambrano judgment](#) in 2011, the primary carer of a British citizen living in the UK derived a right to reside under EU law if their removal from the UK would compel the British citizen to leave the European Union. This benefitted, for example, single mothers from non-EU countries with a British child or children.

I would encourage anyone who has been baffled by the Home Office's position on Zambrano carers to read the full judgment, as your bafflement will be vindicated!

[Curtesy of FreeMovement.org.uk](#)

Is Grandma allowed to stay? Retained rights of residence for in-laws

10th June 2021

One of the trickier aspects of EU free movement law is "retained" rights of residence for family members if the relationship with their EEA citizen sponsor ends. A common scenario is where an EEA national marries a non-EEA national who then travels to the UK as their spouse. After a few years, the non-EEA national's parents — the in-laws — come to the UK and are granted a residence card as [Regulation 7](#) family members.

What then happens if the marriage between sponsor and spouse fails prior to the in-laws securing permanent residence (i.e. five years)?

EU law rights of residence come to end in less than a month. But this issue is likely to arise in the immigration tribunals for a while yet, depending on when the in-laws in question were first issued with their residence cards or family permits.

[Curtesy of FreeMovement.org.uk](#)



EU Rights and Brexit Hub

Research, Advice and Support on EU Citizens' Rights



Economic and Social Research Council



UNIVERSITY of York



Tripwires and timebombs: unnecessary hazards in the plans for dealing with EUSS applications after the deadline

We are hurtling towards the deadline for applying to the EU Settled Status scheme, set up for EU nationals who were resident in the UK before the end of the Brexit transition period, to secure their right to stay. Time is short for addressing the imminent problems, pitfalls and risks posed by the cliff-edge, and by the proposals for dealing with late applications.

Tick, tock: the hard deadline

- [Read the report.pdf](#)
- [Read the summary.pdf](#)
- [Read the report.docx](#)
- [Read the summary \(accessible\).docx](#)

www.eurightshub.york.ac.uk/blog/tripwiresandtimebombsmay21



<http://citizensrightsproject.org>



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New report from the hub: Emergency measures needed



EU Rights and Brexit Hub

Research, Advice and Support on EU Citizens' Rights



Economic and Social Research Council



UNIVERSITY of York



The EU Rights and Brexit Hub have released a **new report** today on the emergency measures that are required to ensure that many EU nationals are not wrongfully exposed to the hostile environment. The deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme (30th June 2021) is imminent.

This report covers some of the key risks that the deadline for applying to the EUSS scheme poses for EEA+ nationals:

1. Reaching EEA+ nationals who have not yet applied to the scheme
2. Protecting late applicants: introducing a substantive scheme and addressing the gaps in the guidance
3. Avoiding the status gap after the 30th June 2021
4. Avoiding unnecessary EUSS delays that push applicants past the deadline
5. Ensuring consistency in decision making for late applications

Download:

[Full report.pdf](#)

[Full report word.docx](#)

[Report summary.pdf](#)

[Report summary \(accessible\).docx](#)

Read our blog post on the report: [Tripwires and timebombs: unnecessary hazards in the plans for dealing with EUSS applications after the deadline](#)

www.eurightshub.york.ac.uk/project-news/new-report-from-the-hub-emergency-measures-needed

You can now get an EU Settlement Scheme application form by email

Most people applying to the EU Settlement Scheme do so **online**. A minority of people **cannot**, generally those who are not EU citizens but who nevertheless qualify for the EU Settlement Scheme under a variety of scenic routes (known to lawyers as Zambrano, Chen, Ibrahim, Surinder Singh and Lounes).

Those people have to call the Settlement Scheme helpline and ask for a paper application form to be posted out, filled in and returned. It's much more of a faff.

With 20 days to go before the Settlement Scheme deadline, the Home Office now says that these application forms can be ordered *and* returned by email instead of by post. This doesn't seem to be mentioned on its website yet, but officials have been letting lawyers and charities know in correspondence. Marianne Lagrue from Coram Children's Legal Centre has the following message direct from the EUSS Grants Team:

*With effect from Wednesday 9th June 2021 it is now possible to request paper application forms from the SRC [Settlement Resolution Centre] to be sent **via email**, this will hopefully speed up the process.*

*In addition to this, if required, it is also possible to **submit** a paper form via email, although this needs to be specifically requested when requesting the paper application.*

Any bulk requests (no more than 10 per sheet) should be sent using the attached spreadsheet [\[here\]](#) with all required columns completed to EUSSGrants@homeoffice.gov.uk.

Presumably non-bulk requests for an emailed application form can also go to EUSSGrants@homeoffice.gov.uk; we'll try to confirm that.

[Curtesy of FreeMovement.org.uk](http://www.FreeMovement.org.uk)



 <http://citizensrightsproject.org>

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RECEIVE FREE SUPPORT IN APPLYING FOR
EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME

FREE SUPPORT WITH

SETTLED STATUS APPLICATIONS

Saturday 19th June
09:00 - 16:00

Mastrick Community
Centre

Greenfern Rd, Mastrick, AB16 6TR

Booking is required!

To book an appointment please email us:

iona_rennie@shelter.org.uk,

vikki_moroney@shelter.org.uk,

laura.keith@weareac.org

To apply, bring your passport or other ID, National Insurance Number, proof of address and telephone. The information you share with us is confidential. Social distancing measures apply.

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No Recourse
North East



DWP changes guidance on recovering Hardship Payment Debt



Public
Law
Project

Published: 3rd June 2021

Following a judicial review claim lodged by PLP, the Department of Work and Pensions has agreed to waive debt accrued by PLP's client, a Universal Credit claimant who was forced to claim hardship payments to cover essential needs after she was unfairly sanctioned for over a year and a half.

[Read PLP's note advisers, 3 June 2021](#)

The department has also revised its [Benefit Overpayment Recovery Guide](#) so it is now clear that it has discretion to waive Recoverable Hardship Payments ('RHPs') regardless of whether the claimant meets the requisite earnings threshold.

These changes are the culmination of a judicial review challenge brought on behalf of our client who is a vulnerable care-leaver with physical and mental health problems and experience of domestic abuse. She had been unfairly sanctioned six times and lived on reduced benefits for over a year and a half.

Although PLP [successfully appealed](#) all six sanction decisions on behalf of our client, she was left in debt which included RHPs (effectively loans) that were taken on to cover her basic needs during the period of sanctioning.

Following a judicial review claim lodged by PLP, the DWP conceded that it does have discretion over whether to recover hardship payments, but initially refused to waive our client's debt. In response to a further threat of judicial review, our client's hardship payment debt has now been waived.

[Read our note on changes to DWP Guidance on Recoverable Hardship Payments by PLP lawyer Emma Vincent Miller](#)

Most recently our client was represented by PLP's Emma Vincent Miller. Matthew Ahluwalia and Sarah Clarke were the PLP lawyers working on her case previously and Zoe Leventhal (Matrix Chambers) was her barrister.

No recourse to public funds: What does it mean and who does it affect?

Shelter

www.bigissue.com/latest/no-recourse-to-public-funds-what-does-it-mean-and-who-does-it-affect/

Scottish Government must strengthen the rights for people who are homeless



May 24, 2021

<https://blog.scotland.shelter.org.uk/scottish-government-must-strengthen-the-rights-for-people-who-are-homeless/>

The Money and Pensions Service launches Beta MoneyHelper site



Money &
Pensions
Service

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) has today released a Beta version of the MoneyHelper consumer website to share with stakeholders and partners, in the next exciting phase of its new consumer brand launch.

MoneyHelper will deliver a single access service for people needing pensions and money guidance by consolidating the MaPS' legacy brands: Money Advice Service, The Pensions Advisory Service and Pension Wise. Pension Wise will continue to operate as a named service provided by MoneyHelper.

MaPS has set a working date of 30 June for the full launch of MoneyHelper to consumers, building in some flexibility to that date to ensure the website meets the needs of MaPS, its stakeholders, partners and – above all – consumers.

Visit the MoneyHelper Beta site at www.moneyhelper.org.uk and for more information about the new MoneyHelper consumer brand visit www.maps.org.uk/moneyhelper.



Tax credit renewals – HMRC scams warning for tax credits customers



Tax credits customers should be vigilant and alert to potential scams, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has warned, as the remaining annual renewal packs will arrive in the post this week.

In the 12 months to 30 April 2021, HMRC responded to more than 1,154,300 referrals of suspicious contact from the public. More than 576,960 of these offered bogus tax rebates.

<https://revenuebenefits.org.uk/blog/tax-credit-renewals-hmrc-scams-warning-for-tax-credits-customers>

Bereavement support for cohabitants

The DWP has put forward a tentative date to begin the process to allow long term working age cohabitants with children the same right to Widowed Parents Allowance and Bereavement Support Payment as married couples, after their partner has died.

The government still has to change the law following the High Court decision on [Jackson and Ors \[2020\]](#) and the [McLaughlin case](#) at the Supreme Court in 2018, which found that the [government position on bereavement benefits for cohabitants with children was unlawful](#).

In a [letter to the Work & Pensions Committee Chair](#), Baroness Stedman-Scott (Minister for Work & Pensions in the House of Lords) has said that the DWP 'hopes to lay a proposal for a draft (Remedial) Order ... before the Parliamentary Summer Recess'



'Breaks or breakdown', Carers Week 2021 report

07 June 2021

Research released for Carers Week has found that carers lost, on average, 25 hours of support a month they previously had from services or family and friends before the pandemic.

72% of carers have not had any breaks from their caring role at all. Of those who got a break, a third (33%) used the time to complete practical tasks or housework, and a quarter (26%) to attend their own medical appointments.

Three quarters (74%) reported being exhausted as a result of caring during the pandemic, and more than a third (35%) said they feel unable to manage their unpaid caring role.

www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/breaks-or-breakdown-carers-week-2021-report

£26m fund will help tens of thousands of Scots online

The third phase of [Connecting Scotland](#), which focuses on supporting skills and training, is open until 5 July

Organisations are being invited to apply for funding to help end the digital divide in Scotland.

Around 23,000 people will be given new online skills and training to help improve their chances of securing a job or to reduce isolation as part of Connecting Scotland.

The £26 million programme, which helps those on lower incomes and groups like older people, will offer online training skills as well as providing people with devices like iPads and Chromebooks, and unlimited data for two years.

<https://tfn.scot/news/26m-fund-will-help-tens-of-thousands-of-scots-online>



RS v Secretary of State for Work & Pensions (ESA): [2021] UKUT 112 (AAC)

Upper Tribunal Administrative Appeals Chamber decision of Judge Mitchell on 31 January 2021. Published 11 June 2021

Read the full decision in [CE/1941, 1942 & 1943/2018](#).

Judicial Summary

This decision seeks to explain the legal mechanism by which a person who was entitled to the contributions-based element of Employment Support Allowance is awarded the income-based element.

It also highlights a number of shortcomings in Department for Work and Pensions practices regarding record-keeping, conduct of interviews under caution in overpayment cases and the provision of documentary evidence to the First-tier Tribunal. The decision expresses concern at the DWP's apparent inability to explain to the First-tier Tribunal the meaning of certain decision-making codes used in the 'notepad' entries that record claimant contacts and actions taken on awards.

Work and Pensions Committee urges DWP to consider lifting the 365-day limit on new-style ESA entitlement when a work capability assessment is still pending

Letter to DWP on disability employment issues also requests details of what steps are being taken to ensure PIP claims are not stopped pending reviews, now that pandemic-related extensions have stopped

In a letter to the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Justin Tomlinson, the chair of the Committee Stephen Timms asks for more information to inform the Committee's [inquiry into the Disability employment gap](#).

[Mr Timms' letter to Mr Tomlinson](#) is available from parliament.uk

Letter calling on the UK Government to #EndtheYoungParentPenalty

On 10 June 2021 a cross-party letter was sent to secretary of state for work and pensions Therese Coffey calling for the adult rate of benefits to be restored to single parents under 25 in Universal Credit, as part of One Parent Families Scotland's campaign to #EndtheYoungParentPenalty.

There is no reason to treat single parent families differently based on age. Whether under or over 25, single parents have a high percentage of their household income taken up by caring for a child as they are both the sole breadwinner and carer for their family. The Government's decision not to extend this support can only therefore be seen as a Young Parent Penalty.

<https://opfs.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/campaigns/end-the-young-parent-penalty/cross-party-letter/>

Free school meals announced for 90,000 more pupils



Holyrood will deliver on the SNP's manifesto pledge to give free school meals to pupils in primary four and five, no matter how much their families earn

More than 90,000 children in Scotland will be entitled to [free school meals](#) by January 2022, the education secretary has announced, regardless of their background.

The Scottish government will extend the universal free school lunches programme – currently only available to children in funded early learning, funded childcare and primary years 1-3 – to state school pupils in primary four and five in a bid to slash child hunger.

www.bigissue.com/latest/free-school-meals-announced-for-90000-more-pupils/





MONEY AND
MENTAL HEALTH
POLICY INSTITUTE

Set Up To Fail Campaign Aims to Tackle Universal Credit Injustice

THE MONEY AND MENTAL HEALTH - charity has launched a new campaign: *Set Up To Fail*. The campaign calls for urgent action from the government to fix design flaws in the Universal Credit system to ensure that anyone who needs help with Universal Credit can get it, instead of being set up to fail by the system.

This comes on the back of new research showing that around 1.3 million people experiencing high levels of mental distress are currently receiving or applying for Universal Credit. The charity's research shows that without support, many people with common symptoms of mental health problems – such as difficulties understanding complex information and remembering appointments – struggle to deal with the ongoing administration and bureaucracy required to get Universal Credit payments. This includes filling in complex forms, dealing with correspondence from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and appealing decisions about their benefits.

www.abccorg.net/item/3689-set-up-to-fail-campaign-aims-to-tackle-universal-credit-injustice



Monthly statistics user consultation results

In May 2021, AiB carried out a consultation with stakeholders and statistics users regarding the discontinuation of publishing monthly statistics. Details of the statistics user consultation can be found here: [AiB Statistics User Consultation - May 2021 | Accountant in Bankruptcy](#)

Main findings

We received 17 responses to this consultation through an opinions survey and we would like to thank all those for their responses.

From this survey, we have the following main findings:

- Over 64% of respondents found the quarterly statistics publication most useful, compared with 24% who found the monthly statistics publication most useful.
- The majority of users are interested in statistics on bankruptcy, Protected Trust Deeds (PTDs), the Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS) and moratorium on diligence. There remains some interest in statistics on corporate insolvency.
- Based on the 17 responses, there are 4 main uses of our statistics: business intelligence, economic analysis and trends, personal knowledge and re-purposing for media activity.
- The majority of respondents find out about our statistical releases from AiB directly either through an announcement email or our website.

Respondents were able to share their thoughts on what other statistics they would find useful. We have acknowledged these comments and are looking to include additional statistics on PTDs, failure rates per company, average debt level and amount repaid in the new Annual Statistics Report that is due to be published on 28 July 2021.

For those who are keen to gain online access to AiB's databases, please contact the [AiB IT team](#). Stakeholders and statistics users were also invited to share their views with the AiB communications team directly. No responses were received by the communications team.

Full results of the opinions survey can be found here: [Statistics User Consultation - May 2021](#)

Conclusion

Given the reintroduction of more detailed quarterly statistics publications and the results detailed above, it is now our intention to discontinue the publication of monthly statistics.

Hence, the May 2021 edition which is scheduled to be released on Wednesday 09 June is will be the last monthly statistics publication.

www.aib.gov.uk/news/releases/21212121/0606/monthly-statistics-user-consultation-results



Equifax changes credit scores on the quiet

Equifax used to calculate credit scores for consumers out of 700. But in April 2021 it switched to calculating scores out of 1000 and has changed the bands used to describe your credit rating.

Oddly Equifax hasn't made an announcement about these changes. The Equifax Credit Report & Score has been updated but hardly anyone uses that. Most people see their Equifax score using the ClearScore report, which still uses the old-style scores out of 700.

How will this affect you?

Your credit record hasn't changed – a higher score isn't better

You might think a higher number sounds good – but it doesn't mean your credit history has improved. Equifax is just showing you a different number.

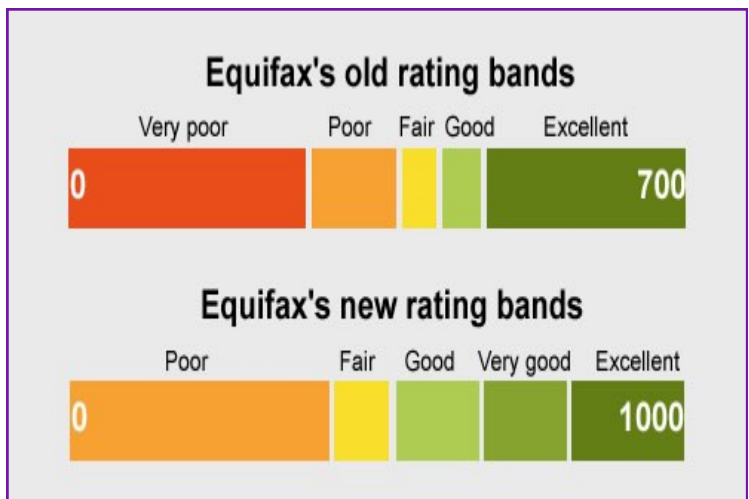
Equifax now puts scores into different bands

Equifax used to use Very poor – Poor – Fair – Good – Excellent to describe your credit rating.

The numbers would have to change for the new 0-1000 scale, but Equifax has also decided to change the band names to Poor – Fair – Good – Very good – Excellent.

This table shows the old Equifax guidelines compared to the new ones:

Equifax rating	previous	from 2021
Very poor	0-279	-
Poor	280-379	0-438
Fair	380-419	439-530
Good	420-465	531-670
Very good	-	671-810
Excellent	466-700	811-1000



Deductions from benefits: What's the issue and what can be done about it?

MONEY
ADVICE TRUST

Following a recent High Court case on the DWP's use of deductions from Universal Credit to collect debt, our Public Affairs and Policy Manager, Grace Brownfield, examines the issues with the current system and where urgent improvements are needed.

In March, the High Court ruled that part of the DWP's current approach to deductions from benefits to pay court fines was unlawful. The case was brought by Shelter on behalf of four people: it focused specifically on the DWP's policy of always setting court fine deductions from Universal Credit at the maximum rate of 30%, even though the law actually provides that these can be taken at a lesser rate, down to a minimum of 5%. The court ruled that, by not showing discretion with where the deduction rate was set – as the legislation intended – the DWP was acting unlawfully.

There's lots more detail on the specific case and judgment on [Shelter's blog](#) – which is well worth a read – but the case also shone a light on the wider issues with deductions from Universal Credit. These are issues that we encounter time and time again in our own work and research.

Read the full article here - www.moneyadvicetrust.org/blog/deductions-from-benefits-whats-the-issue-and-what-can-be-done-about-it/

Case studies needed - disabled students unable to access UC as not had WCA

Tessa Gregory and Lucy Cadd from the law firm Leigh Day are bringing a judicial review challenge to the Universal Credit (Exceptions to the Requirement not to be receiving Education) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (the “2020 Regulations”), which prevent disabled students who haven’t yet been determined to have limited capability for work (LCW) from making a claim to UC. They are seeking further evidence to support the judicial review (in the form of case studies).

The 2020 Regulations were brought into force on 5 August 2020. They changed the position in law as to a disabled student’s entitlement to UC. Previously, a disabled student was entitled to UC if they were in receipt of a qualifying benefit (AA, DLA or PIP) and were deemed to have LCW following a work capability assessment (WCA). However, the 2020 Regulations now stipulate that a disabled student will not be entitled to UC unless they have already been determined to have LCW prior to the date of their claim for UC. We represent a disabled student who has been refused UC on the basis that he did not have a prior determination of LCW before making his claim to UC. As per the 2020 Regulations, he was not invited to a WCA to establish his LCW status.

The case follows the judicial review of [Kauser and JL v SSWP CO/987/2020](#), which the SSWP conceded last year, and concerned the unlawful policy operated by the SSWP in relation to disabled students’ entitlement to UC. It is as a result of conceding that her policy was unlawful, that the SSWP decided to make the 2020 Regulations.

The judicial review has been given permission to proceed on all four grounds. In summary, those grounds are: (i) unlawful failure to consult; (ii) the 2020 Regulations are irrational; (iii) the 2020 Regulations are discriminatory in that they breach Article 14, read with A1P1 and/or Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights; and (iv) failure to comply with the public sector equality duty.

We are seeking case studies to support the case and would be very interested to hear of others who are in a similar position to our client. We are under some time pressure as the current deadline for the case summaries is **6 July**. If there are people you have represented who have been in the same or similar situation we would be extremely grateful if you could provide a short summary of their situation to us (gaining their prior authority to do so). We would be particularly interested to hear from people who might have either been deterred entirely from claiming UC as a result of the 2020 Regs, or who have tried to use the ESA ‘workaround’. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information.

Our contact details are Lucy Cadd – lcadd@leighday.co.uk and Tessa Gregory – tgregory@leighday.co.uk.

Universal Credit - New £400 Benefit Changes Set to Kick in This Week

SHARED ACCOMMODATION RATE - At risk people across Britain will now receive extra support with housing costs as benefit payments for vulnerable claimants are introduced.

The changes affect those who qualify for the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) which determines how much young people can get paid towards their rent.

Under updates to eligibility rules, more vulnerable people, including care leavers and those who have been homeless will see their payments increase by up to £400 each month.

The changes, which are being introduced two years earlier than scheduled, are expected to help **Universal Credit and Housing Benefit claimants**.

The SAR is applied to renters aged under 35 who are claiming support through their Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

Changes to the Local Housing Association rate

There are two key changes:

- Care leavers can now claim the higher one-bedroom LHA rate for longer, as the maximum age limit has been raised to 25, from 22.
- Anyone who has lived in a homeless hostel for 3 months or more, regardless of age, will also now be able to claim the higher rate, as the age limit has been removed.

www.abc.org.net/item/3690-universal-credit-new-400-benefit-changes-set-to-kick-in-this-week



Free Financial First Aid Workshops

The WEA in partnership with Aberdeen City Council is offering workshops in Financial First Aid. The workshops are aimed at community groups and organisations who might be working with people in financial difficulties as well as individuals looking to improve their financial first aid skills.



The workshops take a practical look at how we can deal with financial emergencies at the individual and community level. They help learners to identify emergencies, act quickly to aid those in crisis and connect them to specialist services and support networks. Topics covered reflect the range of interlocking crises affecting people daily, such as benefits problems, redundancy, ill health, debt and eviction. Designed around the needs, interests and numeracy level of learners, the workshops use examples from daily life to increase learners' confidence in dealing with the technical and confusing language of banks, employers, landlords and the benefits office.



Financial first aid skills help learners to respond to money problems more effectively, developing the understanding needed to identify the issues, know their rights and decide what action to take. However, the workshops also help learners to reflect on the social context of financial emergencies, acknowledging the slow and ongoing 'emergency' of poverty in our communities, and to think about how groups can respond.

The course is delivered online including Zoom sessions so you will need an appropriate device (e.g. PC, Laptop or Tablet) and have WiFi access.

Available dates and times are below.

- Tuesday 22nd June 10am-12pm
- Wednesday 23rd June 1pm-3pm
- Tuesday 29th June 1pm-3pm
- Thursday 1st July 10am-12pm
- Monday 5th July 1pm-3pm
- Friday 16th July 10am-12pm
- Wednesday 4th August 10am-12pm
- Friday 6th August 1pm-3pm

Further workshops will be scheduled for Autumn-Winter 2021.

This course is **FREE** to attend thanks to funding from Aberdeen City Council

To book a place: Contact Elaine WEA Education Co-ordinator stating your first and second choice dates. Email: e.morrison-jures@wea.org.uk

Carer's Allowance Supplement payment date

Carers in Scotland who were getting Carer's Allowance on 12 April 2021 will receive a Carer's Allowance Supplement of £231.40 on **16 June 2021**.

The supplement is an extra payment, paid twice a year, for people in Scotland who get Carer's Allowance.

If eligible, you will receive a letter notifying you a payment has been made. Carers do not need to apply for the supplement as it is paid automatically if they are due a payment.

Some payments may take slightly longer but if you have still not received a letter or payment by 23 June call us free on 0800 182 2222.

Find out more at mygov.scot/carers-allowance-supplement

Low income Scots driven deeper into poverty through transport costs



New report reveals transport is too costly for many Anti-poverty campaigners have today called for action to make Scotland's transport system more affordable.

It comes after a report found that Scotland's transport system is too often tightening the grip of poverty on people's lives.

Conducted by the Poverty Alliance and commissioned by Transport Scotland, the report found that public transport was essential for people living on low incomes in terms of accessing employment, as well as vital services such as childcare and education.

<https://tfn.scot/news/low-income-scots-driven-deeper-into-poverty-through-transport-costs>

Updates on Free School Meals, School Clothing Grants and Family Pandemic Payments

Following recent Scottish Government announcements here are the latest arrangements concerning Free School Meals, School Clothing Grants and Family Pandemic Payments. Some frequently asked questions are answered too.

Expansion of Free School Meals to Primary 4 pupils

With effect from August 2021 universal free school meals will be expanded from Primary 1 to Primary 3 to include pupils in Primary 4. From January 2022 this provision will also include Primary 5 pupils.

Free School Meals, Family Pandemic Payment & School Clothing Grants – Primary and secondary pupils

All pupils entitled to statutory free school meals, will receive a payment of £287.50 for the period 28th June 2021 to 16 August 2021. The payment is comprised by seven weeks free school meals at £12.50 per week, £100 school clothing grant allowance and the inclusion of £100 summer **Family Pandemic Payment**.

Do I need to apply for this funding and when will I receive payment?

Eligible families already in receipt of free school meals, do not have to apply for this funding. Payment will be made direct to your nominated bank account by 25 June 2021

Pre-school age child in funded early learning and childcare settings

Pre-school age children are not entitled to free school meals and in accordance with the Scottish Government criteria are not entitled to the **Family Pandemic Payment**. This is because the Scottish Child Payment is now available. If you have not already done so you can apply for the **Scottish Child Payment on mygov.scot**.

I have recently applied but I've not been notified of the outcome

If you have recently applied for income based free school meals, please be assured that we are dealing with all applications as quickly as possible, and we will contact you direct when your application has been processed.

Families who are on a low income but not currently in receipt of free school meals can check entitlement by completing the following online form:

Check entitlement and apply for free school meals

The current eligibility criteria (subject to change) are as follows but is included in the entitlement checker mentioned above.

Children are eligible for free school meals if their parents (or carers) are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

The current qualifying benefits and allowances are:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Any income related element of Employment Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit (WTC), and have an income of less than £16,105
- Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income of less than £7,330
- Support under Part VI of the **Immigration and Asylum Act 1999**
- Universal Credit with a monthly take home pay of less than £610
(*the qualifying benefits and allowances are subject to change*)

If you are aged 16-18 years-old and receive any of the above qualifying benefits in your own right, you can apply for free school meals.

Family Pandemic Payment Winter 2021

In addition to the summer Family Pandemic Payment the Scottish Government also announced a £100 payment which will be paid no later than 16 January 2022. Further information will be made available later in the year confirming expected payment dates.

For more information please visit: **<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/assistance/free-school-meals/>**



E-bike trials for key workers

If you work in the health service or other key industries you might be able to arrange for a free work-based trial.

E-bikes are one of the best ways to get around this summer. Fresh air and exercise with a boost from the battery to make pedalling up hills a piece of cake!

So if you want to add more power to your pedal, contact our transport champion and find out about how you and/or your workplace can benefit from this great summer offer.

Email advice@ne.homeenergyscotland.org with the subject "E-bike trial" for more information.



Making winter feel like summer

This is a great time to check eligibility for the Scottish Government's Warmer Homes Scotland (WHS) programme as work can be booked in ahead of the winter rush.

We'll be running sessions for organisations who work with fuel poor households and would like more information. Sessions will cover:

- how the Warmer Homes Scotland scheme works
- how it has helped people
- other funding options available from the Scottish Government
- plus, all the support we can provide

Detail of dates and how to register will be published on our social media pages and through our partnership team

If you're keen to sign up, email advice@ne.homeenergyscotland.org with the subject "WHS ses-

Customer Service Advisors

Salary: £19,450 p/a. Hours: 35 per week

Location: Aberdeen or Dundee

Home Energy Scotland is the free, impartial advice service funded by the Scottish Government and managed by the Energy Saving Trust. Scarf delivers the service in North East Scotland.

As a Customer Service Advisor at Scarf you will have the opportunity to help households across the north east of Scotland to lower their energy bills and reduce their impact on the environment by providing high-quality tailored and impartial advice and information about energy efficiency.

More details [HERE](#)

Project Manager

Salary: £28,000 – £30,000 p/a. Hours: 35 per week

Location: Aberdeen

We're looking for a Project Manager to lead the effective and efficient delivery of energy efficiency projects for properties across the north east of Scotland

The post holder will be responsible for ensuring compliance with all legal and operational requirements of contracts, liaising with stakeholders, providers, and householders.

Our Project Manager will identify, design, and manage the delivery of projects to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.

View the full job description [HERE](#), containing responsibilities of and requirements for the role.

More details [HERE](#)

