

February 2022 Newsletter

Free bus travel for young people in Scotland



From 31 January, all young people living in Scotland aged between 5 and 21 years will be eligible for free bus travel within Scotland. Parents of those aged 5 to 10 are encouraged to apply using ParentsPortal and those aged 11 and up should apply using the National Entitlement Card scheme.

For children aged 5 to 10 applications should be made via ParentsPortal: <https://parentsportal.scot/home/> A guide to the application process is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4F-G-kzbNo>.

For children aged 11 to 15 an application should be made via <https://getyournec.scot/nec/> Please find step-by-step instructions on how to apply for a NEC and free bus travel through getyournec.scot: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ev_sEjprEDE

For young people aged between 16 and 21 applications should be made by themselves via <https://getyournec.scot/nec/> <https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/apps/news/release.aspx?newsid=8415>

Benefit calculator

Our benefits calculator will help you find out what benefits you can claim.

If you are affected by Coronavirus please go through the calculator and we will tell you about your entitlements. Also see our guide [To benefits for people affected by Coronavirus](#).

The calculator is free to use, and the details you provide are anonymous.

Before you start, make sure you have information about your savings, income, pensions and existing benefits (for you and your partner).

If you run out of time, you can save your calculation and come back to it later, and pick up right where you left off.

- ⇒ Should take 10 minutes to complete
- ⇒ Please complete all fields with an asterisk(*)

[START >>>](#)

Aberdeen City Libraries launch new health information service to support wellbeing

Aberdeen City Libraries have launched Health Information Plus, a service to help people learn more about wellbeing.

Based within the Information Centre of Central Library but working across the city's network of community libraries, Health Information Plus will direct customers to advice on everything from nutrition to exercise.

Customers will be able to access information in a variety of formats, including books, eBooks, audiobooks and online.

The service will operate on a drop-in or an appointment basis, including virtual 1-2-1s. Inquiries can be submitted by email healthinfo@aberdeencity.gov.uk or by phoning 01224 652500.

For more information on the service, visit www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/library-services/health-and-wellbeing



Tribunal correct to treat pay in lieu of notice as employed earnings for UC purposes rather than as a termination of employment payment that could be excluded from calculation

The issue in this case is whether tribunal was correct to hold that a payment of pay in lieu of notice, made after the termination of the appellant's employment, fell to be treated as employed earnings.

The appellant made a claim for universal credit (UC) to the Department for Communities (the Department) on 19 February 2018. On 25 March 2018 the Department decided that he was entitled to UC amounting to £0.00 as his earnings exceeded his entitlement to UC. This was on the basis that he had received earnings of £475.49 in the assessment period from 19 February 2018 to 18 March 2018.

The appellant requested a reconsideration. On 29 March 2018 the decision was reconsidered by the Department but not revised. The respondent appealed. The appeal was considered by a tribunal consisting of a legally qualified member (LQM) sitting alone.

The tribunal disallowed the respondent's appeal.

Decision - [C3/21-22\(UC\)](#)

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment guide for assessment providers

Last updated 24 January 2022

Guidance for health professionals carrying out PIP assessment activity and for those responsible for the quality of PIP assessments.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-assessment-guide-for-assessment-providers#full-publication-update-history

High Court rules that failure to compensate claimants who migrated to universal credit for loss of enhanced disability premium and child tax credit disabled child element is unlawful.

(2022] EWHC 123 (Admin)

This is early days yet but it is likely the Department will need to pay anyone affected since UC commenced, and it is likely to take some time to start the process. When we have news on the next step we will let you know.

This is connected to the previous successful challenge re loss of compensation in SDP cases, both of which found that the failure to protect the income of severely disabled claimants migrating to universal credit was unlawful.

The claimants in the two High Court judgments, TP and AR

issued a further judicial review challenge on the basis that the £120 a month awarded in transitional payments constituted unlawful discrimination under Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). This was because, although they were compensated for the loss of the severe disability premium (SDP), they were not compensated for the loss of the enhanced disability premium (EDP) and so were still around £60 a month worse off than they would have been on legacy benefits. The court has found that the failure to protect the income of severely disabled claimants migrating to universal credit was unlawful.

Leigh Day solicitors representing state:

'According to the DWP, in evidence it gave to the court when defending the judicial review claim, the ruling will affect up to 50,000 people and will involve sums of up to £150 million over a six-year period to put right.'



Guidance on the effect of the Supreme Court's ruling in Fratila

In [ADM Memo 1/22](#) and [DMG Memo1/22](#), the DWP provides guidance on the action that decision makers should take on cases that have been stayed pending the [Fratila judgment](#) - that held that a previous Court of Justice of the European Union case ([Case C-709/20](#)) had already determined that pre-settled status under UK law is not in itself a sufficient right of residence to access income-related benefits.

Jobseekers Forced to Seek Jobs Outside Their Chosen Field of Work

According to the BBC, from Thursday, people will have to look outside their sectors after just four weeks, rather than three months, or face sanctions.

Ministers want 500,000 jobseekers in work by the end of June.

Job vacancies hit a record high of 1.22 million between September and November.

As part of the jobs push - called "Way to Work" - claimants will have to widen their job search outside their previous occupation or sector after four weeks, rather than three months.

A percentage of their benefits could be cut if they are deemed to not be making reasonable efforts to get a job, or if they turn down a job offer.

- ◆ www.gov.uk/government/news/new-jobs-mission-to-get-500-000-into-work
- ◆ www.bigissue.com/news/social-justice/universal-credit-claimants-will-be-forced-to-apply-for-more-jobs-or-lose-their-benefits/
- ◆ <https://thepoorsideof.life/2022/01/27/half-a-million-universal-credit-claimants-told-to-find-work-within-weeks-or-face-sanctions/>



Universal Credit if you have a disability or health condition

Last updated 27 January 2022

This guide provides information on the support and financial help that is available for Universal Credit claimants who have a disability or health condition.

It explains how Universal Credit simplifies the claim process and gives an overview of the changes that Universal Credit brings.

It also covers Work Capability Assessments and how these relate to the Universal Credit Claimant Commitment, as well as how what is expected of a claimant will depend on their personal situation.

There's also information on how Universal Credit supports claimants who are able to work or prepare for work, or may be able to in the future.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-if-you-have-a-disability-or-health-condition-quick-guide

Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee Stephen Timms has welcomed a commitment from the DWP to consider how it could improve its telephone line for people in receipt of letters from its debt management service.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/8565/documents/86502/default/>



Funding boost to Citizens Advice to deliver 'Help to Claim' Universal Credit support

Free confidential and impartial support to help people make a Universal Credit claim will continue to be delivered across Great Britain for the fourth year running.

The Department for Work and Pensions 'Help to Claim' support will be delivered independently by Citizens Advice, in partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland, following a further £21.3 million investment.

People will be able to access Help to Claim support from Citizens Advice via its [website](#) and through the free phone service by calling 0800 023 2581 in Scotland.

The service is free and confidential. Advisers are available 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-boost-to-citizens-advice-to-deliver-help-to-claim-universal-credit-support

**citizens
advice**



Extra £16 million to tackle homelessness

Funding to rapidly move people out of temporary accommodation.

Councils are being given an extra £16 million to help tackle homelessness by moving people swiftly from temporary accommodation into settled homes.

The funding, to be awarded over the next two financial years, takes the total investment in rapid rehousing to £53.5 million. Rapid rehousing aims to ensure people spend the shortest amount of time possible in temporary accommodation, giving them a settled place to live as soon as appropriate.

The package includes an investment of £6.5 million in the Housing First pathfinder to support people with multiple and complex needs.

Housing Secretary Shona Robison said:

“Tackling homelessness is about much more than just providing a bed for the night. Temporary accommodation is an important safety net, but most people need a settled place to stay where they can rebuild their lives.

“Rapid rehousing is based around the idea that most people need a settled home, and this new funding will help councils progress their Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans to move people as quickly as possible into appropriate, settled accommodation.

“The best way to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation is to prevent homelessness from happening in the first place, and today’s announcement follows the recent publication of our consultation on plans for new legal duties on public bodies, highlighting the shared public responsibility to prevent homelessness in Scotland.”

Background

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans cover an initial period of five years from 2019. The new funding comprises £8 million in 2022/23 and £8 million in 2023/24.

[Consultation on prevention of homelessness duties](#). Closing date 31 March 2022

www.gov.scot/news/extra-gbp-16-million-to-tackle-homelessness/

Young people aged under 26 are now eligible for free NHS dental treatment.

The change comes as a further £7.5 million has been given to support the dental sector to recover and build back to pre-pandemic capacity.

Free treatment for people aged under 26 will take effect immediately and there is no “opt-in” required.

Those who started a course of NHS treatment before their 26th birthday will also be eligible. Young people aged under 26 are now eligible for free NHS dental treatment.

The change comes as a further £7.5 million has been given to support the dental sector to recover and build back to pre-pandemic capacity.

www.gov.scot/news/removal-of-nhs-dental-charges-for-all-young-people/

Applications begin for free bus travel for under-22s

All young people and children aged 5-21 years can apply for a card from 10 January to access the Young Persons’ (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel Scheme from 31 January.

Given current public health guidance to reduce contact and mixing, the full marketing launch of the scheme – which will benefit nearly a million young people in Scotland – will take place at a later date.

However, applications are open now with the scheme due to begin on 31 January as planned, in recognition of the fact that some young people need to travel for essential purposes – for example, as key workers or for education or health or care reasons.

www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/young-persons-free-bus-travel-scheme/



Upcoming Events

Adult Disability Payment - Special Rules for Terminal Illness

For stakeholders and partners who may be supporting people to apply for Adult Disability Payment under our fast-track Special Rules for Terminal Illness process or completing the new Benefits Assessment Under Special Rules in Scotland (BASRiS) form.

- ◆ [Tuesday 22 February, 13:30-14:30](#)
- ◆ [Wednesday 02 March, 10:30-11:30](#)



Adult Disability Payment - Debt

For stakeholders who support individuals or families who are living with a disability and or long-term health conditions within the pilot areas.

We will provide an update on Debt and Error, Overpayments and Benefit Suspension policy. This will include an overview on how this has been developed and the process involved to support Adult Disability Payment.

- ◆ [Wednesday 23 February, 13:30-15:00](#)
- ◆ [Tuesday 01 March, 10:30-12:00](#)

Increase in carer's allowance earnings limits

From 11 April 2022, the amount which a person eligible for payment of carer's allowance can earn in a given week without being considered to be gainfully employed and therefore not entitled to receive the benefit will increase from **£128.00 to £132.00**

[The Carer's Allowance Up-rating \(Miscellaneous Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2022](#)

New Independent Advocacy Service opens

Disabled people are now able to access a new advocacy service to get help applying for Scottish social security benefits.

The support is available to disabled people applying for any of Social Security Scotland's current and future benefits including Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment.

It also covers advocacy support for disabled people to access payments for families with children, people who need help to pay for a funeral, carers and young people entering the workplace.

This service will be delivered by the charity VoiceAbility and is entirely independent of the Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland.



www.gov.scot/news/new-independent-advocacy-service-opens-1/

2022 will be biggest year yet for new social security system



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

The introduction of **Adult Disability Payment** and extension of Scottish Child Payment to children under 16 will see a major increase in the number of people eligible to receive Scottish benefits in 2022.

The Scottish Child Payment will increase to £20 from April, giving increased support to 111,000 children under the age of six. Its extension to children under 16 by the end of 2022, subject to the DWP making data available, will see the number of eligible children more than double to 400,000.

Adult Disability Payment, the twelfth benefit and most complex to be introduced so far, will replace the UK Government's Personal Independence Payment. It will be phased in from March, with nationwide rollout at the end of August.

To support this, Social Security Scotland is in the process of recruiting up to 2,000 people by autumn 2022 with the first new recruits set to start early in the New Year - the biggest expansion since its formation in 2018, creating jobs and a boost to local economies.

Scottish Child Payment will double to £20 per week per child

Minister for Social Security Ben Macpherson said:

"2022 will be our biggest year yet in building a new social security system for Scotland with the powers we have.

"The major milestones of introducing Adult Disability Payment and extending Scottish Child Payment will be transformative for many people with a disability or health condition and for families on low incomes.

"By the end of 2022 we aim to have extended the Scottish Child Payment to all those under the age of 16 - subject to the DWP making data available - increasing eligibility to around 400,000 children.

"From April the doubling of our Scottish Child Payment will significantly help us to reduce child poverty and build a fairer society.

"The £20 payment per child per week will be four times what was originally asked for by anti-poverty campaigners and we hope to lift 40,000 Scottish children out of poverty in 2023/24.

"Applying for Adult Disability Payment from Social Security Scotland will be different to applying to the DWP, as we will deliver a much improved experience.

"There will be no private sector involvement, we have removed DWP-style assessments and any consultations that are necessary will be person centred and won't include functional examinations. We'll start from a position of trust. Also, we are offering a range of ways to make an application, including online, by post, over the phone or face-to-face; and, in contrast to the current DWP system, we're removing the burden from individuals to provide supporting information - instead the onus will be on Social Security Scotland to collect the information we require. We'll also fast-track clients who are facing a terminal illness and we will follow the judgement of clinicians instead of being tied to fixed periods of life expectancy.

no private sector involvement

"As well as the positive impact of paying benefits, Social Security Scotland is also growing as an employer. This rapid development is not only making a difference in our communities but is also creating long-term secure employment across the country, and a £280 million contribution to our wider economy - something we can all welcome.

"Scotland's social security system is built on the values of dignity, fairness and respect, and these are the principles which will always guide us as we develop this important public service."

Scottish Child Payment will be fully rolled out to children under the age of 16

Background:

Scottish Child Payment, which is unique in the UK, will be fully rolled out to children under the age of 16 by the end of 2022, subject to data on qualifying benefits being received from the Department of Work and Pensions.

Social Security Scotland was established in September 2018 and delivers 11 benefits – including seven which are brand new.

The introduction of Adult Disability Payment, in Spring 2022, will increase the number of benefits to 12 as Social Security Scotland starts to deliver more complex disability payments.

The organisation will ultimately make payments to 1.8 million people – around one in three people in Scotland. Phase One of the Adult Disability pilot takes place in Perthshire and Kinross, City of Dundee and Western Isles on 21 March 2022 and be phased in over the summer with the rollout nationwide from 29 August 2021

People who currently get disability benefits from Department for Work and Pensions will have their awards transferred to the new Scottish system in stages after the new benefits are introduced from summer 2022.

For more information, contact Social Security Scotland through web chat at mygov.scot/contact-social-security-scotland/ or call the freephone helpline on 0800 182 2222.

www.gov.scot/news/2022-will-be-biggest-year-yet-for-new-social-security-system/



“Very brutal and very unfair”: MSP backs charity’s Universal Credit warning

Tory cuts send a clear message to families that “their poverty does not matter”

Scottish Debt Solution League Tables

Information from the Scottish Government, covering the period from the 20th December 2020 and the 30th of September 2021, shows which organisations provided debt solutions to people struggling with problem debt over that period.

www.advicescotland.com/scottish-debt-solution-league-tables/

From: Kevin Mapstone
kevin.mapstone@amifinancialsolutions.com
Sent: 25 January 2022 15:43
Subject: *AMI Lunch and Learn - 24 February 2022*****

The date for the next AMI Lunch and Learn event for free sector debt advisers has been scheduled for Thursday 24 February at 11.00am. As usual it is free of charge and will run for around an hour, possibly 90 minutes, via Microsoft Teams.

Our main speaker will be James Jones from Experian, talking about all things credit reference related, so please feel free to come armed with any questions you have on the subject. As usual I will also give a brief round-up of any interesting debt sector news and would also welcome any contributions from attendees on any other matters that you may have come across which might be interesting/useful to share.

If you think you might like to attend this event then please respond to me to book your place and a Teams invite will be sent to you nearer the time. Meanwhile please remember to save the date in your diary.

Kevin Mapstone
AMI Financial Solutions Ltd
Mobile: 07458 366329

**FREE
EVENT**

New £3m fund to help families shoulder energy cost crisis

Households are to get help with crippling energy costs with the announcement of a new £3 million fund.

The Scottish Government scheme, which is administered by national advice service Advice Direct Scotland, is designed to prevent households falling into fuel poverty and help those rationing energy use amidst an ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Local authorities and housing associations, as well as charities and organisations which provide energy or debt advice, are encouraged to register online so that they can seek funding for people they support.



<https://tfn.scot/news/new-3m-fund-to-help-families-shoulder-energy-cost-crisis>

Martin Lewis: Up to 7 million missing out on benefits they're entitled to - are you?



Up to seven million people in the UK are missing out on benefits they're entitled to, according to MSE founder Martin Lewis in the latest episode of his ITV show. He explained how to find out if you are, and also for those getting legacy benefits, such as income support or jobseeker's, how to check if you'd be better off on universal credit. Watch a brief extract below or see the full programme on the [ITV Hub](https://www.itv.com/hub).

www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2022/01/martin-lewis-up-to-7-million-missing-out-on-benefits-they-re-en/



Millions of people who rely on the Post Office for banking and cash will be able to continue to do so until the start of 2026 - [here are all the details](#)



Customers of the majority of the UK's biggest banks and building societies will be able to continue to use Post Office counters for basic banking until at least the end of 2025, as part of a new agreement announced today (31 January), making life easier for those who rely on cash. The deal extends an agreement that came into force on 1 January 2020 and was originally intended to end on 31 December 2020.

Customers will be able to continue to use the Post Office's 11,500 counters around the UK for their banking until 31 December 2025. They will be able to make cash deposits and withdrawals. Users will also be able to deposit cheques and make balance queries



CAS - MP Briefing on Five Reforms to Strengthen Universal Credit



A new CAS report looks at how UC supported five groups who seek advice from CAB every day: people who are newly out of work; people who are looking for work; people who are in work; people who are unable to work due to caring responsibilities or a disability; and finally people with children.

Our research found real gaps in the support UC offered to these people. But our report also suggests fixes. Five policy changes would strengthen UC significantly, ensuring our social security system remains accessible and effective for everyone.

With the cost of living continuing to rise, we need to ask if UC is a strong enough safety net. Investing in social security is the right thing to do for our economic recovery.

[Download publication](#)

Help to Claim service

On 26 January 2022 the [DWP announced](#) that Citizens Advice in partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland will deliver the universal credit Help to Claim service from April 2022.

While under the current contract face to face support is available, the new contract is limited to just telephony and digital channels.

NAWRA believes that this is completely inappropriate for vulnerable people who are seeking help because they struggle with those channels.

NAWRA is also concerned at the Minister's comment that those who are unable to access support via these channels will be sent to their local jobcentre where the staff 'will identify the right support to meet their needs'.

Jobcentre staff are not qualified to give independent advice on whether or not to claim – advice that is particularly important as the government ramps up its 'voluntary Move to UC' campaign. It is essential that funding is provided so that independent advice is available to everyone who needs it.

NAWRA has therefore written to the Secretary of State – copied to the Work and Pensions Committee – to express our serious concerns about this development.

[Read our letter.](#)





Average Personal Debt in the UK Double

Feeling you are struggling, you are not alone. Average personal debt in the UK has more than doubled in the last 12 months to over £25,000 per person, new data has revealed.

The exclusive figures have been reported in money.co.uk's [annual debt index](#), following extensive research by the comparison site into household debt across the UK.

Experts say the drastic increase in 2021 is due largely to the ongoing strain of COVID-19, in addition to a recent increase in living expenses.



Key findings within the report include...

- The average amount of personal debt in 2021 is £25,879 - more than double the figure in 2020 (£9,246)
- Around six in ten (59.7%) consumers admitted to being in debt right now
- Almost a third (31.74%) of debt incurred this year has been due to the coronavirus pandemic
- Men (£35,013) have more the twice the average debt of women (£14,911)

www.abcorg.net/item/3806-average-personal-debt-in-the-uk-doubles

Charity launches free advice for Scots struggling with bills

A nationwide campaign gets underway today to encourage Scots to seek free debt advice if they are struggling with their bills.

The Advice Direct Scotland campaign will include adverts on commercial radio, in newspapers, on buses and on digital street hubs across Scotland.

Scots are being urged to contact the charity's free debt advice service, moneyadvice.scot, which provides information and support on a wide range of debt-related issues and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

Specialist debt advisers can work with people to assess their current situation, look at their income and outgoings, and consider what to do next.

The campaign comes amid growing concerns about the cost of living, with inflation rising and steep energy price hikes on the horizon.

January is a particularly difficult time for many families following high levels of Christmas spending.

The moneyadvice.scot service from Advice Direct Scotland includes a knowledge centre with helpful information and live chat at www.moneyadvice.scot. The free service can also be contacted on 0808 800 9060 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.





New CPG inquiry launched into poverty-related stigma



MSPs have today (Wednesday 26th January) launched a call for evidence on the impact of poverty-related stigma, after being told by experts that negative and discriminatory attitudes towards people living in poverty are continuing to blight the lives of people across Scotland.

www.povertyalliance.org/cpg-stigma-inquiry/

More than half of calls to EU Settlement Scheme helpline unanswered



People having problems with their application to the EU Settlement Scheme or issues proving their status have one main point of contact with the Home Office: the EUSS helpline. The Home Office has now revealed that this valuable resource has been failing people, with only 44% of calls getting through to a caseworker between November 2020 and November 2021.

In this time frame, more than 1,400,000 calls were placed, showing the widespread need for information and guidance from the government. Of those, around 650,000 were successfully connected, data released under the Freedom of Information Act [shows](#).

[Full article](#)

The Guardian view on benefit levels: the only way is up



A social security system that leaves 14.5 million people living in poverty is failing. Payments must increase

Benefit levels are set too low. The social security budget was [£36bn](#) less in 2019 than in 2010, and the basic rate of out-of-work benefits is at its lowest for 30 years. Repeated freezes combined with the benefit cap and two-child limit, and rising housing costs, have hit millions of households hard. The consequences have included massive rises in the number of people needing support from food banks and other forms of crisis support, even before the pandemic.

www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jan/24/the-guardian-view-on-benefit-levels-the-only-way-is-up

Britain's welfare system 'unfit for purpose' with millions struggling, experts warn

Two-year study reveals households are being 'battered again and again' by an 'unfit' welfare state that is in urgent need of reform

www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jan/23/britains-welfare-system-unfit-for-purpose-urgent-reform-experts-regardless

MPs to force publication of 'unmet needs' report following Coffey's 'repeated obstruction'



MPs are to use their parliamentary powers to force the publication of a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) report that found disabled benefit claimants had widespread "unmet needs". The action follows the repeated refusals of work and pensions secretary Therese Coffey to hand over the document to the Commons work and pensions select committee.

Full article - www.disabilitynewsservice.com/mps-to-force-publication-of-unmet-needs-report-following-coffeys-repeated-obstruction/



Age Scotland is offering free dementia training sessions for groups, organisations and individuals in Scotland



The training is open to those looking to learn more about dementia and how to be dementia-inclusive, as well as unpaid carers of people living with dementia who would like to better understand their rights.

The charity's dementia training project currently runs three tailored programmes:

- **Dementia Awareness** training covers a range of topics relevant to understanding dementia and being inclusive of those living with the condition.
- **Dementia Inclusion** training is designed to support clubs, groups and community organisations carry out their activities in ways which enable people living with dementia to be included and involved as fully as possible.
- The **Dementia Carers' Rights** workshop can help unpaid carers of those living with dementia better understand their rights and how to access them.

With new dates available for January to March 2022, Age Scotland is encouraging people across the country to sign up now.

In an effort to ensure training opportunities are as accessible and inclusive as possible, the charity also offers a self-study platform which allows carers to learn about their rights when it is convenient for them and without time constraints.

Age Scotland's Dementia Training Coordinator, Sandra Brown, said:

"With around 93,000 people in Scotland living with dementia and this number forecast to increase over the next decade, early diagnosis of the condition is crucial and can help improve the quality of life for people living with dementia.

"Our free, accessible training seeks to raise awareness of dementia, the signs and symptoms and how to be inclusive of people living with the condition.

"We're also proud to offer free, accessible training for unpaid carers of people with dementia to ensure they have a greater understanding of their rights, and how to access them. There's strong evidence that many carers are unaware of their rights as carers, and this lack of knowledge may be a barrier in accessing vital support.

"By taking part in one of our friendly, interactive workshops, or accessing resources through our self-study hub, carers can be better prepared to tackle the complex and sometimes frustrating challenges they can face.

"Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, our team has been delivering training online via Zoom. The online element means people from more remote communities can take part just as easily as people from larger towns and cities where in-person training would have taken place. It's also a chance to bring people from different areas together for a very worthwhile exchange of ideas and experiences."

To find out more and sign up for an Age Scotland dementia training session in 2022, please visit www.age.scot/dementiatraining.





Severely disabled benefits claimants win legal challenge over loss of income caused by move on to Universal Credit



Two severely disabled men known as TP and AR have won yet another legal challenge over the

Department of Work and Pensions' (DWP) failure to provide adequate transitional payments to protect them and others from a cliff-edge loss of income following their move on to Universal Credit (UC). In a scathing judgment handed down today, the DWP is found to have discriminated against the pair when it didn't compensate them the full circa £180 a month difference in the payments they received on legacy benefits and the payments they received on UC when they moved into an area where UC had already been rolled out.

According to the DWP, in evidence it gave to the court when defending the judicial review claim, the ruling will affect up to 50,000 people and will involve sums of up to £150 million over a six-year period to put right.

The ruling is the fourth in favour of TP and AR, who began their legal campaign after they suffered a severe drop in income when they were moved on to UC in 2016 and 2017 as a result of house moves to areas where UC was in operation. Previously they had each received Severe Disability Premium (SDP) and Enhanced Disability Premium (EDP).

Despite rulings in the High Court and Court of Appeal, the DWP still refused to pay severely disabled people affected by the policy the full monthly loss of circa £180 they suffered and instead paid them just £120 a month, compensating for the loss of SDP and not EDP.

Full article - www.leighday.co.uk/latest-updates/news/2022-news/severely-disabled-benefits-claimants-win-legal-challenge-over-loss-of-income-caused-by-move-on-to-universal-credit/

Guardian article - www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jan/21/uk-government-bill-welfare-discrimination-universal-credit

How does this work if the change means a new Element replaces the LCW Element?

Erosion of the Transitional SDP Element

Some claimants who were getting Income-Related ESA, Income Support or Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance, that included a Severe Disability Premium in the month before the date their UC award starts might qualify for the

Transitional SDP Element as an extra Element in their UC assessment .

The Transitional SDP Element is a fixed amount for the claimant's first Assessment Period – but after that it can be eroded or lost due to changes. The amount of the Transitional SDP Element can reduce when another Element increases or a new Element is awarded.

The only exception is where the Childcare Costs Element is awarded or increased – that will not erode (ie not 'eat into') the Transitional SDP Element.

Once the Transitional SDP Element has been eroded it cannot increase again

www.housingsystems.co.uk/News/News/id/146





Changes to earnings arrestment deductions and protected minimum balance



The Debtor Scotland Act 1987, Schedule 2, sets out the amount that can be deducted from a person's wages in an earnings arrestment. An earnings arrestment is when a person's employer receives an instruction to deduct an amount from an employee's wages and pays it direct to their creditors.

A review was carried out in 2021 and as a result, the deduction tables will be amended with effect from 6 April 2022 [The Diligence against Earnings \(Variation\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2021](#).

This change also alters the protected minimum balance in bank arrestments. The protected minimum balance sets out a minimum amount which is protected from arrestment and provides important protection for those who may have their bank account arrested.

The protected minimum balance will increase from £529.90 to £566.51.

Further information will be posted about the changes to diligence against earnings before they come into force on 6 April 2022.

www.aib.gov.uk/news/releases/22222222/0101/changes-earnings-arrestment-deductions-and-protected-minimum-balance

Smart Meters

Grant funding available to support smart meter projects in 2022

Closing date: 12 noon, 11 February 2022

The 2022 Smart Energy GB in Communities programme is now live, with grant funding and support being targeted to organisations reaching people who are over 65, people on a low income or people who are carers.

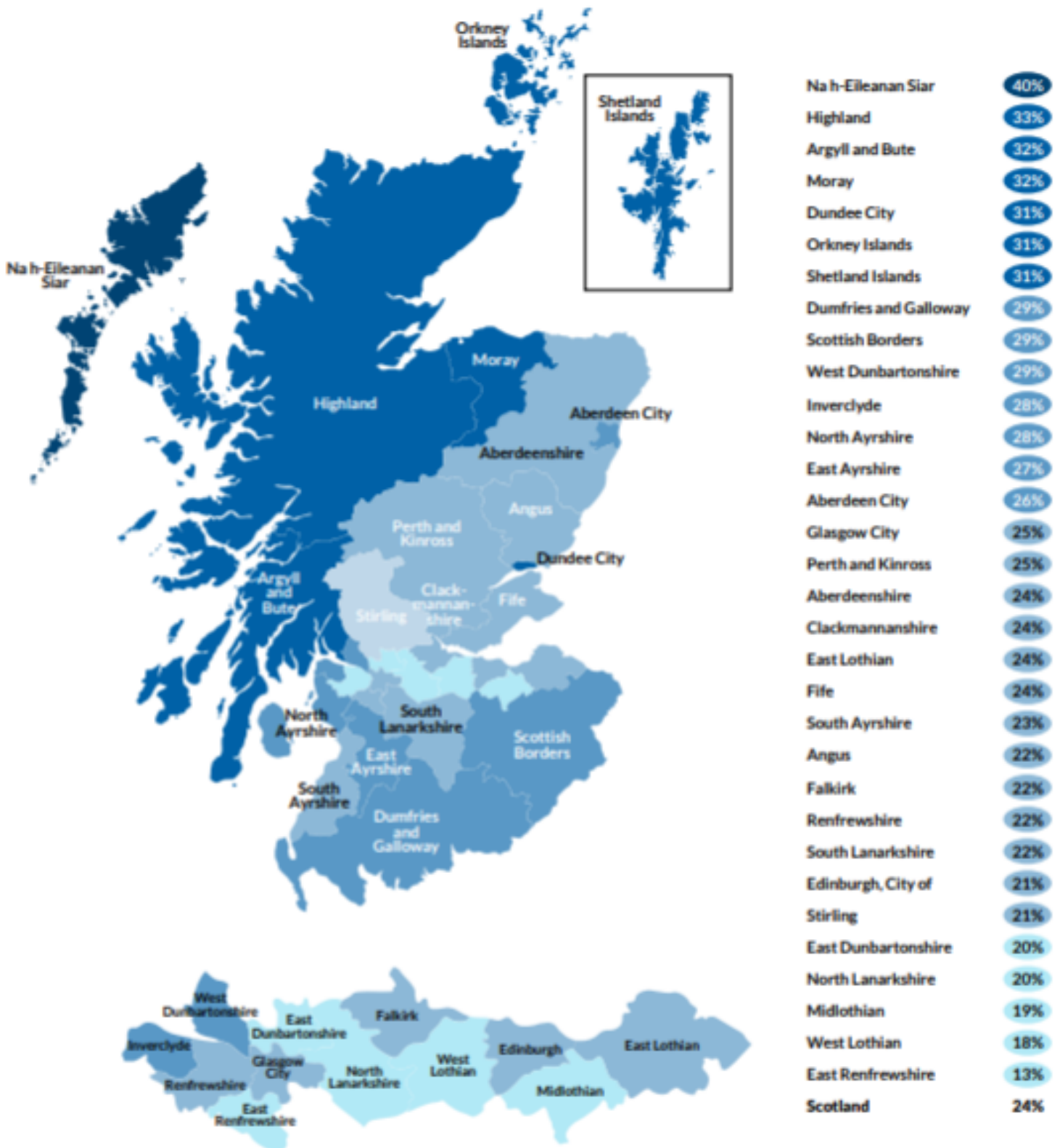
- ◆ Grants of up to £25,000 are available for organisations that can deliver support to people who are over 65.
- ◆ Grants of up to £10,000 are available for organisations that can deliver support to people on a low income.
- ◆ Grants of up to £5,000 are available for organisations supporting people who are carers.

Full details on the application process see www.nea.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/In-Communities-bid-fund-guidance-document-2022-FINAL.pdf. Please read this before completing an online application form and Project Plan. If you have any queries, [contact NEA](#)

Energy Action Scotland | Website: www.eas.org.uk



FUEL POVERTY BY LOCAL AUTHORITY



Source: Scottish Government Scottish House Condition Survey 2019, Local Authority Analysis published December 2020.

<https://new.theclaymoreproject.com/uploads/entities/1230/files/News%20Releases/fuelpovertyLAmav3.pdf>

Sadly, this year looks like it's bringing even more bad news when it comes to rising fuel bills. At Scarf, we are working hard to reduce this impact on as many people as possible in the North East.

If your supplier goes bust the most important thing to remember is: don't panic.

The best advice is to **make a note or take a photo** of your **meter reading** and download any **bills**, and wait for your new supplier to be appointed and get in touch.

There's no need to cancel **direct debits**.

If you're in credit, **the balance will be added** to your account with your new supplier. However, this may take several weeks.

If you're in debt to a company that has stopped trading, **you still have to pay the money you owe**. You will be contacted by its administrators or the supplier which takes over its business.

Our advisors are happy to talk you through any of these steps and can also check your eligibility for energy efficiency improvement programmes such as Warmer Homes Scotland.

Call 0808 129 0888 or email heat@scarf.org.uk for a free consultation.

Worried about your fuel bills - online event - Thursday 3 February at 12.30pm

We're running a number of public online information sessions - keep on an eye on our social media for more details.

The first session 'Worried about your fuel bills?' takes place on **Thursday 3 February at 12.30pm**. If you'd like to join us you can sign up now!

[SIGN UP](#)

**FREE
EVENT**

Join us!

We currently have multiple vacancies:

- ♦ Centre Manager (£42,000 p/a, Aberdeen-based)
- ♦ Customer Service Advisor (£19,900 p/a, Dundee-based)
- ♦ Local Energy Development Specialist (£30,000 p/a, Scotland-wide)

All roles are 35 hours per week with flexible working options.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Energy tips

As a major energy supplier found out the hard way [earlier this month](#), simple energy-saving tips are not created equal...

But there are loads of ways to reduce the amount of energy you use which in turn can help keep fuel bills down. Some save only a little, but that adds up. Our most popular tips include:

- ♦ Mastering your heating system's controls to heat what you need and when you need it.
- ♦ Switching appliances off completely rather than leaving them on standby.
- ♦ Draughtproofing - which can be relatively inexpensive with DIY kits - can save you money AND help you regulate temperatures.

Find more quick wins [here](#). And there's no excuse needed to give your pets a cuddle!

ETZ

ENERGY TRANSITION ZONE



FUNDED LGV LICENCE TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED OIL & GAS WORKERS

ETZ is funding 20 spaces for LGV licence training to support people who have found themselves unemployed from oil and gas.

Training will be delivered directly from a local charity, Aberdeen Foyer's social enterprise – Roadwise Driver Training.

Apply now for fully funded Category 2, Class C training, which will enable you to drive rigid vehicles up to 32 tonnes, including bin lorries, tippers, flat-beds, curtain-sided vehicles, delivery vans, and small trucks.

ETZ Ltd will allocate over £72,000 worth of funding from the North East Economic Recovery and Skills Fund (NEERSF). The funding will support the energy supply chain and target underprivileged demographic groups.

Criteria:

- Reside in either Aberdeen City or Shire with an AB postcode
- Displaced/unemployed from the oil and gas sector
- Clean drivers' licence
- All places to be secured by March 2022
- Priority given to those residing in under represented communities

To apply email:

Pauline Dick
- Aberdeen Foyer Development Coach



Pauline.Dick@aberdeenfoyer.com

*ETZ Ltd is a delivery partner for the North East Economic Recovery Skills funding, confirmed by the Scottish Government last year. It will support people into work, reskill and up-skill employees, and increase innovation and business growth. Aberdeen City Council is the lead accountable body for the Fund.