Benefits & Welfare Update

- May 2019

1. **Rent Increases for UC Claimants**

The DWP is still working on a bulk upload approach for landlords to confirm the 1 April rent increases. See below for more information.



1. **Benefits update**

Working age benefits remain frozen and have not been uprated in April. From 15th May mixed age couples (i.e. those where one member is under State Pension age) can no longer claim Pension Credit. This will mean that couples in these circumstances will be significantly worse off than they would otherwise have been.

1. **Universal Credit – Help to Claim - Citizens Advice Summary up to - 09/05/19**

Number of people supported:

Since Universal Credit went live in Edinburgh on the 28/11/18 we have supported 626 clients in relation to Universal Credit. This has predominantly been in relation to checking entitlement and support to make a claim.

How to access our Services:

* Anyone who needs support in relation to Universal Credit should be directed to their local Citizens Advice Service. A single page poster detailing all of our Bureau locations and outreach services has been circulated to members of the Operational Delivery Group and this is also available on our Website [www.citizensadviceedinburgh.org.uk](http://www.citizensadviceedinburgh.org.uk) We have single point of contact by phone to all of our services – this is 0131 510 5510, where you can chose from options to best direct your call.
* We operate a no wrong door policy. All Universal Credit clients should be supported at their first point of contact and all our advisers should have the relevant knowledge and skills. For particularly complex cases, we have Dedicated Specialist Advisers, who the front line adviser may refer onto or seek guidance from.
* Our Help to Claim Dedicated Specialist Advisers are all now in place, they are: Stuart Woods [stuart.woods@caed.org.uk](mailto:stuart.woods@caed.org.uk) Jonathan Smith [jonathan.smith@caed.org.uk](mailto:jonathan.smith@caed.org.uk) and Saleem Shafi [saleem.shafi2@caed.org.uk](mailto:saleem.shafi2@caed.org.uk)
* Our Dedicated Specialist Advisers will be providing an additional ½ day per week Universal Credit Drop in Clinic in each of our current 4 bureau locations. For reference, our bureaus are located at 58 Dundas Street (City Centre), 23 Dalmeny Street (Leith), 8 Bath Street (Portobello) and the Fountainbridge Library at 137 Dundee Street. In June/July we will be re-opening our Muirhouse Bureau at 31 Pennywell Road. Details of these additional drop in sessions should be published on our website and can be circulated to the ODG by the 20/05/19
* Our Dedicated Specialist Advisers have each been allocated a Specific Job Centre, where they will provide 1 day per fortnight onsite appointment based service in each JCP location, which can increase if demand requires. Access to this service is managed by the local JCP. The allocations are, Stuart Woods – Westerhailles, Saleem Shafi – Leith, Jonathan Smith – High Riggs.



In other news, CAB Leith are offering specialist help to EEA nationals wanting to apply for Settled Status.

1. **Social Security Stakeholder Toolkit**

The Scottish Government has published a stakeholder toolkit on the delivery of devolved social security benefits. It is available at <https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-security/>

It is for all public, third sector and charitable organisations who are involved in the delivery of, or providing advice on, the new social security benefits which are being devolved to the Scottish Government under the Scotland Act 2016. These include a range of powers over disability and carers, as well as powers to make administrative changes to Universal Credit and vary the housing costs element.

The toolkit has been produced by the Scottish Government and provides resources and information to help you to communicate with your staff and clients about the significant changes happening in the field of social security in Scotland.

You can use the information and facts in this toolkit on your organisation’s intranet to inform your employees about the changes.  You could also use it on your external website, newsletters and social media to let your clients and local partners know about the new social security benefits being introduced and how they might affect them.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/delivery-devolved-social-security-benefits-stakeholder-toolkit/pages/5/>

1. **Standard Life Foundation**

This foundation funds strategic work including research, policy work and campaigning, which addresses structural issues and individual practice relating to financial wellbeing.

They welcome applications for funding, the next application deadline is **3 June 2019, 1pm.**

**Find out more at** <https://www.standardlifefoundation.org.uk/funding/guidelines>

1. **Edinburgh Escalation Routes**

Here’s the latest information on who to contact with queries at DWP



1. **Best Start Grant**

Here’s an update about the launch on Monday 3 June of the Best Start Grant.

 

1. **Changes to disability benefits**

The first step in scrapping unnecessary reassessments for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for pensioners starts on Friday (31 May). Find out more:

