

March 2024 Spring Statement

Jeremy Hunt's spring statement on 6 March included several announcements relating to benefits. As ever, some are imminent changes, while others are in the pipeline for future years.

Child Benefit

A major announcement from the budget statement is that the eligibility criteria for Child Benefit will change. This will come in two stages:

- From April 2024, the High-Income Child Benefit Charge will not apply until earnings reach £60,000 (up from £50,000). The rate of the High-Income Child Benefit Charge will also be halved so that those earning above £60,000 will not repay Child Benefit in full until they earn £80,000 (up from £60,000).
- From April 2026, the government intends to change how earnings are assessed for the High-Income Child Benefit Charge from an individual assessment to a household assessment. This is in order to combat the current disparity that a single person earning £60,000 (April 2024 figure) would attract the charge but a couple both earning £59,000 would receive Child Benefit in full.

Universal Credit Budgeting Advances

From December 2024, the repayment term for Universal Credit Budgeting Advances will increase from 12 months to 24 months. Note: the repayment term for Universal Credit Advances (at the beginning of a claim or after a significant increase in entitlement) is already 24 months.

Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund will be extended for a further six months in England to September 2024. For updates in your area, see your local authority website.

Disability claims processing

Additional funding to increase system capacity for disability benefit claims processing was announced as part of the budget in order to meet increased demand and improve timescales for claimants.

Additional Jobcentre Support pilot

The Additional Jobcentre Support pilot, which is currently live in 90 Jobcentres across England and Scotland, will be extended by a further 12 months. Under the Additional Jobcentre Support pilot, work coaches spend more time with claimants in order to get them into work. As part of the extension, claimants will be asked to agree to revised claimant commitments at 6, 13 and 26 weeks, or risk their claims being terminated.

Other announcements

- Debt Relief Orders: from 6 April 2024, the £90 administration fee will be abolished.
- National Insurance: from 6 April 2024, the main rate of Class 1 contributions will reduce to 8% and Class 4 contributions will reduce to 6%.
- Prepayment meters: following the end of the Energy Price Guarantee in March 2024, the standing charge on prepayment meters will be permanently removed to end the inequality between those paying by prepayment meter and those paying by direct debit.



Managed Migration Update

The process of managed migration – where existing legacy benefit claimants are invited to make a claim for Universal Credit – is well underway.

From February 2024, managed migration is in all Jobcentre regions across Great Britain. Over the course of 2023/24 the DWP notified 500,000 tax credit claimants – as well as people who claim other benefits who have fallen under a ‘discovery phase’, where the DWP test out the process for other categories of claimant.

Over the next few months, the managed migration process is due to ramp up significantly. Here is the current timetable – as announced in a written statement made by Jo Churchill, Minister of State for Employment – to help you know what to expect.

The DWP have outlined the number of households that they expect to notify during 2024/25:

Benefit	Notified Households
Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance	20,000
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Child Tax Credit	90,000
Income Support	110,000
Tax credits and Housing Benefit	120,000
Tax credits only	10,000
Housing Benefit only	100,000

For the full statement, visit questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-01-25/hcws213 

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Managed migration timetable

2023/24 – 2024/25 – tax credit only claimants

April 2024 – Income Support claimants and those receiving both tax credits and Housing Benefit

June 2024 – Housing Benefit only claimants

July 2024 – claimants receiving both income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Child Tax Credit

August 2024 – State Pension age claimants in receipt of tax credits (directed to claim Pension Credit or Universal Credit depending on their circumstances)

September 2024 – income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance claimants

2028 – 2029 – claimants receiving income-related Employment and Support Allowance only and those receiving both income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Housing Benefit

Further Investment for the Help to Claim Service

Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland have been delivering the Help to Claim service since 2019. The service provides telephone and digital support to help people to make a new Universal Credit claim, including those who have received a managed migration notice. The support covers making and managing a new claim up until the claimant receives their first correct payment.

DWP have announced a further £38m investment in this service. It will be run independently across England, Scotland and Wales for another two years from April 2024.


In a statement made by Jo Churchill, she reported that:

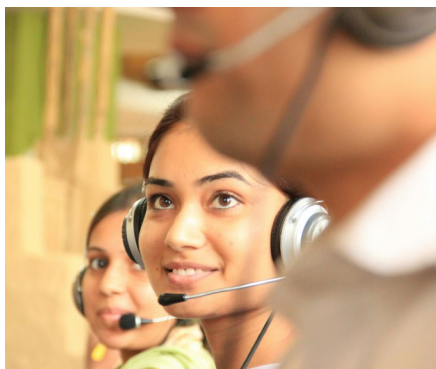
‘Since April 2019, ‘Help to Claim’ has supported nearly 900,000 people, with 9 in 10 people rating their overall experience as good or very good and would recommend it to friends and family.’

This is good news for those who may struggle to make a claim on their own and are able to access services remotely. However, there will be no return to face-to-face support, so for those unable to access support by telephone or online the DWP have advised that they will be ‘able to go to their local jobcentre, where jobcentre staff will identify the right support to meet their needs.’

There is no information available about the nature of the face-to-face support that will be sourced and whether this is within the Jobcentre or dependent on local provision.

It is also important to note that the Help to Claim service is designed to be accessed by someone who has already made the decision that a Universal Credit claim is right for them. Advisers in York and North Yorkshire can call or email our Advice Line if they are helping a client make this decision and need additional advice.

To access the Help to Claim service by phone, webchat or BSL go to: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/help-to-claim 



The Severe Disability Group – Guidance for Clinicians

In February 2024, guidance was published for clinicians as a back-up to the expansion of testing for claimants who will be fast-tracked to the new severe disability group (SDG).

The severe disability group was first proposed in the Health and Disability White Paper, in March 2023.

The criteria for the group were announced by DWP Minister Tom Pursglove in September 2023.

“The criteria used for the severe disability group” he said, “will be based on the impact of a disability or health condition; we are looking at those that are lifelong, have a significant effect on day-to-day life and are unlikely to improve.”

In addition to the new criteria, there was to be a simplified disability benefit assessment process – a process that fast-tracked claimants to their Personal Independence Payment and the Limited Capability for Work Related Activity group.

Continued overleaf →

It's a stage in the claiming process that lies between a standard application and an application under special rules.

By the time of Mr Pursglove's statement, the Government had already worked with an expert group of specialist health professionals to draw up the criteria, and the policy had been tested on a small scale across a range of health conditions.

A larger number of claimants are now to be involved in the ongoing testing – hence the publication of the guidance for clinicians. The guidance includes examples of the kinds of conditions likely to be regarded as meeting the criteria.

The two key agents in the process will be the DWP and clinicians. Clinicians will identify their own patients for the SDG, while the DWP will do the same for their existing claimants.

The DWP will contact these claimants and request consent to obtain medical evidence from their clinician. A form for the SDG will then be sent to the clinician with a request to return it within 15 working days.

This form is a new, short form, similar to those used for palliative care. You will know the form as either the DW1500 or the more recent SR1.

The range of professionals with clinician status will include doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, or clinical social workers.

The guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/severe-disability-group-test-information-for-clinicians>

Guidance on Retention of Habitual Residence in Cases of Forced Marriage or Transnational Marriage Abandonment

[HB Circular A2/2024](#)

To be entitled to a means-tested benefit, claimants must be habitually resident in the 'common travel area' (the UK, Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man) with a right to reside. In most cases, new entrants to the UK will have to serve a period of actual residence before being accepted as habitually resident, typically between one and three-months. Under this policy, certain people who have been detained outside the UK against their will, retain habitual residence on return, with immediate access to means-tested benefits.

This applies to victims of forced marriage or transnational marriage abandonment, described in the guidance as follows:

- victims of 'forced marriage'** are individuals who have been removed from the UK where they are normally resident – in some circumstances this will be those who have left the UK voluntarily, for example for a holiday – and have subsequently been detained abroad against their will; and
- victims of transnational marriage abandonment** are individuals who have been abandoned overseas due to domestic abuse – for example by their spouse who is a British or Irish national or has indefinite leave – and find themselves unable to return to the UK as they have been detained against their will, often through the withholding or destruction of their documents, causing their immigration status to lapse.

The guidance goes on to point out that, individuals coming under the transnational marriage abandonment (TMA) route, can apply to the Home Office for Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) to allow them to return to the UK. They will also be granted a Biometric Resident Permit with the endorsement of 'SETTLEMENT ILE TMA' which can be used to support their access to benefits.



Social Security and Universal Credit (Migration of Tax Credit Claimants and Miscellaneous Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2024 – S.I. No. 341/2024

I've a particular fondness for taking charge of an unruly bunch of miscellaneous amendments.

Love the way they're always misbehaving – running all over the place, from one set of regulations to another, some downright obscure, and causing no end of confusion.

This lot are no exception.

You can decide for yourselves which is the naughtiest...

Four of 'em, in all. Four of note, that is, sitting in the front row. There are others, but they're at the back of the class, heads bowed, and praying not to be noticed.

It's okay, kids. You won't be.

The first concerns, oddly enough, student income. It's an amendment to regulation 71 of the UC Regulations. Turn to page 867 of CPAG for some background reading – under the heading “How student income affects Universal Credit”.

The amendment clarifies the calculation of student income where a student makes a claim to Universal Credit part-way through the year. The income is to be averaged across an academic year, or a period of study if shorter. It puts an intention into action – to ensure that student income is attributed to the appropriate assessment periods.

The second amendment effectively prevents certain tax credit claimants from bunking off Universal Credit. And it will do this from 6th April 2025. From that date existing tax credit claimants will not be able to renew their tax credit claims each year, nor will they be able to make a new claim to Child Tax Credit because they are already on Working Tax Credit, and vice versa. Such behaviour is completely unacceptable, or, at least, will be, from 6th April 2025.

Next: an amendment to regulation 68 of the Universal Credit Regulations 2013. It's operative from 1st April 2024. From that date, children placed for adoption with a Universal Credit claimant will not be considered to be looked after by the local authority but instead will count as part of the claimant's benefit unit, thus attracting a child element.

The last, and probably the most roguish of these amendments, is the one that reverses a recent Court of Appeal decision. It shames me just to look at it!

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away, at a time not too distant, a Ms Bui and a Ms Onakoya engaged in several rounds of jousting with

the DWP over whether a National Insurance number was a prerequisite for a claim to Universal Credit. They finally unseated the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions at the Court of Appeal.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions flew through the air and landed on his posterior with an almighty thump!

The Court had decided: a claim for Universal Credit could be made without a National Insurance number.

It must have been an almighty thump, because, in retaliation for such a humiliating public indignity, this particular amendment reverses the effects of the Bui decision. There is now a requirement that a person must be allocated a National Insurance number before an advance payment of Universal Credit can be made.

Those are the front-rowers in this motley collection of miscellaneous whatnots.

An unruly bunch at the best of times.

Class dismissed!

Statutory Paternity Pay Amendments: New Flexibilities

New regulations [↗](#) have been introduced that extend the period within which Statutory Paternity Pay must be claimed and provide an option to receive it in a single block or in two non-consecutive weeks.

The regulations came into force on 8 March 2024 and apply in relation to children whose expected week of childbirth or date of adoption placement starts on or after 6 April 2024. They provide more flexibility in relation to the period in relation to which a father or partner may claim Statutory Paternity Pay.

In particular, the amendments extend the period within which Statutory Paternity Pay may be

claimed to any time within the first year from the date of childbirth or date of placement for adoption. The amendments also provide a choice of claiming Statutory Paternity Pay in either a single period of two consecutive weeks or two separate one-week periods. Prior to the amendments, Statutory Paternity Pay could only be claimed for a single period of either one or two-weeks within the 8 weeks after birth or placement.

The regulations also make provisions in relation to notice, for example to shorten the required notice period from 14 to 4 weeks.

The Statutory Paternity Pay (Amendment) Regulations 2024 SI No. 121 are available at www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/121/contents/made [↗](#)



Welfare Writes

A Vexatious Request

An attempt to define the ordinary meaning of the word “vexatious” might bring to mind words like “pesky”, “irritating”, “annoying”. There are several meanings in Chambers Twenty-first Century Dictionary. One of these is “wantonly troublesome”.

However, a more formalised meaning is required for some legal procedures. And this was one of the first problems faced by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) when it made a decision on a case brought by a complainant under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) against the DWP.

To read the decision, go to [ic-257131-l4v8.pdf \(ico.org.uk\)](https://www.ico.org.uk/ico/decisions/decision/IC-257131-l4v8.pdf) [↗](#)

For a start, in the reasons for the ICO’s decision, the ICO noted at paragraph 17 that “The term “vexatious” is not defined in the FOIA.

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It appears in section 14(1) without much ado, or fanfare. Section 14(1) states that a public authority, such as the DWP, is not obliged to comply with a request for information if that request is vexatious.

Borrowing guidance from an earlier case, the Commissioner said that vexatiousness in a request for information should be assessed under four headings:

- ✎ The burden imposed by the request on the public authority and its staff
- 🔵 The motive of the requester
- 🟡 The value or the seriousness of purpose of the request, and
- 🟣 Any harassment or distress of, and to, the public authority's staff

What was the nature of the request, that made it such a nuisance to the DWP?

It started with media reports in the Daily Telegraph. Media reports that appeared to generate hostilities towards disabled people claiming benefits. From this, a member of the public, the complainant, submitted a Freedom of Information request to the DWP in the following terms: *"Please provide details of all meetings, correspondence and phone and other calls between DWP ministers/special advisers and staff of the Daily Telegraph in the last three months"*. What, in other words, was the exact relationship between those parties?

The Department refused to comply with the request. It was purposeless, vague, and downright impractical. How could the department go through all that communication detail, on computers, mobile phones, post-it notes, and lord knows what else.

The complainant requested an internal review of the Department's decision to do nothing. The Department stuck to its position. Vexatious. Intolerably vexatious! Section 14(1) lifts the burden of disclosure from our laps, and we can sit easy.

No-one will find out anything.

The complainant, in the face of this refusal, took the next step in the process of escalation, and went to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The ICO found that the DWP still had the incubus sitting on its lap, tickling its chinny-chin-chin. The DWP could not invoke section 14(1) to refuse the complainant's request. For example, this issue of the practicalities in digging up the information...exactly how many DWP staff were involved in communications with the Daily Telegraph?

The ICO gave an exact number...
Eight.

Five ministers and three Special Advisers.

On this basis, the ICO wasn't convinced that the requirement that these actors go through their lines again, checking closely for references to the Daily Telegraph, was "particularly onerous".

The ICO therefore ruled that the complainant's FOI request was not vexatious, and that the DWP had to issue a further response within 35 days of their decision notice – the date of the decision being 27th February 2024.

The Continuation of the Household Support Fund

In the recent Budget, the Chancellor announced that the Household Support Fund, due for the chop in March 2024, was to be extended for six months to September 2024. This was in no small part due to the force of several letters from interested parties, in the state and voluntary sectors.

In early February, for example, representatives of more than 120 organisations, mostly from the voluntary sector, sent a letter to the Chancellor calling upon him to extend the life of the Fund.

Barnardo's took the lead in the letter.

Other signatories included the Trussell Trust, NAWRA (the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers), and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

120 – that's more signatures than the Magna Carta!*

The signatories wanted the HSF to be extended for at least the next year for the following persuasive reasons.

A major gap in support would be left which neither local government nor the voluntary sector could fill. The Fund provided *"vital support, helping families in crisis access essentials, receive advice and support and get practical help with things like furniture and white goods"*.

This was followed a month later by another letter signed by more than 170 council leaders, published the day before the Spring Budget.

The letter took forward the idea of crisis support in the direction of crisis prevention.

Here's how they spelt it out: *"In the long term, councils and our partners in the voluntary and community sector want to shift the focus from crisis support to prevention. However, in the short term, the need for an enhanced local welfare offer is not reducing."*

We would therefore welcome urgent confirmation that the Household Support Fund will be continued beyond March to allow us to keep residents well, support them to engage in work and education, prevent escalating crises and reduce pressure on wider public services."

Amongst the signatories to this letter there was Councillor Claire Douglas, Leader of the City of York Council

*Editors Correction: *The original document of Magna Carta, as agreed upon by King John and Henry III, carried no signatures. Instead, the charter was sealed by the royal great seal and it was confirmed in the presence of witnesses.*

SSWP v Miah[2024] EWCA Civ 186 – no requirement for a Universal Credit claimant to request backdating before their claim is determined

Rejecting the Secretary of State’s appeal, the Court of Appeal confirms that a decision on a claim for Universal Credit may be revised to take account of a subsequent request for backdating.

In accepting the previous Upper Tribunal decision in *AM v SSWP (UC) [2022] UKUT 242 (AAC)* (see our Autumn 2022 Bulletin for a summary), the Court agreed that the matter of the date from which entitlement begins is a matter that can be re-determined following a request to revise (mandatory reconsideration).

This means that, whether or not a claimant asked for backdating with their claim or before the claim was decided, they can subsequently request this by seeking mandatory reconsideration/any grounds revision, within one month, or up to 13 months of the decision. It is then open to the decision maker and any subsequent tribunal to consider whether the conditions for backdating, as set out in [regulation 26 \(2\) Universal Credit etc \(Claims and Payments\) Regulations](#), are satisfied, regardless of whether the issue was raised with the original claim.

The Judges note that a claim for Universal Credit does not provide opportunity to request backdating and comment that ‘the ‘Journal route can hardly be described as obvious: inventive or well-advised claimants might take it, but it will certainly not occur to everyone’.

CPAG comment that, in their view, the DWP should urgently amend the online claim form for Universal Credit so that it asks claimants whether they would like their claim to commence from an earlier date.

It is still advisable to request backdating by making a note on the journal before the claim is decided. Where this has not been done, a later request for backdating

should still be considered as long as submitted within the deadlines for mandatory reconsideration. Claimants need to set out that they satisfy the criteria for backdating, for example that they could not reasonably have been expected to claim earlier due to disability.

The Court of Appeal decision can be found here: www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2024/186.html

The original Upper Tribunal decision can be found here: www.gov.uk/administrative-appeals-tribunal-decisions/am-v-secretary-of-state-for-work-and-pensions-uc-2022-ukut-242-aac



GS v Secretary of State for Work & Pensions [2024] UKUT 4 (AAC) UA-2022-001714-ULCW – an inadequate statement of reasons

The claimant was in receipt of Universal Credit and requested a Work Capability Assessment. In some way or other – not getting limited capability for work, or not getting limited capability for work related activity – he was dissatisfied with DWP’s decision on the matter.

So, he appealed to a First-tier Tribunal. Again, he met with dissatisfaction – the tribunal dismissed his appeal.

His next step was to request a statement of reasons. The statement recorded that the appellant’s wife was present at the hearing.

The statement, however, did not mention that the wife had given any oral evidence at the hearing, that she may, therefore, have said nothing. This was very odd. The appellant could have sworn he heard his wife speak, at the hearing. How could he not have heard? How could the Judge not? The appellant’s right ear testified to the fact for days after. She spoke both loudly and volubly, on his behalf.

The appellant then sought permission from the tribunal judge to appeal to the Upper Tribunal.

It must be said at this point that the appellant had, loyally and lovingly, always believed every word his wife uttered, since the day they were married.

The tribunal judge, however, didn’t. In refusing leave to appeal to the Upper Tribunal, the judge said that he had taken the wife’s oral evidence into account, and that, contrary to

her husband’s rather unusual habit, didn’t believe a word of it. She was, in legal jargon, “unreliable”.

The next step for the appellant was to request leave to appeal directly to the Upper Tribunal.

Leave to appeal was granted on the ground that the First-tier Tribunal may well have erred in law in not making findings of fact about the appellant’s wife’s evidence and

not recording these in the statement of reasons. In this respect, the statement was inadequate.

Ultimately, it was a procedural rule that had been infringed, so Judge Mitchell, of the Upper Tribunal, allowed the appeal, and remitted it to a fresh tribunal for redetermination.

The infringed rule of procedure was derived from the *Bancoult* case (*R (Bancoult) v Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs* [2007] EWCA Civ 498) and is essentially this: you can’t introduce new reasons for a refusal at a later stage of a process that did not form part of an earlier refusal.

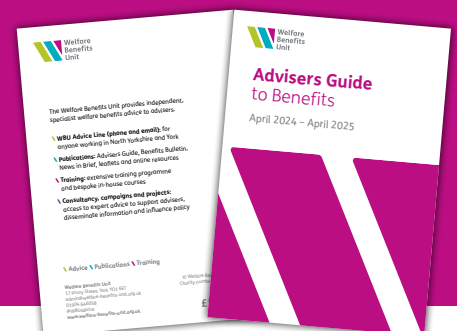
The full decision is available here: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65bba40521f73f0014e0baaa/UA-2022-001714-ULCW.pdf

Advisers Guide to Benefits 2024/25

“The advisers guide is indispensable especially when doing outreach work, it is very portable yet contains all the basic rules and rates”

Our Advisers Guide to Benefits is written for people who give information and advice as part of their work. This concise annual guide provides an overview of benefit criteria including Universal Credit, disability benefits and additional help available. Its clear format makes it ideal for quick reference, and the compact style is handy to use, whether in the office, out and about, or for home working.

The 2024/25 Guide is available to order online at www.welfare-benefits-unit.org.uk/publications/advisers-guide



SSWP v AT [2023] EWCA Civ 1307 – Pre-settled Status and entitlement to Universal Credit for those otherwise at risk of destitution


In their decision of 7 February 2024, the Supreme Court refused the Secretary of State’s application for permission to appeal. This closes the door on any further challenges to the findings of the Upper Tribunal in SSWP v AT [2022] UKUT 330 (AAC) and Court of Appeal in SSWP v AT [2023] EWCA Civ 1307 which must now be followed by decision makers.

The judgement means that, where there is no other qualifying right to reside, it is unlawful to refuse to award Universal Credit to those with Pre-settled Status where to do so leaves them at risk of being unable to meet their basic needs.

EU citizens with Pre-settled Status can now rely on the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights, including the right to human dignity. In practical terms, the decision in ‘AT’ requires decision makers to make an assessment of potential risk before refusing to make an award.

It is important to make arguments for any qualifying right to reside, for example, as a ‘worker’, which can be supplemented by destitution arguments under ‘AT’.

Key factors to address include: whether the claimant has any other right to reside; are they able to work; have they got reliable current or future resources and, if so, are these sufficient to cover their basic needs, including for housing and heating, food, clothing and hygiene.

The CPAG summary and note for advisers is available at: cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights/test-cases/test-case-updates/destitute-eu-nationals-pss-can-rely-eu-charter-fundamental-rights-obtain 

The Proper Approach to the Calculation of Special Guardianship Allowances

The Local Government Ombudsman’s (‘LGO’) decision in this case highlights not only defects in this particular council’s approach but conveniently sets out proper practice in relation to the calculation of Special Guardianship Allowances.

Miss B has responsibility for her granddaughter under a Special Guardianship Order. She is claiming Child Benefit and this had been deducted when Devon Council was calculating her Special Guardianship Allowance (SGA). It had been deducted in this way since January 2022.

Continued overleaf →

Miss B made a complaint about this practice and her support (or lack of) as a Special Guardian to the LGO.

The LGO found that Devon Council had a blanket policy of deducting Child Benefit from all SGA claimants and that this was contrary to the Government guidance.

Regulation 13 of the Special Guardianship Regulations 2005 allows for deductions of Child Benefit. However, in a Department of Education document [medwaychildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/dfe_guid_allowance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/230000/medwaychildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/dfe_guid_allowance.pdf) entitled 'Standardised Means Test Model For Adoption And Special Guardianship Financial Support 2005', it is recommended that:

'If a family is in receipt of Income Support, we recommend that the local authority pay the family the applicable maximum payment without assessing their income/ expenditure in this test. The figure

paid to the family should not include any deductions for child benefit (as they are in receipt of Income Support)'

Miss B was in receipt of Universal Credit, which, she pointed out, is the replacement for Income Support.

The LGO highlights previous cases including one in 2020. Here's the link to that case: www.lgo.org.uk/decisions/children-s-care-services/friends-and-family-carers/20-008-652 It concerned the London Borough of Brent where the council was also found to be at fault for deducting Child Benefit from all Special Guardians irrespective of circumstance.

Whilst the DfE document is not statutory guidance the LGO made their position clear: *'We have said that councils should not operate a blanket policy of deducting child benefit from the allowance of special guardians receiving means-tested benefits. They should consider cases*

individually and give reasons for departing from the guidance'

As a result of Miss B's complaint, Devon Council have been asked to check the claims of the other 170 Special Guardians in the county. They have agreed to apologise to Miss B, recalculate her SGA following the government guidance, repay her for deductions made since January 2022 and pay her £600 for delays caused by the complaints process and for the lack of support and information she was given since becoming a Special Guardian.

Devon Council has also agreed to change their policy in regard to calculating SGA to align with the government guidance from Jan 2024.

The full report on the LGO complaint can be found at www.lgo.org.uk/decisions/children-s-care-services/friends-and-family-carers/23-000-973?chapter=2

Looking Forward To... A Realisation of Future Aspirations

The DWP has announced a series of plans and aspirations for claimants with additional support needs, in the context of new technology and the modernisation of its services. They can be found in a recently released DWP publication called "Additional Support for DWP Customers". This document explains what the DWP has planned, and their "future aspirations"

The plans and aspirations will be pushed forward in three different areas.

The first is to ensure that claimants get the support they need. This will involve various measures. The first, and most fundamental, is identifying claimants who might need additional support when checking UC claims for accuracy. Also, DWP Debt Management will get a Vulnerability Framework from which staff can judge whether a claimant is at risk of becoming vulnerable.

Continued overleaf →

There is also a six-point plan for a procedure to follow when a member of DWP staff identifies a claimant who may be at risk of harming themselves. The full title of the document is “Suicide or self-harm: Universal Credit Six Point Plan Framework” and it can be found at: [data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2023-0791/161.Suicide or self-harm DWP 6 Point Plan FrameworkV10.pdf](https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2023-0791/161.Suicide_or_self-harm_DWP_6_Point_Plan_FrameworkV10.pdf)

For the use of technology, the following innovations are envisaged. Assessing how Artificial Intelligence can be used to identify claimants who need support. The Department is to purchase a new telephony system with speech analytics software – this software will identify vulnerable claimants. There’s also to be a new web portal that will enable claimants to ask simple questions about their benefits and to notify the DWP of changes in circumstances.

The last, and more personable, area of innovation relates to access and opportunity. To this end, the Department will engage in partnership networks to improve its identification of the changing needs of claimants; it will also, through its Advanced Customer Support Teams, improve the publicity materials that relate to the support it gives to vulnerable claimants.

Training Programme May 2024 to March 2025

“Really great combination of delivered information and practice exercises made complex information easy to learn”

Are you new to welfare benefits, in need of a refresher, or looking to expand your knowledge? Whatever your level of experience or particular interest, take a look at our upcoming courses and come and join our “friendly supportive and extremely knowledgeable” tutors.

Upcoming Training

Introduction to Universal Credit and Migration Wednesday
19 June 2024, 10am to 4pm

Move to Universal Credit? Wednesday
26 June 2024, 10am to 4pm

Introduction to Benefits Thursday
4, 11 and 18 July 2024, 10am to 4pm

Benefits Following a Bereavement
Wednesday 4 September 2024,
10am to 12:30pm

Universal Credit – Income and Capital Thursday 12 September
2024, 10am to 12:30pm

Personal Independence Payment – How to Get the Right Decision
Tuesday 24 September 2024,
10am to 4pm

Introduction to Benefits Wednesday
and Thursday 9, 10, 16, 17, 23 and
24 October 2024, 10am to 12.30pm

Benefits for Disabled Young People Including Students Tuesday
5 November 2024, 10am to 4pm

Benefits for State Pension Age
Wednesday 13 November 2024,
10am to 4pm

Introduction to Benefits Thursday
16, 23 and 30 Jan 2025, 10am to 4pm

Benefits to Help Pay Rent Wednesday
5 February 2025, 10am to 4pm

Benefits Overview – Working Age
Thursday 13 February 2025,
10am to 4pm

Book your course today at www.welfare-benefits-unit.org.uk/training



Welfare Benefits Unit Advice Line 01904 642512
advice@welfare-benefits-unit.org.uk

Monday – Thursday, 9am – 5pm | Friday, 9am – 4.30pm
Available to advisers in North Yorkshire and York

Please do not give our contact details to members of the public

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