



Hosted by Wolverhampton Council

Friday 5th June 2015

Wolverhampton University

MC001 (Main Lecture Theatre), Ground Floor,
MC Building, South Campus, Wulfruna Street,
Wolverhampton WV1 1LY

AGENDA

- 9.30 **Registration and refreshments**
- 10.00 **Welcome:**
Helen Winfield, Head of Financial Support Service – Wolverhampton City Council

June Dennis – Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies – University of
Wolverhampton
- 10.15 **Keynote speaker:** Steve Iafrati, senior lecturer and course leader in Social Policy at the
University of Wolverhampton
*Supporting people out of poverty: how can we reduce welfare demand in
Wolverhampton?*
- 11.00 **Break**
- 11.30 **Workshops** - session one (see 'workshop options' on following page)
- 12.30 **Lunch** (not provided at the venue)
- 1.45 **Guest speaker:** Ruth London, Fuel Poverty Action
Standing up against fuel poverty
- 2.30 **Workshops** - session two (see 'workshop options' on following page)
- 3.30 **Information exchange**
- 4.00 **Close**

WORKSHOP OPTIONS

Each workshop lasts an hour and runs twice (once at 11.30am and again at 2.30pm). Please choose **two** from the following options.

If you'd like to run a workshop at a future NAWRA meeting please contact kelly@nawra.org.uk

- A. Classroom MC406: Personal Independence Payments: the role of the assessment provider - Patrick Thomson, (Senior Communications & Stakeholder Manager, Capita) and Hafeeq Bostan (Director of Communications, PIP Assessments, Capita)

The Department for Work and Pensions introduced Personal Independence Payments (PIP) in April 2013 as a replacement for Disability Living Allowance. Capita are the independent PIP assessment providers in Central England and Wales. Capita Health Professionals carry out PIP assessments and produce reports for Decision Makers at DWP to determine eligibility to PIP. This session will cover the role of the assessment provider, Capita's approach to delivering PIP assessments, an operational update and a discussion of how Capita can work with welfare rights advisers and other organisations.

- B. Classroom MC408: Pensions, tax and benefits - Gareth Morgan (Ferret Information Systems)

The recent pension freedoms mean that there are now many more options open to people in the ways that they can make use of their pension savings. Depending upon their circumstances, some of these may be unwise and some very dangerous. There are also changes in the way that tax is applied to pensions' withdrawals and to the treatment of notional income from pension savings for benefits.

The workshop will summarise the changes and effects, and look at the advice needs that now exist – and how the new Pension Wise service may be meeting them.

- C. Classroom MC424: Law Student Representation Project - Tom Holdcroft (Wolverhampton City Council Welfare Rights Service)

The 'Law Student Representation Project' is a joint initiative between Wolverhampton City Council (Welfare Rights Service) and the University of Wolverhampton (School of Law). It is designed to provide much needed appeals representation to people living in Wolverhampton who are in dispute with the DWP over entitlement to benefit. Many people are losing out on benefit entitlement because decisions are being made without full knowledge of the facts (including medical facts) and/or because the law is being applied incorrectly in their case. As part of the dispute process people are having to challenge decisions by way of appeals to establish entitlement. This can be very challenging, particularly for vulnerable people and those with significant physical or mental health conditions. The role of the Law Student Representative is to support people in bringing an appeal and represent them at appeal. The role can be very rewarding and provides important Curriculum Vitae experience for students. This workshop explains how the project evolved (based upon the innovative work of Andy King at Bristol Law Centre), provides in-sight to the recruitment and training of student and seeks to answer whether it as it appears – a win, win, win, win situation.

D. **Classroom MC418: The Equality Act and Social Security** - Tom Royston (Garden Court North Chambers) and Dan Manville (Wolverhampton City Council Welfare Rights Service)

This workshop explores the scope of the Equality Act as a tool to influence DWP practice both through public and private law especially in line with recent case law developments surrounding the administration of Employment and Support Allowance. It is clear that welfare reform brings many changes. However, in implementation there is a lack of regard for the needs of disabled people. Wolverhampton City Council's Welfare Rights Service has used the Equality Act to good effect to bring to account poor administrative practice where it has been demonstrated to effect service users. This area of work is likely to become even more important with the roll out of Universal Credit and the expectations placed upon disabled claimants.

SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

Steve Iafrati is a senior lecturer and course leader in Social Policy at the University of Wolverhampton. Having previously worked in the voluntary sector and then in local government as a neighbourhood manager, Steve has an interest in issues relating to poverty and regeneration. Recent publications and research have included studies of hate crime, caste discrimination, payday loans, experiences after New Deal for Communities, and funding substance abuse treatment. Steve studied for a BA (hons) in Sociology and Economics before completing a PhD examining redevelopment in the West Midlands.

Ruth London is an organiser with Fuel Poverty Action. With thousands of people dying from cold every year, and thousands involved in disputes with their energy company, FPA is working to ensure that no one has to face their provider alone, and that everyone is equipped with information about their rights, for instance to avoid pre-payment meters and crushing rates of debt repayment. She has also been involved for many years in the women's movement, particularly Women Against Rape, and has long experience of working with people organising on their own behalf. She's a pensioner and a grandmother.

Gareth Morgan runs Ferret Information Systems which produces a wide range of advice and information systems and calculators, including the Future Benefits Model. He spends a lot of time talking, writing, training and consulting about the effects of welfare reform and about advice strategies. Increasingly he's focussed on ways to look ahead at the effects of changes on individuals and organisations.

Tom Holdcroft is a Welfare Rights Officer within the Specialist Support Team (SST) at Wolverhampton City Council. He is involved in providing training to and mentoring the students involved in the Law Student Representation Project. He contributes to the overall training that the SST provides to local groups and organisations within Wolverhampton. In particular he leads on the courses surrounding ESA (Work Capability Assessment), Personal Independence Payment, benefit sanctions and benefits for people from abroad. Tom also has his own demanding appeals caseload.

Tom Royston is a barrister at Garden Court North Chambers. Tom appears regularly in the High Court and Upper Tribunal (Administrative Appeals Chamber). Before coming to the Bar, Tom worked in Citizens Advice Bureaux and a Law Centre, where he specialised in employment, discrimination and social security law. As an activist, Tom was the Sheila McKechnie Foundation UK Consumer Campaigner of the Year 2009, in recognition of a campaign he led about the cost of contacting government to claim benefits. The campaign led to a policy change affecting 35m phone calls per year

and also won his bureau the national award of Campaigning CAB of the Year. He also established the Yorkshire Tribunal Advocacy Project, which provides pro bono representation in social security tribunals. Tom has worked with CPAG on the Rutherford bedroom tax and Winder Council Tax Reduction cases and has a particular interest in work which approaches welfare rights cases from a public law angle. He also specialises in public and private law discrimination claims, immigration and other areas of social welfare law.

Dan Manville has been a Welfare Rights Worker for nearly 16 years, training in central Manchester before a move to rural Lancashire, then onto the West Midlands. After nearly a decade at Birmingham Tribunal Unit life, love and LASPO brought him to Wolverhampton Welfare Rights where he is currently a Welfare Rights Officer with the Mental Health Social Work team. Dan recognised the utility of the Equality Act upon study of *MM & DM v SSWP* and has made good use of it in assisting service users to bring private law claims against the DWP and its contractors. Most recently Dan represented in *IM v SSWP* which has proved to be a landmark decision surrounding the correct approach to regulation 35.

LOCATION AND TRANSPORT

The main meeting will take place in the ground floor lecture theatre in the MC building and the workshops in the rooms on the second floor of the same building.

See the [interactive map of the University campus](#) and a [city centre street map](#).

By rail:

The train station is on the main London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Edinburgh lines. The station is on Railway Drive, just outside the ring road. As you exit walk straight ahead and veer right across the road bridge going over the ring road. It's a seven minute walk.

By bus:

Buses come into the city centre from all over Wolverhampton and the West Midlands. To plan a bus journey go to www.travelinmidlands.co.uk

From the bus station walk straight ahead as you exit, past WH Smiths on your left and continue to the crossroads. At the crossroads continue straight ahead down Lichfield Street. You will see the Britannia hotel and The Grand Theatre on your left as you continue down the road. At the next junction where you reach Indi bar and the Royal London Buildings turn right – you will see The George in front of you. This is the beginning of the 'University Quarter'. It's a five minute walk.

By metro:

The Midland Metro offers a service every 10 minutes throughout the day from Birmingham Snow Hill to Wolverhampton St Georges terminus via West Bromwich.

Upon exiting the Metro station walk towards Primark, cross the road and then take a right alongside Marks and Spencer's. Continue along this road - it will bend slightly to the right and then back to the left. Keep going until you reach a crossroads - you will have Indi Bar on your left. Cross over and continue on the same direction around the Royal London Buildings. You should now see The George in front of you. This is the beginning of the 'University Quarter'. It's a seven minute walk.

By bicycle:

Wolverhampton is on [National Cycle Route 81](#). For local routes, see the [city cycle map](#).

By car:

Junction 10 of the M6 is the nearest motorway junction. The University is split into two sites - City Campus North and South - both of which are signposted from the Ring Road and the A449. The MC Building is on the South campus.

Although there is only very limited metered parking by the main reception on Wulfruna Street, there are a number of public pay car parks within walking distance.

Of these, the Civic Centre car park, at the end of Wulfruna Street, or the long-term car park off Whitmore/Broad Street are the closest.

- General parking spaces are indicated on the [Wolverhampton street map](#)
- Details of the type of parking (public, disabled or staff) can be found on the University's [interactive campus map](#).

ACCOMMODATION

[Novotel](#)

Union Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 3JN

Tel: 01902 871100

132 rooms

[Premier Inn Wolverhampton City Centre](#)

Broad Gauge Way, Wolverhampton, WV10 0BA

Tel: 0871 527 9186

89 rooms

[Redwings Lodge, Wolverhampton Central](#)

45 Waterloo Road, Wolverhampton, WV1 4QL

Tel: 01902 715577

100 rooms

[A Park View Hotel](#)

12-13 Park Road West, Wolverhampton, WV1 4PP

Tel: 01902 567628

21 rooms

SOCIAL EVENING

NAWRA members will be meeting up for food and drinks from 6pm on Thursday 4th June at The Hogshead, 186 Stafford Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1NA www.hogsheadwolverhampton.co.uk

If you have any queries about the meeting please contact
Mark Perlic, Wolverhampton Council Welfare Rights Service
Mark.Perlic@wolverhampton.gov.uk

www.nawra.org.uk