

nawra

national association of
welfare rights advisers

National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers

Friday 9th June 2017

Catrin Finch Centre, Glyndwr University, Wrexham, LL11 2AW

Welfare Rights Advisers Cymru cordially invites you to the next meeting of NAWRA (the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers).

All welfare benefit advisers are welcome, whether you work in the statutory, voluntary or private sector; NAWRA members come from all three.

You do not have to be NAWRA members to come, as long as you promise to pick up a membership form. To get news of future NAWRA meetings, information and activities why not join NAWRA? See overleaf for more details.

There is no charge to attend or advance booking required - just come along for what should be an enjoyable and interesting day.

Please find the programme for the day, notes about speakers and workshops and joining information attached.

On arrival, please sign in and select your workshops.

If you are travelling on Thursday please join us at the Elihu Yale Wetherspoons pub from 6.30pm onwards. The Elihu Yale is a popular town centre pub located at 44 Regent Street, Wrexham LL11 1RR. As well as the usual food and drink there is the opportunity to watch the unfolding general election results in like-minded company.

For any further queries please contact Damian Keogh at Wrexham County Borough Council on 01978 298240, email damian.keogh@wrexham.gov.uk

About NAWRA:

NAWRA – the [National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers](#) – is a membership based organisation for advisers and organisations across the UK.

Our aims are to challenge, influence and improve welfare rights policy and legislation; and to be a national voice for welfare rights advisers.

Our quarterly meetings are held around the country and include key note speakers, workshops and a range of networking and professional development opportunities.

Membership of NAWRA is available to any group or individual working in the welfare rights field and/or who supports our [aims and objectives](#) and is administered by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in London. Contact Kelly Smith at kelly@nawra.org.uk



About your hosts for the Wrexham NAWRA meeting:

Welfare Rights Advisers Cymru (WRAC)

WRAC is the Welsh group for statutory and voluntary sector advisers in Wales. WRAC meets 3 to 4 times a year to provide an informal forum to hear speakers, share information, knowledge and good practice. Meetings are held in North, South and Mid Wales on a rolling basis to enable as many advisers as possible to attend. In a similar way to NAWRA, the group has become more formalised, aiming to influence the DWP and HMRC at the Wales level and to link into related agendas of the Welsh Assembly Government.



WRAC

Welfare Rights Advisers Cymru

Membership is on an individual basis (currently a bargain £10 a year). For membership details please contact Damian Keogh at Wrexham Welfare Rights Unit. (email: damian.keogh@wrexham.gov.uk)



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AGENDA

- 9.30** **Registration and tea/coffee on arrival**
- 10.00** **Introduction and welcome**
Alan Markey, NAWRA chair
- 10.05** **Welfare after the election: what to expect from our new government**
Damian Keogh, Income Maximisation Unit Manager, Wrexham County
Borough Council
- 10.20** **Guest speaker: Paul Neave, Head of Advice Services – Welsh
Government**
The Information and Advice Action Plan for Wales – a model for the UK?
- 11.00** **Break**
- 11.15** **Workshop session one** (see workshop options on following page)
- 12.15** **Lunch** (not provided at venue)
- 1.15** **Guest speaker: Dr Gideon Calder, Swansea University**
The Spirit Level: Why Inequality is Everyone's Issue
- 2.00** **Workshop session two** (see workshop options on following page)
- 3.00** **Break**
- 3.15** **Information exchange**
- 3.45** **Plenary**
- 4.00** **Close**

Speaker Information

Paul Neave

Paul Neave has twenty-nine years' experience of working in the field of social welfare advice (Welfare Rights, Housing and Money Advice) primarily in the employment of local authorities. For over a decade, Paul has been a senior manager within Flintshire County Council, with responsibility for the authority's Advice and Homelessness Services. Paul was also responsible for developing and implementing the authority's welfare reform mitigation strategy and is Flintshire's Tackling Poverty Champion.

On the 8 May 2017, Paul was seconded from Flintshire County Council to the Welsh Government to take up the position of Head of Advice Services and is now responsible for leading the implementation of the Welsh Government's strategic Advice and Information Action Plan.

Dr Gideon Calder

Gideon Calder teaches Social Sciences and Social Policy at Swansea University, and convenes the South Wales Equality Group, which is affiliated to The Equality Trust. He is the author or editor of nine books, most recently *How Inequality Runs in Families: Unfair Advantage and the Limits of Social Mobility* (Policy Press, 2016). He is currently working on children's life chances, and also (separately) on the theory and practice of co-production. He is co-editor of the journal *Ethics and Social Welfare*.

Workshop Information

Workshops are led by NAWRA members and others who have offered to share their expertise with fellow welfare rights advisers. If you'd like to run a workshop at a future NAWRA meeting please contact kelly@nawra.org.uk

NAWRA workshop levels:

Introductory	Assumes little or no prior knowledge of the topic or a refresher session
Intermediate	Assumes a reasonable working knowledge of welfare benefits work or some knowledge of the specific topic under discussion
Advanced	Assumes a good working knowledge of welfare benefits work or detailed knowledge of the topic under discussion

Practical	Focusing on developing good practice or offering some 'hints and tips'
Theoretical	Focusing on policy debates or discussion of emerging theory
Strategic	Focusing on planning and putting practical knowledge, and/or theory in to practice

Each workshop lasts an hour and will be run twice, once at 11.15am and again at 2pm. Please choose **two** from the following options:

Workshop A: PIP caselaw update

*Ruth Hession, Welfare Rights Adviser / Ymgynghorydd Hawliau Lles
City and County of Swansea / Dinas A Sir Abertawe*

Workshop level: Intermediate and Practical/Theoretical/Strategic

This workshop will provide an overview of the recent developments in PIP caselaw, selecting some of the most significant decisions for discussion. We will also discuss the impact of the recent amendments to the PIP regulations.

Workshop B: Universal Credit full service? What service?

Tom Messere - Big Book of Benefits

Workshop level: Intermediate/Practical

The slow initial pace of "transition" to UC - after a long period of piloting since 2015 - gave hope that the DWP were prioritising a pragmatic "test and learn" approach over any rush to unachievable timelines (as UC before) with the risk of total meltdown (as in PIP's past). Teething problems were to be expected, but mainly from scaling up of numbers from pilot levels. However it's the sheer scale of unpreparedness on basic processes and issues for a new much wider range of claimants that makes UC so unfit for purpose at present.

Building on a recent NAWRA survey of advisers, this workshop is an opportunity to share issues, concerns, experiences and - as ever - resourceful cunning workarounds, as the

DWP coalition of chaos and confusion moves ever closer to your area. Strong and stable it most certainly ain't?

What will UC Full Service mean in theory when it arrives to a JC+ near me? What are likely problems in practice? What can we do about it? How can we build on these workshops?

"I've been a wild adviser for many a year..." Well since just before the last "biggest change since Beveridge" when a new simpler, Income Support was all shiny new and almost better than sliced bread :-) Tom currently works part time as an adviser for an online community and in a shady past has even managed teams. The rest of the time, he writes and trains on matters welfare rights - both in his own right - see www.bigbookofbenefits.com - and on behalf of CPAG and others. Tom is South Wales rep on the NAWRA committee and contributes to their policy work and that of Welfare Rights Advisers Cymru.

Workshop C: Utility Best Deals

Jayne Bellis, Pennysmart Community Interest Company

Workshop level: Introductory and Practical

With the recent welfare cuts and energy price increases, never has the need been greater for low income households to reduce bills as well as maximise income. There are help schemes available for low-income families that struggle to pay energy and water bills. This is an upbeat session on paying less and guaranteeing 'better-off' outcomes for all who attend.

Learning outcomes:

- Be able to assist clients to switch gas or electricity tariff/supplier
- Know what help is available for vulnerable & low income consumers
- Know what to do if clients have gas, electricity or water debts
- Be able to signpost clients to access free help and advice

What is Pennysmart CIC?

Jayne Bellis is MD of Pennysmart Community Interest Company a north Wales based social enterprise set up in 2009 to support community facing organisations tackle poverty, debt and financial exclusion. The vision was to be recognised as a provider of high quality money advice services for the UK, whilst bringing real long term jobs, skills and training for local people without competing directly with existing charity providers. Pennysmart CIC have recently been shortlisted for the IMA 'Debt Team of the Year 2017'

What can Pennysmart Advice Services do?

Pennysmart Advice provides professional money advice and casework support to the clients of other organisations. Organisations such as local authorities, registered social landlords and charitable trusts, whose main focus is not money advice, but who benefit indirectly because their service users struggle to access benefit entitlements, manage their money or deal with debt problems.

Workshop D: Down to Earth: How to help your clients plan an affordable meaningful funeral.

Fiona Singleton, Down to Earth, Quaker Social Action

Workshop level: Introductory/Practical

Fiona Singleton is project manager for Down to Earth, a project of Quaker Social Action. Down to Earth helps people on low incomes to plan affordable and meaningful funerals. They help people to look at ways of saving money against the cost of a funeral and also help them to find ways of raising funds through both statutory and charitable funds.

Gain skills and knowledge to better support your clients in this practical and interactive workshop.

What you'll get out of the session:-

- A clear understanding of the range of funeral options and the cost implications of these
- An understanding of ways to help your clients to save money when planning a funeral
- The ability to discuss ways of raising money to help pay for a funeral
- A clear understanding of the eligibility criteria for bereavement benefits and payments
- The ability to access a range of resources to support clients in funeral planning

Workshop E: Can there be equal life chances? (afternoon session only)

Dr Gideon Calder, Swansea University

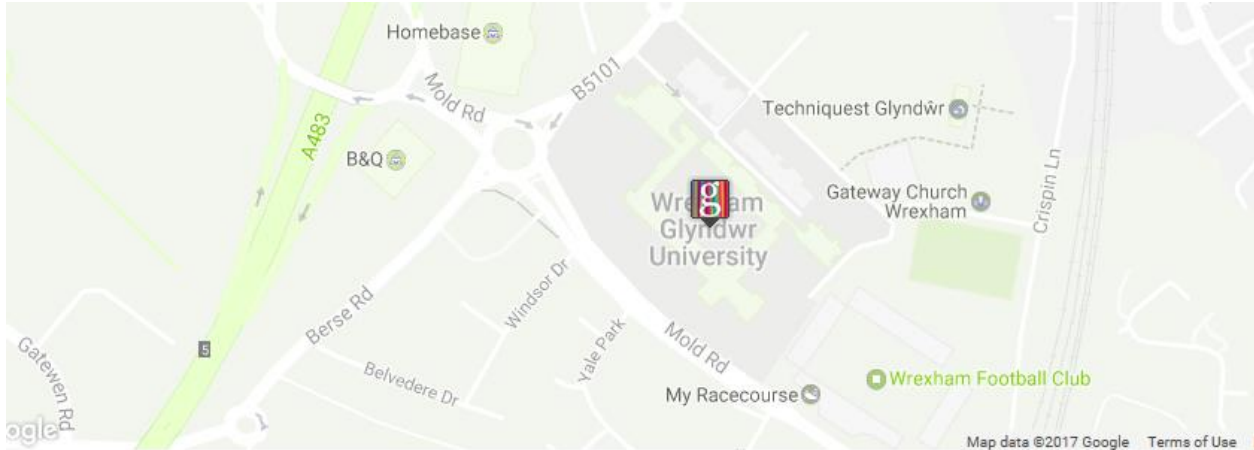
Workshop level: Introductory and Theoretical/Strategic

Politicians of all kinds will say that every child should have an equal chance in life, and that promoting this should be a priority. Yet this has never been the case in the UK. In many respects, it is less true now than it was a few decades ago. The children of disadvantaged families are very likely to end up disadvantaged themselves. This workshop will explore both why life chances remain so unequal in the 21st century, and how this might be tackled.

LOCATION AND TRANSPORT

The Catrin Finch Centre

The meeting will be held at the Catrin Finch Centre, in the grounds of Wrexham Glyndwr University, LL11 2AW. See map below for layout of campus and grounds. There is parking on site but not necessarily right next to the Centre.



Tea and coffee are available on arrival and during breaks.

Lunch is not provided, however there are cafes in the University and the nearby Sainsbury's supermarket. There is also the Plas Coch pub within five minutes' walk from the Catrin Finch Centre.

Wrexham / Wreccsam

[Wrexham](#) enjoys a privileged location. Within twenty minutes travel you can lose yourself in the Welsh hills, be fascinated by the Roman remains in Chester or view the rich historical past within Wrexham County Borough. A short drive from the town centre you can find and enjoy a number of historical sites which remind us of the local way of life over hundreds of years. Add to this excellent road links to North Wales, the North West and beyond and you can understand why Wrexham is a very popular place to visit and stay. For general information have a look at the [official Wrexham tourist site](#).

Getting to Wrexham

Train: Wrexham is easily accessible from the north (via Manchester/Chester), the south and east (via Birmingham/Shrewsbury/Crewe) and the west (via north & mid Wales lines). Get your tickets to/from Wrexham General station (not Wrexham Central). The venue is a 5 minute walk away.

Leave the station through the main entrance and turn right. At the end of the car park turn right onto Regent Street. Take the first right onto Crispin Lane (opposite ATS). Continue past the Wrexham Village student accommodation block and the football pitch before turning left into the University grounds. The Catrin Finch Centre is the first building on the right hand side.

Air: The nearest airports are Liverpool and Manchester.

Car: The A483 passes through Wrexham, the junction for the town centre is 1 minute away from the venue; it connects to all the major motorway and A road networks.

Accommodation in Wrexham

There are numerous hotels around the town. Nearest to the venue are the Premier Inn, opposite the railway station and the Ramada Hotel, about 15 minutes' walk away; there are also other options in the town centre including the Lemon Tree.

[The Lemon Tree](#)

01978 261211

[Premier Inn](#)

0871 527 9422

[Ramada Hotel](#)

01978 291400

SOCIAL EVENING

The Elihu Yale, 44–46 Regent Street, Wrexham LL11 1RR

It's a Wetherspoons pub – usual fayre of good beer, not too noisy and reasonable food. Members of Welfare Rights Advisers Cymru, Wrexham Council Welfare Rights team and NAWRA committee members will be ready to welcome thirsty travellers from 6.30pm onwards on the evening of Thursday 8 June.

There are plenty of alternative eateries elsewhere in the town centre.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Please contact Damian Keogh at Wrexham Welfare Rights Unit

email: damian.keogh@wrexham.gov.uk

telephone: 01978 298240

*Have a safe journey, a fun NAWRA and a great stay in
Wrexham*