



**Hosted by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Welfare Rights**

**Friday 9 March 2018**

Stockton Tabernacle  
The Square  
Stockton on Tees  
TS18 1TE

**AGENDA**

- 9.30           **Registration and refreshments**
- 10.00           **Welcome:** Julie Danks, Deputy Chief Executive of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- 10.15           **Guest speaker:** Alex Cunningham MP for Stockton North
- 10.45           **Guest speaker:** Tracey Hetherington – Poverty Truth Commission
- 11.15           **NAWRA AGM:**
- Annual report 2017/18
  - Election of committee representatives
- 11.30           **Break**
- 11.45           **Workshops - session one** (see 'workshop options' on following page)
- 12.45           **Lunch** (not provided at the venue)
- 1.45            **Workshops - session two** (see 'workshop options' on following page)
- 2.45            **Workshops - session three** (see 'workshop options' on following page)
- 3.45            **Information exchange**
- 4.15            **Close**

## WORKSHOP OPTIONS

Each workshop lasts an hour and each one runs 3 times. Although the workshops stand alone they have a common theme running through them so it would be advisable to try to attend all three.

If you'd like to run a workshop at a future NAWRA meeting please contact [kelly@nawra.org.uk](mailto:kelly@nawra.org.uk)

### NAWRA workshop levels:

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

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

- A. **Welfare rights and the benefit cap** – Alison Gillies, Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland  
*Workshop level: Practical/Intermediate*

The workshop will look at the benefit cap: how it operates, who is likely to be affected and who is exempt. In addition, we will consider the current legal challenges to the cap and what we should be advising clients in light of these challenges.

Alison is a Welfare Rights Worker at Child Poverty Action Group Scotland. She is author of CPAG's Welfare benefits and tax credits handbook and Children's Handbook Scotland.

- B. **Children's benefits** - Julie Henry and Kathryn Gaines, Durham County Council Welfare Rights  
*Workshop level: Practical/Intermediate*

This workshop will explore what benefits children and families can claim and the impact of the benefit cap on claimants. As well as considering the 2 child limit in tax credits and universal credit it will also look at DLA take-up for children with disabilities.

Julie has worked in welfare rights for most of her career. She has been involved in training other staff for many years including jointly developing and tutoring on Teesside University's Social Security: Policy and Practice qualification. Julie is currently a Team Leader (Welfare Rights) with Durham County Council Welfare Rights Service, managing a range of core and commissioned activities, including casework services, tribunal work and dedicated welfare rights provision within other services.

Kathryn has worked at Durham County Council since 2004 initially working on an innovative project developing online and video conferencing welfare rights advice. She now specialises in benefits for disabled children delivering a wide range of training and workshops both to

families and professionals. Kathryn has a background in performing arts and has appeared in the seminal British soap Brookside and the student drama Hollyoaks.

C. **Welfare Rights & Local Welfare Assistance Schemes** - Billy Park and Lyndsey Wood, Stockton on Tees Borough Council

*Workshop level: Practical/Intermediate*

This workshop considers the relationship between Welfare Rights Services and Local Welfare Assistance Schemes. It will identify areas of partnership and how to improve access for difficult to engage customers.

Billy has worked in Welfare Rights for over 30 years having worked for Shelter and a TUC Unemployed Workers Centre. Currently employed by Stockton Welfare Rights he has extensive knowledge having lived through various reviews of social security (and still survived). He has also worked with the Law Centres Network.

Lyndsey has worked in Welfare Rights for nearly 20 years. She recently became manager of Stockton-on-Tees Welfare Assistance Team which supports vulnerable residents with DHPs, Settlement Support, Crisis Applications and Council Tax Discretionary Payments.

## **SPEAKERS**

### **Alex Cunningham MP**

Alex has been the Member of Parliament for Stockton North since 2010. Since his election, Alex has led on campaigns such as funding for the NHS, banning smoking in cars with children present, promoting Carbon Capture and Storage and energy intensive industries on Teesside and, until recently as Shadow Pensions Minister, developing Labour policy on pensions.

Before his election to Parliament, Alex served as a Cleveland County then Stockton Borough Councillor for 18 years and was Cabinet Member for Children and Young People covering education and children's social care. Education – both formal and informal – is his passion, and he sees it as a tool to develop both people and communities into the future.

Outside of politics, Alex started his career as a journalist, before moving into communications for British Gas and later, Transco, where he became Head of Communications. He has also been a Board member for One North East, Arts Council North East, the founding chair of Stockton's Children's Trust, and a member of the National Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and chaired it in the North East.

### **Tracey Hetherington**

Tracey has worked in the voluntary community sector for over 15 years and been a part of Thrive since 2012. Thrive's vision is to close the gap between the rich and the poor, ensuring social justice and equality for all in Teesside. People in Teesside living on the margins will have the support to be empowered to improve their livelihoods, gaining the power needed to effect real, transformative change and tackle the issues that have, in the past, kept them in poverty.

Over the past 12 months, Tracey has been involved with empowering sanctioned claimants; building the financial resilience of low income communities and working with key partners to develop Stockton's Poverty Truth Commission.

## LOCATION AND TRANSPORT

The meeting will be held at the [Stockton Baptist Tabernacle Church](#), The Square, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TE. Sat Nav users should use postcode TS18 1AR.

All rooms are accessible but if you have any specific requirements or questions, please [contact us](#) in advance.

Plan your journey by bus, train, on foot or by bicycle using [Connect Tees Valley](#).

### By rail:

Thornaby is the nearest railway station.

### By bus:

Find local bus timetables at [Connect Tees Valley](#).

### By car:

- From the A66 West; exit for the A135, turn right at the junction heading North into Stockton. Follow the signs for Castlegate Shopping Centre.
- From the A66 East; exit for the A135, turn left at the junction and follow the signs for Castlegate Shopping Centre.
- Access to the car park can be gained from Tower Street or Riverside Park Road.
- Sat Nav users should use postcode TS18 1AR.
- Parking at Castlegate is £1 for up to 3 hours, £2 for 3-5 hours and £3.50 for 5-24 hours.

## ACCOMMODATION

The hotel closest to the venue is [Premier Inn Stockton-on-Tees/Middlesbrough](#), Whitewater Way, Thornaby, TS17 6QB

Information on Stockton can be found at [www.thisisstockton.co.uk](http://www.thisisstockton.co.uk)

## SOCIAL EVENING

Join fellow NAWRA members from 6.30pm on Thurs 8 March at [The Ivy House](#), 22 Dovecot Street, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LN

If you have any queries about the meeting please contact  
Kelly Smith (NAWRA Secretary) at [kelly@nawra.org.uk](mailto:kelly@nawra.org.uk)

[www.nawra.org.uk](http://www.nawra.org.uk)