

Hosted by Edinburgh City Council's Advice Shop

Friday 4th September 2015

Edinburgh Council
City Chambers
249 High Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1YJ

AGENDA

- 9.30 **Registration and refreshments**
- 10.00 **Welcome:**
Mark Upward, Advice Services Manager – City of Edinburgh Council

Councillor Cammy Day – Vice Convenor, Health Social Care & Housing Committee – City of Edinburgh Council
- 10.15 **Keynote speaker:** Ann McVie, Head of the Scottish Government's Low Income Benefits Policy Unit

A new framework for welfare rights in Scotland: an update on the Smith Commission and beyond
- 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:** Robin Tennant, Poverty Alliance: *Tackling stigma, standing up for claimants*

Guest speaker: Eri Mountbatten, Aberystwyth University Students' Union: *Mandatory reconsiderations*
- 2.30 **Workshops** - session two (see 'workshop options' on following page)
- 3.30 **Information exchange** inc. Hanna McCulloch on CPAG's Early Warning System
- 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. Mandela Room: **Developing a Child Poverty Strategy** – John Heywood, Child Poverty Strategy

The Welfare Reform Act's changes and ongoing amendments to benefit provision have been highlighted as real threats to achieving the objective of reducing child poverty in the UK. This session will look at how a local child poverty strategy is being developed, including what data and stakeholder input is required to make a strategy as meaningful as possible.

B. Dunedin Room: **Benefit conditionality long-term survey** – Sarah Johnsen, Research Fellow, Napier University

The huge increase in the number of benefit sanctions has caused widespread concern that the conditionality regime now in place for many benefit claimants are counter-productive and punitive. A national study is underway to make an objective assessment as to whether or not these concerns are valid. This session will hear about how the study is being conducted and will hear from both sides of the debate about the effectiveness of sanctions in supporting people into work.

C. Main Council Chamber: **Provision of advice to Polish and Romanian communities** – Roddy Samson, Granton Information Centre & Hazel Betts, Citizens Advice Edinburgh

The challenges of providing effective welfare rights advice to EEA nationals have significantly increased since the amendments to regulations that commenced on 1st January 2014. Advisers' ability to assist has become more restricted. Coupled with language and potential cultural barriers, providing effective advice has required imagination and tenacity. This session looks at how two advice services have dealt with both the technical and the cultural challenges of assisting people from the Polish and Romanian communities in Edinburgh.

D. Diamond Jubilee Room: **Universal Credit: the perspective from landlord-based welfare rights advisers – how do welfare rights advisers working for landlords manage the UC claim process?** – Tony Donohue, housing consultant & reps from Dunedin Canmore HA

Universal Credit presents significant challenges to claimants' payment of rent due to some confusion in the claims process and delays in payments. How landlord-funded welfare rights advisers balance the needs of claimants with the demands of rent payments is becoming increasingly pressured. When the flow of information from the DWP is often unclear and rent arrears are increasing, how should advice be provided on the UC claims process and in relation to APAs for paying rent direct to landlords and for payment of rent arrears?

LOCATION AND TRANSPORT

The meeting will take place in the main Council Chamber on the first floor of the City Chambers, 249 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ and workshops in rooms nearby.

See the [city centre street map](#).

By rail:

Edinburgh Waverley Train Station is on the main London, Birmingham, Inverness, Perth and Aberdeen lines. The station is on Market Street in the city centre. As you exit walk to the right then left up Cockburn Street then turn right at the top onto the High Street. The City Chambers are 300 metres up the High Street. It's a steep walk that takes less than 10 minutes.

By bus:

Buses come into the city centre from all over the UK as well as local services.

From the bus station walk south through St. Andrews Square, turn left onto Princes Street then right onto North Bridge. At the first junction turn right onto the High Street. The City Chambers are 400 metres up the High Street. It's a moderate walk that takes 15 minutes.

By bicycle:

Edinburgh is on [National Cycle Route 1](#) Local cycle map is [here](#)

By car:

Edinburgh city centre can be accessed from the M8 or M9 to the west, the A1 or A68 to the east, the A7 or A702 from the south and the A823(M) from the north.

Although there is only very limited metered parking around the High Street, there are a number of public pay car parks within walking distance.

Of these, the Greenside and St. James Centres car parks, on Leith Street, or Castle Terrace car park just off Lothian Road are the closest.

General parking spaces are indicated on the [Edinburgh parking map](#).

ACCOMMODATION

[Travelodge Edinburgh Central](#)

33 St. Mary's St, Edinburgh, EH1 1TA
Tel: 0871 984 6137

[Premier Inn Edinburgh Central](#)

82 Lauriston Place, Edinburgh, EH3 9DG
Tel: 0871 527 8366

Or search:

www.hotelscombined.com

www.visitscotland.com

SOCIAL EVENING

NAWRA members will be meeting up for food and drinks from 6pm on Thurs 3rd Sept at The Kilderkin, 67 Canongate, Edinburgh, EH8 8BT www.kilderkin.co.uk

If you have any queries about the meeting please contact
Kelly Smith, NAWRA secretary
kelly@nawra.org.uk

www.nawra.org.uk