

Wednesday 7 and Thursday 8 December 2022

On Zoom

AGENDA

Day 1: Wednesday 7 December 2022 (1.00pm to 4.30pm)

1.00 **Introductions and welcome**
Alan Markey, Coventry Independent Advice Service and NAWRA chair

1.10 **An evaluation of the impact of Local Welfare Assistance**
Zoe Charlesworth, Policy in Practice

Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) acts as a safety net to prevent households falling into destitution and to prevent the escalation of crises. Although the role of councils in providing crisis support has expanded in recent years, there has been little accompanying evaluation of the impact of crisis support, or comparison of the design of local provision, to inform the most effective mechanism for supporting residents.

In this context, London Councils commissioned Policy in Practice to work with a group of London Boroughs to evaluate the impact of Local Welfare Assistance schemes. The research took place in 2022 and comprised extensive fieldwork and data analysis. The findings provide insight into the nature of crisis, the best mechanisms for support, and the impact of crisis support on recipients. These findings can assist councils and other organisations to design support provision that best meets the needs of clients.

[Slido #3426248](#)

1.55 **Break**

2.05 **Predatory Marriage**
Daphne Franks, [Predatory Marriage UK](#)

“Your mother and her man friend – did you know they were married?”

So, with a phone call from the doctor, began a horrific series of events which have highlighted the gaps in safeguarding for the elderly and the vulnerable, both at the time of marriage and in the Law.

In March 2016 Joan Blass was almost 92 years old, with severe vascular dementia and terminal cancer. She was unable to make the simplest decision and never knew that she had remarried just five months before her death.

Joan's daughter Daphne Franks tells the story of a secret marriage, a revoked will, an unmarked grave, grooming, gaslighting, a Private Member's Bill and a campaign to highlight all the issues. The Franks family hope to fill all the gaps so nothing like this will ever happen to another family in the future – because, as they have learned, it's currently happening to many of our elderly and vulnerable and their families.

Daphne Franks is a teacher who has worked at Leeds Medical School for many years, teaching Communication Skills and other non-clinical courses.

Issues with current safeguards:

- If the victim has set up a power of attorney, the attorney is not notified if the victim marries.
- Notifications of marriage are displayed on notice boards in register offices and are not easily searchable or listed online.
- No evidence is kept at the point of marriage – no video or audio recordings – once a marriage certificate is attained the following impact on wills is almost impossible to challenge.
- Registrars have responsibility for judgment of mental capacity on the day. These persons may not have training on dementia or mental capacity.
- There is an absence of joined up safeguarding between different relevant organisations and an absence of standardised safeguarding or mental capacity training.

[Slido #3059995](#)

3.05 **Break**

3.15 **Hybrid and remote working: lessons learned and good practice after two years of the pandemic**

Zoey Corker (Leeds Council) and Julie Kirkby (Durham Council)

As more and more local authority welfare rights services are moving to a hybrid way of working we will look at the pros and cons for managers and staff. We will also consider how this impacts on service delivery.

[Slido #1293215](#)

4.00 **Close**

Social evening: Wednesday 7 December (from 7.00pm)

In the evening all members are welcome to join a virtual NAWRA social evening on Zoom.

Day 2: Thursday 8 December 2022 (9.30am to 1.00pm)

9.30 **Welcome and introductions**
Alan Markey, Coventry Independent Advice Service and NAWRA chair

9.40 **The Phil Hanns Memorial Lecture:
The Real Level of Unemployment 2022: The myth of full employment across
Britain**
Prof Christina Beatty, Sheffield Hallam University

Christina is a Professor of Applied Economic Geography in the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University. Earlier this year, she co-authored [The Real Level of Unemployment 2022: The myth of full employment across Britain](#). The report examines real levels of unemployment, work and growth in economic inactivity due to long term sickness. It also shows how some of the increase in conditionality is likely only to punish rather than support people who might want to move back to work.

[Slido #3023379](#)

10.40 **Break**

10.50 **Challenging benefit overpayment recovery**
Kevin Higgins, Advice NI

Advice NI has [launched a campaign](#) to lobby for action from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in respect of the overpayment recovery waiver system. This would restore confidence in the overpayment recovery waiver system by ensuring everyone affected by overpayments is made aware of the existence of waivers and how to seek one and monitor decision making to ensure that waivers are applied correctly.

[Slido #3069092](#)

11.50 **Break**

12.00 **Mini-benefits updater**
Tom Messere, Big Book of Benefits and Mental Health and Daphne Hall, rightsnet

A whirlwind tour through some of the latest happenings and "about to happens" in social security. In this session, we will focus on the cutting edge/ breaking news of the most recent key changes and trends (including the Autumn Statement and aftermath).

We will also be launching the long-awaited fully updated, sparkly, shiny latest edition of the *NAWRA Benefit Changes Chart* combining a broader catch up

of recent and forthcoming changes, alongside a handy reminder/checklist of cuts and "welfare reform" since austerity v1.0 launched in 2011 that may help prepare us for v2.0. A summary of the changes with analysis of their impacts.

[Slido #3574004](#)

12.30 **Information Exchange**

[Slido #2024748](#)

13.00 **Close**

The conference is free to attend but open to NAWRA members only.

[Find out more about joining](#)

If you have any queries about the conference please contact

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