



Quarterly conference

Hosted by Greater Manchester Law Centre & Stockport Council

Friday 6 June 2025

Stockport Town Hall

Edward Street, Stockport, SK1 3XE

In association with Garden Court North chambers



Sponsored by:



Reserve your place before 14 May 2025 at
<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/nawra/1615545>

AGENDA

- 09.30 **Registration and refreshments** (no access to venue before 9.30)
- 10.00 **Welcome** – Alan Markey, Coventry Independent Advice Service & NAWRA
Chair

- 10.10 **Guest speakers:**
- Geoff Fimister, writer and consultant on social security issues; Co-Chair of the Disability Benefits Consortium; Head of Policy, Inclusion Barnet; and a founder member of NAWRA
 - Gary Vaux, recently retired from Hertfordshire County Council Money Advice Unit

Celebrating 50 years of NAWRA

10.45 **Workshops:** session one (See ‘workshop options’ on the following page)

11.45 **Break and refreshments**

12.00 **Workshops:** session two (See ‘workshop options’ on the following page)

13.00 **Lunch** (not provided, many options locally, please don’t bring food into the venue)

14.00 **Guest speakers:** Lawyers from Garden Court North Chambers
Legal challenges to the Green Paper welfare reforms

Challenging the forthcoming changes to social security provision is likely to involve us as advisers and our clients as well as solicitors and counsel to bring the challenges in the courts.

Drawing on feedback from the morning, leading social security barristers from Garden Court North are coming together with us to discuss how that might happen. Tom Royston and colleagues will join us to discuss how we might all be change agents in these worrying times.

The Public Law teams from Leigh Day, Greater Manchester Law Centre and lawyers from Public Law Project will also be on hand to draw some inspiration as to where those challenges might lie and contribute to discussions.

15.30 **Information exchange & NAWRA updates**

16.00 **Close**

WORKSHOP OPTIONS

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

Workshops all run twice (once at 10.45 and again at 12.00) so please choose **two** of the following:

A. Missing benefits and the Access to Disability Benefits project

Mark Perlic, City of Wolverhampton Council

Workshop level: Introductory and Practical

This workshop is designed to showcase the work of the Financial Wellbeing team of the City of Wolverhampton Council's Welfare Rights Service. Funded through the Household Support Fund in response to the cost-of-living crisis this team undertakes 'missing benefit' assessments with the focus being on vulnerable and 'pension age' residents living in Wolverhampton. Further, in conjunction with the University of Wolverhampton the team also operates the Access to Disability Benefits Project (A2DBP) which recruits and utilises volunteer Social Care students to act as 'form fillers' for Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and the Work Capability Assessment. We look to share information on how the projects seek to identify and engage with residents. We will also be giving insight to a 'customer' journey and the rewards of the work undertaken.

B. Responding to the welfare reforms Green Paper

Daphne Hall, rightsnet

Workshop level: Intermediate and Strategic

In March 2025, the government issued its [Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper](#) which proposed, among other things, tightening up the eligibility for the daily living component of PIP, scrapping the WCA and making the UC health element contingent on disability benefits instead. These proposals could have far-reaching impacts on your clients.

This workshop will be an opportunity to discuss the proposals, consider whether they will achieve the government's objectives, and identify what arguments we might put up to challenge them, both through the government's consultation process and with our clients on an individual basis.

C. Challenging DWP decision-making in the coroner's court

Ciara Bartlam, Garden Court North Chambers

Workshop level: Intermediate and Strategic

Ciara is a barrister who specialises in representing bereaved families at inquests and

inquiries. She recently represented the family of a [Greater Manchester resident who took a fatal overdose against a background of failings by the DWP](#). Ciara will discuss the findings from this case and explain what an inquest is, how coroners approach these cases, and the advice that can be given to bereaved families, friends and advocates on how to challenge DWP decision-making in a coroner's court. [Greater Manchester Law Centre is fundraising to send copies of John Pring's book 'The Department' to every coroner's office in England and Wales](#).

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 into practice

EXHIBITORS



[Advice Pro](#) is the secure case management application which helps you work flexibly, efficiently and securely. The system was developed in association with AdviceUK, the UK's largest network of advice-providing organisations. AdvicePro currently assists more than 11,765 users and 664 agencies and consortia throughout the UK. There are various modules which are available such as the money module; built-in SMS service; digital signature module, secure client portal, auto actions and our latest AI integration for case note recording.

The money module has both the common and standard financial statement built in together with the relevant trigger figures; the ability to record and track welfare right issues through from benefit check to claim; mandatory reconsideration/redetermination and appeal stages. The appeal stage allows tracking, recording and reporting to Upper Tier Tribunal stage. In addition, there is a specific Universal Credit matter category allowing agencies to track and record the appropriate elements applied for together with individual outcomes.



[Housing Systems](#) is one of the leading second tier benefits advice services - developing the tools advisers need to give the best advice to customers so that they make a successful move onto UC and resolve benefit issues quickly.

Used by over 350 local authorities, charities and social housing providers, the extensive ucnotes website is packed full of information, commentary and tips. It also hosts various resources – whether it’s a calculator, standard letter, mapping tool, flowchart or leaflet to support customers.

The respected email query service answers over 3,000 benefit queries a year, giving a full and detailed response usually within one working day.

The monthly newsletters and articles keep advisers up to date with benefits news and hot topics. And the monthly online Friday Fun Quizzes raises awareness of key topics and increases knowledge and skills.

They deliver more than 150 training courses a year - both online and face-to-face and have developed a unique suite of 20 welfare benefit related e-learning courses. They also host regular webinars and conferences.

LOCATION AND TRANSPORT

The conference will take place at Stockport Town Hall, Edward Street, Stockport, SK1 3XE. The what3words address is [///rugs.nights.gender](https://www.what3words.com/?w3w=///rugs.nights.gender)

By train:

- Stockport train station is a five minute walk from the Town Hall.

By bus:

- [Stockport bus station](#) is a 10 minute walk from the Town Hall or take bus route number 192 and alight just after the Town Hall.
- For full local timetable information see [Transport for Greater Manchester](#).

By car:

- There is limited on-street metered parking around the Town Hall complex.
- There is a [multi-storey car park](#) at Stockport train station, a five minute walk away.

By taxi:

- There is taxi rank located at Stockport train station.

ACCOMMODATION

The following hotels offer budget options close to the venue:

- [Holiday Inn Express Stockport](#) - 11 Station Rd, Stockport SK3 9JD (0161 359 6363)
- [Red Bull](#) - 14 Middle Hillgate, Stockport SK1 3AY (0161 480 1286)
- [Travelodge](#) Regent House, Heaton Lane, Stockport SK4 1BS (0871 559 1890)
- [Premier Inn Stockport Central](#) 48 Churchgate, Stockport SK1 1YG (0333 321 9032)

SOCIAL EVENING

NAWRA members will be meeting up for food and drinks from 6pm on Thursday 5 June at the [Red Bull](#), 14 Middle Hillgate, Stockport SK1 3AY (0161 480 1286).

We will have a NAWRA sign on the tabletop, the venue is accessible, and everyone is welcome to join us.

The conference is free to attend but open to NAWRA members only. Find out more about [joining](#).

If you have any queries about the meeting please contact

Kelly Smith, NAWRA secretary

kelly@nawra.org.uk

www.nawra.org.uk