



## NAWRA conference

Hosted by Newcastle Welfare Rights Service

Monday 23 March 2026

The Banqueting Suite, Newcastle Civic Centre, Newcastle, NE1 8QH

Sponsored by:



### AGENDA

- 09:30 **Registration and refreshments**
- 10:00 **Welcome**  
Daphne Hall, rightsnet & NAWRA Vice Chair
- 10:05 **Cllr Adam Walker**, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, Health and Prevention, Newcastle City Council
- 10:20 **What it means to be a Marmot City**  
Rachel Gallagher, Consultant in Public Health
- Rachel will present what it means for Newcastle residents to be part of a [Marmot City](#) – putting health equity at the heart of policies and practice with examples from the [Director of Public Health Annual Report on Food Security 2026](#)
- 11:05 **Break and refreshments**
- 11:20 **Workshops:** session one (See 'workshop options' on the following page)
- 12:20 **Lunch** (not provided, many options locally)
- 13:20 **Workshops:** session two (See 'workshop options' on the following page)

- 14:20      **Break and refreshments**
- 14:35      **Safeguarding Newcastle Against Poverty (SNAP)**  
James Steward – Programme Lead, Active Inclusion Unit, Newcastle City Council
- A look at [Safeguarding Newcastle Against Poverty \(SNAP\)](#) and the benefits of a joined-up approach to advice provision across the City.
- 15:20      **Launch of latest edition of the NAWRA Benefits Changes Chart**  
Tom Messere, Big Book of Benefits & Daphne Hall, Rightsnet
- Big benefit changes have been hanging in the air, then readied to go, then u-turned... But they are now taking final shapes. So these two NAWRA committee members have updated this essential resource to clarify what actually is now changing (and what isn't). We re-introduce the chart and how it works and launch it first to Newcastle then the world. And also to highlight some of the key changes and welcome any questions and comments as time allows.
- 15:35      **Information exchange, NAWRA updates and AGM**
- 15.50      **Closing remarks**
- 16.00      **Close**

## WORKSHOP OPTIONS

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

Workshops all run twice (once at 11.20am and again at 1.20pm) so please choose **two** of the following:

### **A. The benefits of co-location**

Tom Foster, Newcastle Welfare Rights Service  
*Workshop level: Introductory / Practical / Strategic*

Tom will look at some of the co-located advice provision in Newcastle, and the benefits this brings to residents and other organisations.

## B. AI and the law: overview of opportunities and risks

Gareth Morgan, Ferret Information Systems and NAWRA rep for Wales

*Workshop level: Introductory / Intermediate / Practical / Theoretical / Strategic*

A personal look at AI and advice work (although with a few decades experience of working as a chartered information scientist with expert systems, AI and IKBS). Gareth will cover a bit of basics to ensure we're using the same labels but look more at the dangers and benefits of AI today.

## C. Child DLA mobility on grounds of 'severe mental impairment'

Mark Perlic, Wolverhampton City Council Welfare Rights Service

*Workshop level: Introductory / Practical*

This provision is often misunderstood by both advisers and tribunals. This workshop by Mark Perlic from the City of Wolverhampton Council's Welfare Rights Service, seeks to underline the primary and secondary legislation which set out the qualifying criteria for the provision whilst, more importantly, also examining the case law views which have developed around the various different tests. Having an understanding of the 'correct legal line' that should be adopted in such cases is essential to save potential entitlements being missed. Those who are supporting families with disabled children, particularly those who exhibit behavioural problems, may benefit from attending.

### 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 into practice

## EXHIBITORS



[Housing Systems](#) is one of the leading second tier benefits advice services - developing the tools advisers need to resolve complex benefit issues quickly and stay fully informed on changes to the welfare benefit system.

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.



The [Welfare Benefits Unit](#) offers specialist welfare benefits advice to those who work with members of the public. Our experienced advisers provide independent support through our advice line, publications, training, consultancy, campaigns and projects.



[Work and Thrive Newcastle](#) is a collaboration of local partners working together to support residents into new jobs, better jobs, and to improve their skills through training. The service has delivered over 4,300 appointments to residents in its Work & Thrive Central hub since it was launched in January 2024.

## SOCIAL EVENING

NAWRA members will be meeting up for food and drinks from 6pm on Sunday 22 March at [Akenside Traders](#), Dean St, Newcastle NE1 1PQ.

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

## LOCATION AND TRANSPORT

The conference will take place at [Newcastle Civic Centre](#), Newcastle, NE1 8QH. Opened in 1968 by King Olav V of Norway, Newcastle Civic Centre is a landmark of modernist architecture and civic pride.



Entrance for the NAWRA conference is marked above in red.

The what3words address is [Chats.clues.fish](#)

### By train:

- Newcastle Central Station is a 15-20 walk away from the venue. However, you can use the Tyne and Wear Metro system, exiting at Haymarket station, and this reduces the walk to approximately 5 minutes.

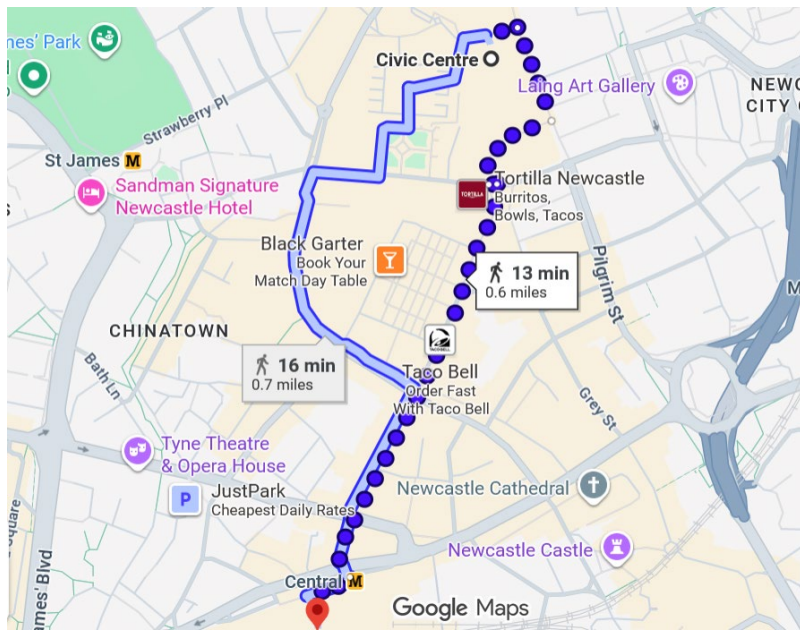
### By bus:

- Haymarket Bus Station is a five minute walk from the venue. Information on bus services can be found at [Traveline Northeast](#).

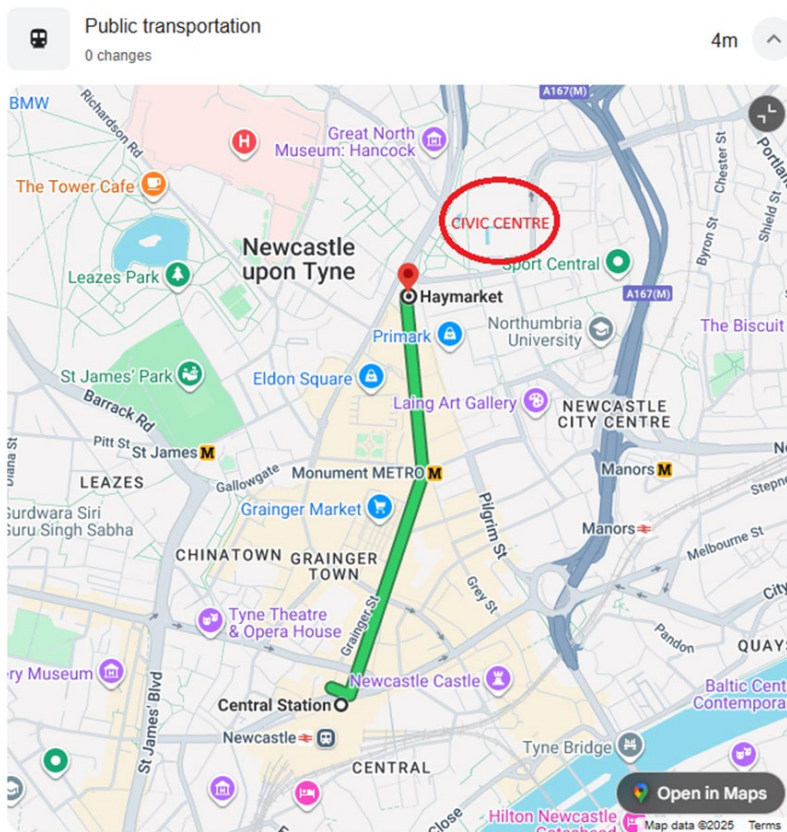
### By car:

- There is limited car parking at the following locations:
  - Sandyford Square car park, NE1 8PB
  - College Street car park, NE1 8JJ
  - Eldon Square multi-storey, NE1 7RZ

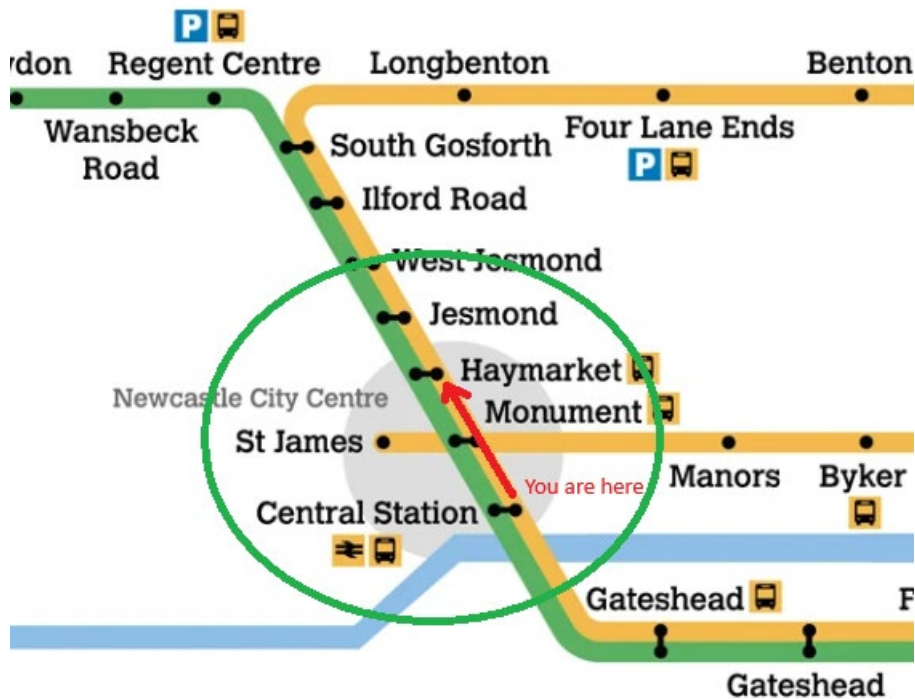
Map showing walking route from Central train station to Civic Centre:



Map showing Metro route from Central station to Haymarket:



Metro map showing route from Central station to Haymarket:



## ACCESSIBILITY

The venue is accessible to those who have a disability. There is ramp access to the main doors and then lift access to the upper floors as needed.

**Quiet Room:** A room will be made available for prayer or quiet reflection. Please ask staff on the day for its location.

## ACCOMMODATION

The following hotels offer budget options within walking distance of the conference venue and railway station:

- The Sandman Signature Hotel
- Premier Inn (City Centre at the Gate)
- The Maldron Hotel
- Motel One
- Four Points Flex by Sheraton
- Grey Street Hotel

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](mailto:kelly@nawra.org.uk)

Andrew Young, Newcastle Welfare Rights: [Andrew.Young@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Young@newcastle.gov.uk)

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