



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

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: TBC

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:

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



For 60 years, [Child Poverty Action Group](#) (CPAG) has been at the forefront of the fight to prevent and end child poverty in the UK. Our experience in welfare rights and social security advice is unrivalled - our rights handbooks are recognised as the definitive guides for advisers, support workers, and advocates nationwide.

CPAG's trusted information, training, and advice services help frontline workers secure the financial help that families need. Our expert welfare rights team supports advisers across local authorities, housing providers, and charities, equipping them to navigate the complexities of the benefits system with confidence and accuracy.

Our extensive range of publications - from our annual Welfare Benefits Handbook to specialist titles and in-depth research reports - offers practical, reliable guidance informed by decades of policy expertise. These resources are relied upon daily by advisers, campaigners, academics, and policymakers committed to building a fairer society.

Each year, CPAG delivers over 220 training courses, both online and in person, designed and taught by leading welfare rights experts. These cover everything from introductory sessions on the benefits system, to advanced topics such as benefits for migrants, judicial review, and appealing to the Upper Tribunal. Every course is designed to give participants immediately applicable knowledge and skills.

In addition to our training and publications, CPAG Welfare Rights provides a comprehensive digital platform for frontline advisers. Subscribers gain access to online handbooks, regularly updated articles and bulletins, and an expanding library of practical tools, including test case summaries, template letters, and appeal resources. Authoritative, accessible, and always up to date, it is the essential resource for anyone working to support families and individuals through the welfare system.

For six decades, CPAG has combined frontline support with evidence-based policy and campaigning work to tackle the root causes of poverty. Whether through training, advice, publications, or advocacy, our vision remains constant: of a society free from child poverty, where all children can enjoy a childhood without financial hardship and have a fair chance in life to reach their full potential.



[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.



[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](https://www.what3words.com/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.

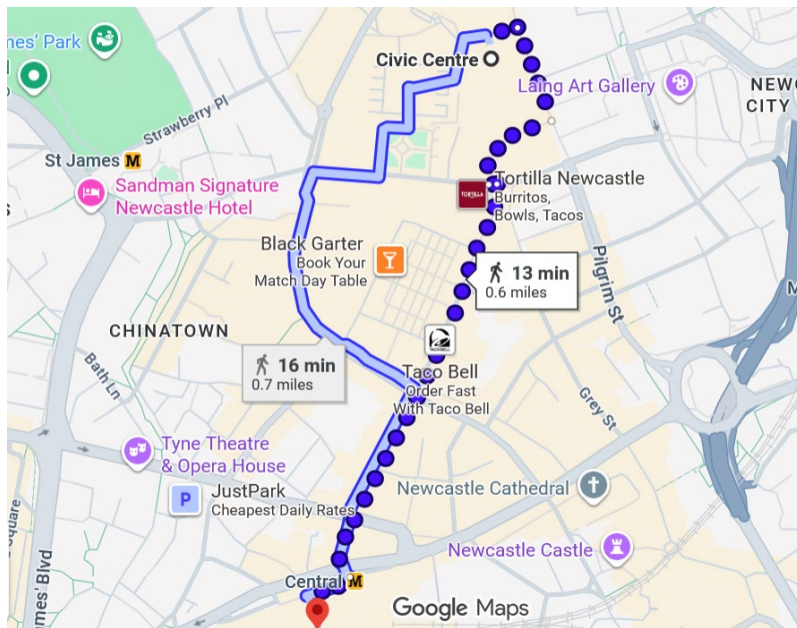
By bus:

- Haymarket Bus Station is a five minute walk from the venue. Information on bus services can be found at [Traveline Northeast](https://www.traveline-northeast.co.uk/).

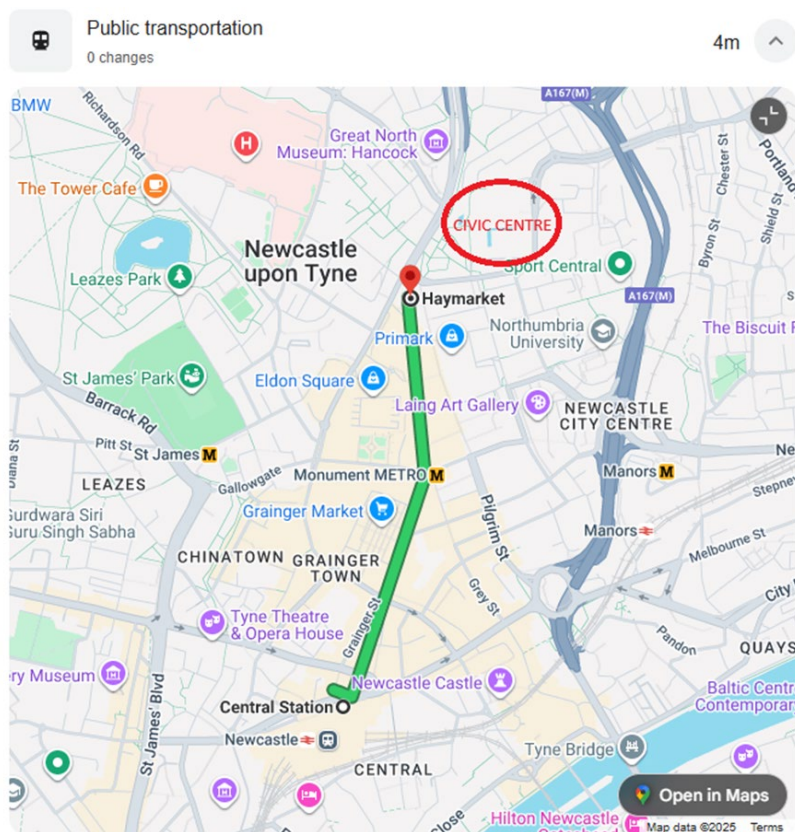
By car:

- 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

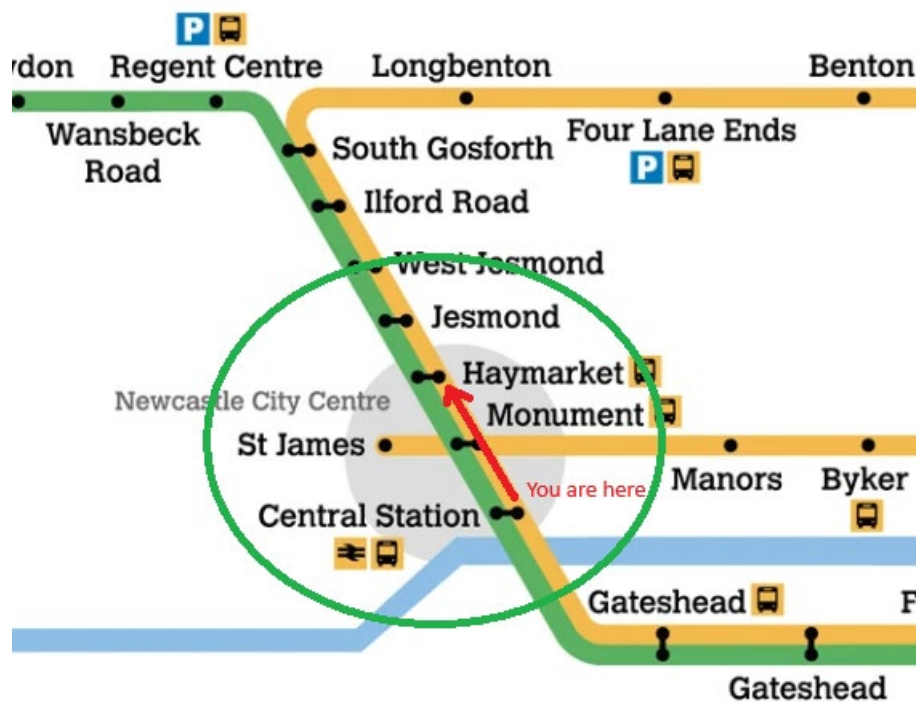
Map showing walking route from Central train station to Civic Centre:



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

Andrew Young, Newcastle Welfare Rights: Andrew.Young@newcastle.gov.uk

www.nawra.org.uk