

Benefit Matters

Our newsletter for advisers in Royal Greenwich

Finance Directorate

Coronavirus - Benefits Update

The Spring Budget on 3 March set out how the government intends to extend economic support to reflect the easing of COVID restrictions and the reopening of the economy. This issue focuses on the COVID-related announcements as we begin the process of gradually easing out of lockdown. The full Budget statement and supporting documents are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit uplifts extended

These uplifts were introduced last year in response to the pandemic and were due to end on 5 April 2021. The £20 per week Universal Credit uplift will now be extended for a further six months. Working Tax Credit claimants will receive equivalent support in the form of a one-off payment of £500. There is no need to claim, HMRC will text claimants to confirm if they are eligible – these include people who on 2 March 2021 were receiving:

- just Working Tax Credit (WTC) or both WTC and Child Tax Credit (CTC);
- CTC only and eligible for but not receiving WTC because their income was too high.

The payments are non-taxable and will not affect other benefits. Eligible claimants should receive their payments by 23 April 2021.

The government has confirmed that the payment will be disregarded if the claimant subsequently has to claim UC. The additional support will come to an end in October.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS) and Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) extended

The JRS has been extended to 30 September and will continue to cover 80% of furloughed employees' wages for hours not worked up to a maximum of £2,500. Employers will have to pay a 10% contribution towards employees' wages from 1 July, increasing to 20% in August/September.

In terms of the SEISS, the government outlined its plans for the two new grants in a [policy paper](#). The fourth grant will be set at 80% of 3 months' average trading profits, paid in a single payment and capped at £7,500. Eligibility will be based on 2019/2020 tax returns and will be open to people who became self-employed in that tax year (meaning that people who are newly self-employed may qualify for help for the first time). For people who have received earlier grants, basing the assessment on 2019/20 tax returns may mean that the fourth grant is higher or lower than the previous grants they received. The rest of the eligibility criteria remains unchanged. A fifth grant has also been announced which will be available from July 2021.

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**Welfare Rights Service
Advisers Advice Line**
020 8921 6376
E: wrs.ce@greenwich.gov.uk
Weekdays: office hours

**Welfare Rights Service
Public Advice Line**
020 8921 6375
Mon, Wed, Thurs: 10am – 1pm
[Via online contact form on website](#)

Universal Support Team
020 8921 3333
Mon to Fri: 10am - 4pm
[Via online contact form on website](#)

Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme extended

Test and Trace Support Payments are for people who are employed or self-employed and receiving qualifying benefits who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. Local authorities also have the discretion to award payments to claimants not on a qualifying benefit who will face financial hardship as a result of self-isolating. Claimants who are eligible will receive the payment in addition to any benefits they receive.

Claims can now be made for the £500 payment up to 42 days after the first day of the self-isolation period. The scheme has also been extended until the end of June and been opened up to parents and guardians who need to take time off work to care for a child who has been instructed to self-isolate. The child/young person must be aged 15 (or under 25 with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan) and must have been told to self-isolate after 8 March. All the other normal eligibility criteria apply. Qualifying parents will receive one payment per child per household.

The updated guidance: Claiming financial support under the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). Royal Greenwich's [Test and Trace webpage](#) has been updated to reflect these changes.

COVID Winter Grant Scheme

The COVID Winter Grant Scheme has been extended to 16 April 2021 (it was previously due to end on 31 March). The scheme provides local authorities with additional funding to support low income families (with or without children) with food, essential utility bills and other associated essential costs. All eligible parents with children on free school meals should have received a text message and email confirming that additional support will be available during the Easter holidays. The text will contain a payment code which families will be able to redeem at the Post Office. Payments are worth £30 per child for the two-week period. Please email any queries that need escalating to wintergrantpayment@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

The [Holiday Activities and Food Programme](#) which provides grant funding to local authorities to coordinate free holiday provision for eligible children has been expanded to cover school holidays in 2021, starting with this Easter. This support enables families with children who qualify for free school meals on low income grounds to continue receiving this help during the holidays.

Useful links

- [Royal Greenwich's Together for Winter webpage](#)
- [Find out about free holiday meal provision for children in locations around the borough](#)

Housing support measures for tenants extended

The ban on evictions has been extended until after 31 May 2021 (it was previously due to end on 21 February). Due to the notice period requirements, effectively this means that most evictions cannot take place until after 14 June 2021, however note that exceptions apply. The ban on evictions before 31 May 2021 also applies to borrowers – there are no exceptions.

The requirement for landlords to provide tenants with six months' notice has been extended to 31 May 2021 (it had previously been due to end on 31 March). This requirement applies to notices served between 29 August 2020 and 31 May 2021 but note that exceptions apply to the most serious cases (such as anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse).

See [Shelter's COVID-19 and housing](#) page for more information.

Benefit Changes Timeline

Date	Benefit/Topic	Change
27 Jan 2021	Universal Credit (UC)	Severe Disability Premium (SDP) Gateway closed - Claimants receiving SDP in legacy benefits are no longer protected from naturally migrating to UC. Transitional SDP protection element may be included in UC award (see page 4).
15 Mar 2021	Support for mortgage interest (SMI)	Claimants with an outstanding SMI loan, who are purchasing a new home, can transfer their loan to the new property regardless of whether they are currently receiving a qualifying benefit. ADM Memo 03/21
End March 2021	Sickness and Disability benefits	Claimants could be invited to have video assessments for disability benefits as technology is rolled out (see page 8).
April 2021	All Healthy Start vouchers	Benefits uprating – highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most benefits & tax credits linked to inflation rise 0.5%, Basic and New State Pension rise 2.5%. • Housing Benefit (HB) - earnings disregard reduced back to pre-2020/21 levels (£17.10) and reduced personal allowances introduced for people reaching pension age on or after 1 April 2021. • Earnings Limit increases (weekly figures): Permitted Work £143; Carers Allowance earnings limit £128 pw (no change). • UC and WTC uplifts continue for further 6 months (see page 1). Value of vouchers increases from £3.10 to £4.25 per week (worth a minimum of £221 a year per child) – see page 7
April 2021	Universal Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UC advances - recovery period extended to 24 months (rather than 12 months) • Maximum deduction rate to recover debts from UC reduced from 30% to 25% • Surplus earnings limit remains £2,500 until April 2022. The lower limit of £300 was to have been reintroduced from April 2021 but has been deferred for another year.
April 2021	Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	LHA rates (used to work out how much UC housing costs or HB private tenants can get) are frozen at 2020/21 levels
1 April 2021	National Living Wage	Extended to 23 and 24 year olds for the first time and increased from £8.72 to £8.91. See other National Minimum Wage increases
16 April 2021	COVID Winter Grant Scheme	Expected to end (see page 2)
31 May 2021	Shared accommodation rate in UC and HB	Exemption for care leavers extended up to 25 th birthday (was previously age 22 nd) and the lower age limit is removed to include all claimants aged under 35 who have spent at least 3 months a homeless hostel. The changes were due to be introduced from October 2023 but have been brought forward (see page 4).
30 June 2021	EU Settlement Scheme	Deadline for making application to EU Settlement Scheme for EU, EEA or Swiss nationals to regularise their status and continue to live, work, study and access free healthcare and benefits in the UK (see page 5).
August 2021	Universal Credit	Minimum income floor will be gradually reintroduced, work coaches will have discretion to apply it on case by case basis where claimants earnings continue to be affected by covid.
End Sept 2021	Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme & Self-Employment Income Support Scheme	The extensions on both schemes are expected to end on 30 September (see page 1)

Transitional protection for former Severe Disability Premium (SDP) recipients claiming UC from 27 January

The closure of the Severe Disability Premium (SDP) Gateway on 27 January, means that claimants who were receiving SDP in one of their legacy benefits are no longer prevented from claiming Universal Credit and cannot make new claims for legacy benefits or tax credits unless one of the limited exceptions¹ apply. Note that the closure of the gateway doesn't mean that SDP is abolished or that existing legacy claimants receiving SDP will be automatically transferred to UC from 27 January. Existing claimants will continue to receive SDP and can still become entitled to it. The closure of the SDP gateway is only an issue for SDP recipients who must claim UC due to a change of circumstances (such as moving to another borough). Claiming UC will bring their existing legacy benefits to an end.

UC has no equivalent disability premiums, so a transitional SDP protection element will be included in the UC calculation of eligible SDP recipients who make a new claim for UC on or after 27 January to compensate for the loss of SDP. However, note that the transitional element is not intended to compensate for the full amount of the legacy benefit that was previously paid.

The SDP transitional element is paid at set amounts. The rate which applies depends on if it is a single person or couple claim and whether the limited capability for work-related activity (LCWA) is included - see below.

Single Person		Couple – joint claimants		
With LCWA	Without LCWA	With double SDP in legacy award	LCWRA is included for one of them	No LCWRA incl for either of them
£120	£285	£405	£120	£285

The DWP will automatically consider entitlement to the payment by checking if claimants were receiving SDP in their one of their previous legacy benefits (but not Housing Benefit) before claiming UC. They must also satisfy the SDP eligibility conditions up to and including the first day of the UC award. Note that there will be no entitlement to the payment if the UC award is made because the SDP recipient has formed a couple with an existing UC claimant – so couples in this situation are likely to be significantly worse off.

Once awarded, the transitional payment will remain in payment even if the qualifying benefit ends, or if someone claims Carer's Allowance or the UC carer element for the person who is being looked after. However, entitlement will end once the UC claim ends or the claimant is no longer eligible for UC and it will not be possible to get the payments reinstated in a new UC claim.

Useful links: [Memo ADM 01/21](#).

Changes to LHA exemptions for care leavers and homeless

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is used to work out the maximum rent that is used to calculate HB and the UC housing costs element for tenants renting from private landlords. The LHA rate that applies is normally based on the number of bedrooms the person is allowed under the size criteria.

The shared accommodation rate of the LHA applies to claimants under the age of 35 who are living alone and renting privately. This means that unless an exception applies, HB/UC housing costs for under 35s will be assessed based on the LHA shared room rate and not the higher one-bedroom rate even if they don't live in shared accommodation. There are a number of exceptions to this rule which enable the one-bedroom rate to be included instead – for example for people who qualify for a severe disability premium. There are also exceptions for care leavers under 22 and for people aged at least 25 but under 35 who have spent at least 3 months in a homeless hostel. From 31 May, the care leavers exception will be extended to care leavers under age 25 and for those who have spent at least three months in a homeless hostel, the lower age limit will be removed to include all claimants aged under 35. Affected claimants will be able to claim the exception from that date. Local authorities may choose to proactively contact claimants who are affected, but the onus is on claimants to self-identify to claim an exemption.

Useful links: [Guidance LA Welfare Direct 3/2021](#)

¹ Exceptions include claimants in 'temporary' or 'specified' accommodation who can still make new HB claims

EU nationals and the EU Settlement Scheme – 30 June deadline

The ending of the post Brexit transition period on 31 December 2020 ended European free movement rights under UK law. We are now in an immigration “grace period” until 30 June 2021. This has important implications for European Economic Area (EEA) nationals (including Swiss nationals) and their family members living in the UK.

EEA nationals and their family members who were living in the UK before 31 December 2020 have until 30 June 2021 to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) to regularise their status. This is a legal requirement to continue to remain in the UK after 30 June and retain their right to work, housing and so on. Provided the EEA national applies by the 30 June deadline, these protections will continue until the EUSS application has been determined (including any subsequent appeals against a decision to refuse status).

New arrivals after 31 December 2020 cannot apply to the scheme.

Living in the UK for 5 years or more before 31 December 2020

EEA nationals and their family members can apply for settled status (indefinite leave) broadly following five years residence in the UK. This will enable them to continue living and working in the UK after 30 June. It also provides:

- access to income-related benefits;
- access to social housing and housing assistance.

Living in the UK for less than 5 years before 31 December 2020

EEA nationals who have been resident in the UK for less than 5 years are likely to be granted pre-settled status and be awarded limited leave for 5 years. This will give them the right to be in the UK and rent, work and so on beyond 30 June. However, the benefit rights of EU nationals with settled status is unclear and is dependent on the outcome of a Court of Appeal case ([R \(Fratila & Tanase\) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions \[2020\] EWCA Civ 1741](#)). On 18 December 2020, the Court of Appeal found that preventing reliance on pre-settled status for the purposes of claiming certain social security benefits (including Universal Credit) amounted to unlawful discrimination. The government has been given leave to appeal to the Supreme Court and a decision is awaited. A stay has been placed on the Fratila decision until it is resolved. We will keep you advised of developments.

What happens after 30 June 2021?

The EUSS will close to new applications on 30 June 2021, but there are some exceptions. For example, it will still be possible to upgrade from pre-settled status to settled status after 30 June and to submit family permit applications where the sponsor has been granted status under EUSS, provided the relationship existed before 31 December 2020 (applies to both EEA and non-EEA nationals).

Important: Please remind residents you are working with of the need to apply to EUSS before the 30 June deadline if they wish to remain in the UK after this date. Those who miss the deadline and do not have a different form of UK immigration status will be considered a person subject to immigration control and will not be eligible for public funds (including social housing/homelessness assistance). Late applications will be considered where there are reasonable grounds.

How to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme

[Apply online on GOV.UK](#)

Useful links

- [The Aire Centre](#) – services include a range of helpful [EUSS Information sheets](#) (available in several other languages).

Universal Credit Update

Universal Credit Help to Claim Service

The government has confirmed that funding to Citizens Advice to deliver the Universal Credit Help to Claim service has been extended for a further 12 months. The service has been in place since April 2019 and provides free targeted support for people needing additional support to claim UC up to the point of their first payment. Further information about the service is available on [Greenwich CAB's website](#).

UC and deductions for court fines – policy ruled unlawful

The High Court has ruled that the DWP's rigid Universal Credit deductions policy is unlawful because it "fetters discretion" and prevents decision makers from considering claimants' individual circumstances. The case in question, ([Blundell & Ors, R \(On the Application Of\) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions \[2021\] EWHC 608 \(Admin\)](#)) related to deductions for court fines and was brought by Shelter on behalf of a group of former rough sleepers who were left destitute after automatic maximum deductions of one third (30%)² were applied to their UC to repay court fines leaving them with £52 a week to live on. This case was heard together with a second claim brought by Hackney Community Law Centre on behalf of a disabled UC claimant who had been left in extreme hardship due to the deductions policy. The judgement on 17 March 2021 said:

"I conclude that the Secretary of State's policy and practice are not lawful in their present form. There would be no legal difficulty if the deductions policy admitted of exceptions, even rare exceptions, in individual cases. The claimants themselves accept that. But it does need revising to enable that to happen".

This welcome ruling means that claimants who are in hardship because they are struggling to repay historical court fines can now ask the DWP to reduce their deductions. The DWP has sought and been granted leave to appeal against the ruling.

[Read Shelter's Blog for further information.](#)

Social sector tenants, Universal Credit and annual rent increases

Many council and housing association tenants have been forced to claim Universal Credit for the first time in the last year. Among the other problems that social sector tenants have had understanding UC and all its processes, one issue that has emerged is around rent verification.

Most social sector rents change on the 6 April each year and claimants need to notify UC to get the increase covered. UC will provide all claimants with housing costs with a "To-do" via their online account (called "Confirm your housing costs") to enable them to notify of any annual rent changes. They will also need to add a note on their journal. This process will trigger a verification request to the social landlord.

Some tenants run into difficulties getting the increase covered because they haven't understood the process. Many have just added a note to their journal about the rent increase without also completing a change of circumstances form – a journal entry alone doesn't trigger a new rent verification request.

Changes must usually be reported in the assessment period in which they occur in order to be reflected in the next UC payment. However, late notification and backdating is possible if the DWP accepts that there was a good reason. Claimants should be advised to notify as soon as possible and add a note to their journal with their reasons for notifying late.

Carers and Universal Credit

Universal Credit includes an extra carer element worth £163.73 a month for carers satisfying the eligibility conditions. This can be included for carers who regularly and substantially care for someone receiving a qualifying disability benefit. The carer element can be included even if the carer has not claimed Carer's Allowance (CA).

Note that the carer element isn't automatically included in UC even if the carer is receiving CA. We understand this is because UC recognises CA as an income but is currently unable to interpret what that means

² Recovery rate reduces to 25% from April 2021

to a claimant's circumstances. In order to ensure that carers don't miss out, they need to specifically declare that they are a carer on their UC account.

If CA is backdated, CA will be considered as income for the previous UC assessment periods, thereby creating an overpayment. This can cause problems because claimants may not be prepared for this as they are often notified about the overpayment several weeks later, by which time they have spent the backdating. To get the carer premium backdated for the full period, this should be reported as a late change of circumstances on the UC claim.

Please encourage carers you are working with to check if they are missing out on the premium and to notify UC if necessary. Alternatively, please contact our [advisers line](#) if you need advice about a resident you are working with.

In the longer term, it's hoped that this matter can be raised with the Minister and a trawl instigated of all past and present UC claims to ensure that where CA has been declared or notified as an income, the carer element has been awarded, from the same date that the CA was awarded from.

Note that there are similar issues with UC failing to include a limited capability for work-related activity element for ESA claimants who are in the support group.

UC and terminal illness

The government has repeated its commitment to review the way the benefits system treats people who are terminally ill. In particular, the "six-month rule" which requires people to provide evidence that death can reasonably be expected within six months in order to access certain benefits faster and at a higher rate, and the requirement to reapply 3 years after the benefit is awarded. Justin Tomlinson (Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work) acknowledged in a [House of Commons debate](#) on 22 February, that the current situation is unacceptable and hopes to be in a position to "set out the timetable to start bringing forward the changes".

The government plans to *look at, engage and consult on what more can be done across Government to support people in this situation*. These issues will be explored in the forthcoming health and disability Green Paper. Aims include introducing a cross-governmental "Tell Us Once" style system to avoid the need for claimants to have the same difficult conversation with multiple government agencies. Mr Tomlinson said: "we are *absolutely committed to bringing this forward as quickly as we can, and we are working across Government on this.*"

Note: the difference in the way that the social security system treats people with a terminal illness who cannot reasonably meet the six month condition has been judged by the [High Court in Northern Ireland](#) to be discriminatory and "manifestly without reasonable foundation". The claimant, Lorraine Cox, who had been diagnosed with the terminal illness motor neurone disease was awarded £5,000 compensation for the 'upset, distress, annoyance, inconvenience, worry and humiliation' caused as a result.

Healthy Start Vouchers – make sure residents don't miss out!

Healthy Start is a welfare food scheme that targets pregnant women and children under 4 years old in low income households, who are amongst the groups most at risk of food poverty. This important means-tested scheme provides a basic nutritional safety net to support families to make healthy food choices. Help is in the form of vouchers (now worth £4.25 per week) which can be exchanged for free food (fresh/frozen fruit/vegetables and infant formula) and vitamins.

Who qualifies?

- all pregnant women under 18 regardless of income;
- women who are 18 or over and at least 10 weeks pregnant and families with children under 4 receiving means-tested benefits (such as Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance). Claimants receiving Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit can also get this help, but income limits apply.

Many families miss out on this additional financial help, so please encourage residents who may qualify to apply. Visit the [Healthy Start website](#) for more information.

Greenwich Advice Network and Greenwich Advice Forum

These meetings are normally six-monthly but have been taking place more frequently than usual due to the pandemic. The last Greenwich Advisers (GRAF) meeting was on 30 March and focused on issues for EU nationals (including the EU Settlement Scheme) post Brexit. We had guest speakers from Lewisham Refugee Migrant Network and from Public Health. The date of the next meeting has not yet been fixed, however, it's likely to be at the end of June – we will circulate details nearer the time together with confirmation of the discussion topic.

The next virtual Greenwich Advice Network meeting (GAN) meeting will be in May – we will confirm the date and distribute invitations shortly. The meeting will focus on the possible development of an online advice referral platform for professionals.

If you are not already on the mailing list and would like to receive information about future GAN or GRAF meetings, please email sandra.pierre@royalgreenwich.gov.uk with your contact details (name, organisation, telephone number).

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Update

DWP to start reintroducing PIP face-to-face assessments from May

The DWP have confirmed that they plan to begin reintroducing face-to-face assessments for health and disability benefits. Face-to-face assessments for PIP and Work Capability Assessments (for Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance) will resume from May and will take place alongside paper-based and telephone assessments where suitable. Initially face to face assessments will only be available for claimants who are unable to access existing paper, telephone and video channels.

The DWP state in a 29 March press release that they have worked with assessment providers to ensure that assessment centres are COVID compliant and that their approach will be kept under review to ensure it remains consistent with latest public health guidance.

Useful links: [DWP - Claimants guide to attending face-to-face health assessments during COVID-19 period](#)

New regulations introduced enshrining telephone and video health assessments in law

Prior to March 2020, most people claiming PIP, Universal Credit, ESA or Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit had to attend an assessment in person. These face to face health assessments were suspended in March 2020 in response to the pandemic while the DWP explored alternative ways of carrying them out. The DWP have issued new regulations which add telephone and video to the list of approved ways in which health assessments can be carried out for the purposes of establishing entitlement to these benefits. The new regulations apply from 25 March and are available [here](#).

Joint PIP/ESA assessments - pilot

The DWP announced plans to develop an integrated assessment for PIP and ESA/UC work capability assessments in 2019 and 2020 and had begun testing a single digital platform in a small number of assessment centres. This work which was paused due to COVID-19 is now set to resume with the IT development to form part the work of the new Departmental Transformation Area (DTA). The DTA will be an area where processes will be tested and evaluated before being rolled out nationally. The first site will be in London and is scheduled to start in April 2021.

Pensioners being underpaid state pension

Pensions consultancy firm, Lane Clark & Peacock published a [report](#) in May 2020 which highlighted that thousands of married women who reached state pension age before 6 April 2016 and were therefore covered by the old pre-April 2016 state pension system may be entitled to more pension than they are currently receiving. The Office for Budget Responsibility estimates that payments owed to pensioners amounts to £700m in 2021-22 alone.

This is a highly complex issue, but in simple terms, people who were born before 6 April 1953 (or 6 April 1951 for men) can claim basic State Pension and may qualify for pension 'top-ups'. This provision protects married women who may have been financially dependent on their husbands in retirement and allows state pension entitlement to be increased based on their husband's national insurance (NI) contributions where their own contributions generated a lower pension figure. Women used to have to claim the additional top up, but a rule change in March 2008 meant that married women on low pensions should have been awarded it automatically when their husband turned 65. According to the report, most of the cases are due to people failing to claim the top up (perhaps because they did not know they were entitled), but it also highlighted that many people have had their state pensions miscalculated and underpaid due to the DWP's failure to automatically pay the top up.

Note that the underpayments issue does not only affect married women, widows, divorcees and the over-80s (whether married or not) may also be affected. Examples of people who may be missing out include:

- Group 1.** Married women/civil partners turning pension age before 6.4.16 and receiving a state pension of less than £82.45 per week (April 2021 rate);
- Group 2.** Widows or civil partners whose pension was not reviewed/increased following their husband or civil partner's death;
- Group 3.** Married women or civil partners whose partner reached state pension age (65) before 17.3.08 who failed to apply for an additional pension. People missing out whose partners reached pension age after 17.3.08 will get any arrears owed automatically.
- Group 4.** Over 80s with a state pension of less than £82.45 per week (April 2021 rate).

The DWP confirmed in March that they will be checking hundreds of thousands of state pension records for claimants who have been underpaid. Some groups (including 2 and 4 above) should get their payments automatically and don't have to do anything, but others will have to contact the Pension Service (on 0800 731 0469) and ask for their pension to be checked and reassessed.

Claimants receiving means-tested benefits (Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support) who subsequently receive a lump sum to cover state pension arrears must notify the relevant benefit offices about their increased income as their awards will need to be reassessed. For Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support, this could generate an overpayment which the council may seek to recover. However claimants may be able to argue that the overpayment should not be recoverable due to the Pension Service's official error and should get advice. Note that Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support will be unaffected if entitlement to Pension Credit Guarantee element continues.

Useful links

- Visit [Lane Clark & Peacock's website](#) for more information and a list of groups who may be affected. There is also a calculator married women can use to check if they are being underpaid.
- [Pensions Age article](#)
- The City of Wolverhampton's [Benefits Bulletin](#) also includes a helpful summary.



A success story...

Client was referred to the Welfare Rights Service by Live Well Greenwich. He was very vulnerable and didn't respond to paperwork. His benefits had stopped after he reached pension age. He had no substantive income and was £700 in arrears with his rent. With our intervention, his Housing Benefit was reinstated, thus ensuring that no further enforcement action was taken. We escalated the issue with State Pension and together with Live Well Greenwich, were able to get the relevant paperwork completed to get his State Pension put into payment. This included backdated arrears of £5,000.

Training news

We are currently working on our May to July training programme and will email you separately when it is available.

Publicity update

We are currently working on updating our Benefit Rates card and factsheets for 2021/22. We will notify you by email when the Benefit Rates cards are available. The updated factsheets will be uploaded to the [Royal Greenwich website](#) as they become available. Note that the [online advice centres directory](#) is also being updated and includes up to date information about advice centre services as lockdown begins to ease.

Remember – if you need advice about a resident or family you are working with, call our [advice line for advisers and staff \(020 8921 6376\)](tel:02089216376)

If you would like this information in another format (for example in large print), please email WRSTraining@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.

Next issue: July 2021

Royal Greenwich Welfare Rights Service produces 'Benefit Matters'. If you would like to contribute in any way, please email Sandra Pierre (sandra.pierre@royalgreenwich.gov.uk).



Welfare Rights Service

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