



Universal Credit Advice

Welfare Reforms & Universal Credit Explained

Description

The Welfare Reform Act received Royal Assent on 8th March 2012 and represents the biggest Social Security shake-up in sixty years.

Universal Credit (UC) the Coalition Government's flagship, replaces the existing "passport" benefits of Income Support, Job Seeker's Allowance, and Employment Support Allowance for people of working age. Child Tax and Working Tax Credits will be abolished completely and responsibility for some of the Social Fund functions will transfer to local authorities or devolved governments as will the replacement for Council Tax Benefit. Some of these changes become effective from April 2013 whilst Universal Credit commences from October 2013.

Housing Benefit which currently provides some £14 Billion to social landlords is to be abolished and the housing costs, so critical to the income streams of social landlords, are to be absorbed as an element of UC. How much of the contractual rent and eligible service charges will transfer at the point of claim is still to be confirmed. What we do know is the "housing costs" element will be paid, in the vast majority of cases to tenants. For landlords this will create challenges, such as the greater need to support their tenants make "digital" claims; extend the variety of payment facilities; create more robust collection procedures; and promote an early interventionist rent arrears procedures and controls..

This workshop will help practitioners to understand the variety of changes and how they may interact from a housing professionals perspective; assess their likely impact on both tenant and the organisation; and enable organisations themselves to begin the preparatory work that will ensure they are ready to deal with all the issues which will arise from these changes.

Programme

- 9.30am - REGISTRATION**
- 9.40am - Coalition Government's Welfare Reform agenda**
- Need for Change;
 - Objectives of the new schemes
- 9.50am - Emergency Budget/CSR changes.**
- Non-dependant deduction increases
 - Benefit caps
 - Under-occupation restrictions
- 11.10am - COFFEE**
- 11.30am - Universal Credit**
- Structure of UC (including treatment of housing costs, non-dependents)
 - Claiming UC (how, where, support available?)
 - Payment of UC (direct payments, vulnerability and exceptions)
 - Conditionality (for those out of work, in work, for couples)
 - Introduction timetable (new claims, migration of existing HB claims)
 - Associated changes (localisation of Council Tax support, Social Fund, PIPs)
 - Pensioners (new Pension Credit "housing credit", timetable, payment arrangements)
- 1.00pm - LUNCH**
- 1.45pm - Implications for Social Landlords and housing & support services**
- Rent collection and arrears control (including effect on Pre-Action Requirements)
 - Financial management and risks
 - Data-sharing and liaison with LA and DWP
 - Impact on temporary accommodation; supported accommodation;
 - Changes to the rules on temporary absence and their effect on housing costs.
- 3.00pm - Mitigation considerations**
- Financial Inclusion
 - Digital Inclusion
 - Stock Profiles and procurement
 - Allocations and Transfer policies
 - Sub-letting and lodgers
 - Others?
- 4.15pm - CLOSE**

Who should attend?

We would recommend this workshop to staff who are responsible for strategic issues within your organisation; those who are operational managers; and those frontline staff who need to fully understand the extent of these changes.

Trainer Info

Bill Irvine was Head of Benefits, Revenues & Advice Services at one of the UK's largest councils; acted as local government advisor to the Housing Benefit Standing Committee, Westminster; for many years acted as a welfare rights advocate; and has tutored on HB/Rent Arrears issues, on behalf of the Chartered Institute of Housing, for many years. He currently operates HB Advice & Advocacy acting as representative of tenants, Private Landlords and Housing Associations in their respective HB/LHA negotiations with councils and, rather uniquely, represents them in disputes before First and Upper-tier tribunals. He also writes regular articles on LHA related topics and responds to Landlord's queries and complaints via various web-based forums and his own website.

Bill was one of the principal witnesses at the DWP Select Committee, Westminster hearings, relating to Local Housing Allowance in January 2010, where some of his recommendations were adopted as "Good practice" in subsequently produced DWP Guidance.

Book a Place?

If you would like to make a booking at one of our regional events or arrange something bespoke in-house for your organisation please contact:

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or phone

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