



Spring 2013 Newsletter

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**Telephone & reception opening hours Monday, Tuesday Thursday 10 am to 4pm.
Wednesdays & Fridays office appointments only, by arrangement**

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter we hope you find it useful and informative. We have just completed the first 12 months of our Transition fund period with Calderdale Council. The Transition fund payment runs to the end of September. Currently we have no funding in place for a continuation of our core service beyond September, although we have a number of applications awaiting decisions over the next few months. There is no guarantee that any of these applications will be successful but we remain positive a solution can be found to enable us to continue to deliver some kind of service beyond 1st October. We will let you know what happens once we are in a position to do so.

A collection in aid of DART was held at Sainsburys on 27th February over £300 was raised and as another supermarket tells us 'every little helps' We would like to thank the staff at Sainsburys for their support and in particular to Garry Hodgson who nominated DART. Thanks too to all who volunteered to help out on the day; your support is very much appreciated.

We will be having a Charity stall on the precinct in Halifax on Friday 2nd August and we are looking for items of bric a brac, books, plants etc. If anyone has any items to donate you could bring them on the day or alternatively you can bring them to the DART office during our opening hours or at other times by prior arrangement. We will also need volunteers to help out on the stall on the day so if you can spare us an hour or two please get in touch as we will be organising a rota. We are also in need of items for our office tombola so if you have any suitable unwanted items please bring them to the office.

We hope to have other fundraising activities during the year and we always welcome other groups running fundraising events on our behalf. Earlier this year the Southowram Community Centre held a coffee morning on behalf of DART our thanks go to all concerned. Could **you** put on a fundraising event for DART?

The Welfare reform changes continue to concern many of our clients therefore we have provided some information on some of the changes in this edition of our newsletter. Let us know if you would like information on other benefits in future editions.

A brief summary of the services we offer to clients

- Established in 1984, DART delivers a unique comprehensive specialist disability advice and information service to people with disabilities & their Carers. The core service is currently funded by Calderdale MBC until September 2013 but we have had to reduce our advice capacity by 50% as part of our Transition fund agreement. We now have to signpost more clients to other advice services in Calderdale.
- We are Town centre based and can be accessed by local public transport. There is on street Blue Badge disabled parking available.
- Clients are able to contact us by phone; letter; fax, email and at office appointments.
- We have developed a database of local organisations and we keep these organisations up to date with developments via our quarterly newsletter and general mailshots
- We deliver a designated Cancer Support service to Cancer patients; this is funded by the Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Foundation.
- Our service has over the past 28+ years assisted many thousands of clients to improve their lives. This has been achieved through the expertise of our advice service, and through the financial gains which are achieved for the individual, and their families through our benefits work.
- We guide and assist clients with the completion of complex and lengthy benefit claim forms. We advise them how to challenge decisions that they may disagree with, and offer support to enable them to take their case to Independent Appeal Tribunals. The support with form filling and appeals is currently very limited for clients accessing the core service, due to our reduced advice capacity.
- We offer information, sign-posting and if required a direct referral to other statutory and voluntary services, to give people the opportunity and the ability, to access specific support and services that will assist them to achieve a better overall life quality.
- We also advise clients on many other areas affecting their lives. For example, we assist with the completion of and verify (blue badge) applications for disabled parking permits. We offer a passport to leisure registration service allowing disabled people to receive discounts on local services such as swimming; theatre and cinemas.

- We advise people on warm front grants; energy efficiency measures; the Staywarm Scheme and can provide disabled people with information about a range of support groups and other organisations and services in the area, that are pertinent to their needs.
- We offer advice on safe alcohol limits, stopping smoking; healthy eating; improving fitness; falls prevention; aids/adaptations etc., and we can make direct referrals to appropriate agencies such as: The Substance Misuse Service; Housing Support; Adult Health & Social Care Services; The Adaptations Service and other relevant agencies as identified by each client.
- We provide opportunities for people with disabilities to become paid staff, volunteers or Trustees, within our organisation which is reflected in the current staff/volunteer/trustee levels, thus, supporting our policy of being 'user led'.
- As a user led organisation, DART has always encouraged user involvement and ownership of the organisation. We strive to reduce the inequalities that are often evident in wider society, by working collectively, to listen to; to be informed by; and to act upon the views of our beneficiaries. We believe that in empowering our clients to be involved in the decisions about our service operation and delivery, and offering disabled people and carers' opportunities to get involved, this would result in further improvements in the way we deliver our service at all levels.
- We have our own website which is updated regularly and which offers people an alternative method in which they can learn more about us, and the ability to contact us for help and advice via the enquiry form. We have a facebook page to attract a wider audience. We are involved in Local Giving which although is acting primarily as a fund-raising opportunity for us, does also let a wider audience know about our work, and offers information about volunteering opportunities.
- We provide a quarterly newsletter which we use to keep our client group informed of local and national issues which may affect them. It is distributed to all clients on our electronic mailing list. This is also made available as a paper copy on request and is published on our website. Clients are encouraged to contribute any items of interest for publication.
- During the year ended 31st March 2013 the core and Cancer Support services dealt with 4,729 issues. 2,990 of these issues were about welfare benefits. We achieved a benefits success total of £2,022,881 when calculated on an annual basis.
- We had 1,563 client contacts with 802 clients, an average of nearly 2 client contacts per client.

Disabled people are set to lose more than £28 billion in benefits by 2018 as a result of government cuts and reforms to the welfare system, according to new research.

The research – by the disability charity Scope and the think tank Demos – calculates that 3.7 million disabled people will lose out as a result of the cuts.

By 2018, some disabled people could be affected by at least six different cuts, through reforms to working-age disability living allowance (DLA), housing benefit, and employment and support allowance (ESA). Some could lose more than £23,000 by 2018.

About 150,000 disabled people are set to lose more than £15,000 each by 2018, with the worst-hit likely to be those – in the work-related activity group – who are affected by the new 12-month time limit on the contributory form of ESA.

Those who lose their DLA when it is replaced by the new personal independence payment will also be hit hard.

The research was carried out in a bid to measure the cumulative impact of all of the government's welfare cuts on disabled people, something the government insists is impossible.

But even the cuts assessed by Scope and Demos under-estimate the total impact of the government's reforms.

The researchers found that the combined impact of other welfare cuts was too difficult to calculate, including the freezing of child benefit (affecting one million disabled parents), the closure of the Independent Living Fund (affecting 19,000 disabled people), and cuts to council tax credit (1.38 million disabled people) and local housing allowances for private tenants (827,000 disabled people).

There are also continuing restrictions on social care, with local authorities tightening eligibility criteria, increasing charges, and cutting services.

Richard Hawkes, Scope's chief executive, said: "In 2013, disabled people are already struggling to pay the bills. Living costs are spiralling. Income is flat-lining. We know many are getting in debt, just to pay for essentials.

"What's the government's response? The same group of disabled people face not just one or two cuts to their support, but in some cases three, four, five or even six cuts.

"It paints a frightening picture of the financial struggles affecting disabled people in 2013."

(Disability News Service March 2013)

Calderdale Customer First

Our services

At Customer First you can:

- Get help with housing benefit, Council tax benefit and free school meals
- Buy trade waste bags and labels
- View plans for local developments

- View the Unitary Development Plan
- Apply for a Passport to Leisure
- Apply for disabled car parking badges
- Request home care
- Renew bus passes for disabled people
- Renew blind and blind companion bus passes
- Report blocked drains
- Report potholes or faulty manhole covers
- Report abandoned cars
- Report graffiti
- Report dog fouling
- Report noisy neighbours
- Report missed bin collections
- Request fridge/freezer collection
- Arrange pest control
- Report dangerous trees
- Book appointments with our specialist surgeries
- Customer First is a hate / race reporting centre
- Renew a library book.

The above list gives just some of the examples of the services available at Customer First either by ringing the Contact Centre or visiting a Customer First Service Centre. Complex or difficult we will help by putting you in contact with the right person

Contact Calderdale Customer First

You can contact Customer First by email or telephone:

- **Email**

customerfirst@calderdale.gov.uk

- **Telephone** General Number: 0845 245 6000

Street Care: 0845 245 7000

Finance: 0845 245 8000.

Opening times Monday to Thursday 8.45 am to 5.30 pm Friday 8.45 am to 5pm

If the matter needs **urgent** attention you should call the out of hours *emergency number* on 0845 1111 137.

Localised Welfare Assistance

In April 2013 Calderdale Council introduced a local Welfare Assistance scheme to help residents in times of emergency or disaster, and to help maintain independent living within the community.

The new localised scheme will replace Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants which were formerly managed by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Calderdale Council aims to provide support to those households with a genuine need.

Support will be provided by awarding vouchers rather than cash for living expenses.

The scheme will be funded by Central Government. However, funding is limited, so the Council will monitor funds to ensure that support is being provided to those most vulnerable.

Cabinet Member for Communities, Cllr Pauline Nash, said:

"The impact of Welfare Reform will be far reaching and everyone will need to take responsibility for their household budget and to plan for the unexpected demands on their finances. The transfer of responsibility to local Councils from April 2013 to help households in emergency situations will give Calderdale an opportunity to consider how best we can deliver that help in the future.

"The Welfare Assistance scheme will be a safety net for people who find themselves in genuine need as a result of an emergency or disaster situation."

The two schemes are as follows:

➤ **Community living support**

Community Living Support (CLS) aims to help people:

- return to the community after being in care
- stay in their home rather than go into care
- set up home in the community after having an unsettled way of life (as part of a planned programme of resettlement)
- care for a prisoner or young offender when they leave prison on a temporary licence
- ease exceptional pressures on families because of a family breakdown or illness
- pay for certain travelling expenses e.g. going to a family funeral or visiting someone who is ill.

CLS is not intended to assist with replacing items. In these circumstances you may be able to claim a budgeting loan from DWP

As there is a limited amount of money available for CLS we may not be able to make an award in every case or for all the things you need. Priority will be given where an award will

play an important part in helping people cope with exceptional circumstances and where it will meet the aims of CLS.

Priority items will be:

- Cooker or microwave
- Beds and bedding
- Baby items.

Some items we cannot pay for as they are excluded under our scheme rules.

How will you pay me?

No cash will be paid.

If we can make an award of CLS we will let you know the maximum spend amount for each item awarded.

You will then be asked to decide where you want to buy the items from and we will order and pay for them for you.

If you have a support worker you should ask them to help you with this

Can I claim CLS?

You can claim help from CLS if you are getting one of these benefits:

- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance – income based
- Employment and Support Allowance – income related
- Pension Credit

Or

- If you are due to leave care and likely to get one of these benefits when you leave.

How do you decide if CLS can be awarded?

We will look at all the information on your application before deciding if we can make an award.

If you have a support worker, social worker or probation officer you should ask them for help in completing the application form and if happy to do so provide a letter in support of your application. The information you and your support worker provide will help us reach a decision.

Applications for CLS can be made in advance, for example if you and your support worker are working towards resettling you into the community.

Do not delay making a claim until you have found a new place to live, we can make an interim decision in advance of your move.

This decision would be valid for up to 3 months.

When would I get a decision?

We will contact you by phone or email within 2 weeks to tell you if we can help.

How can I apply?

You can download an application form from the Councils website, or you can telephone **0845 245 8000** and request an application form be posted to you.

➤ **Emergency living support**

Emergency Living Support (ELS) can be awarded to help people with something they need either

- in an emergency or
- because of a disaster.

And where the help needed

- is not available from anywhere else and
- is the only way to stop serious damage or risk to the health and safety of a person or their family.

What can I get help with?

An award may assist with an essential item or to meet immediate living expenses.

Any award made will be for the smallest amount needed to remove the crisis or alleviate need until your next regular income is available.

How will you pay me?

No cash will be paid. Vouchers for local supermarkets will be given to meet living expenses.

If you need help with items, such as a cooker or furniture we will let you know how much we can award. You will then be asked to choose where you want to buy the item from and we will order and pay for this for you.

Can I claim ELS?

You do not need to be receiving benefits to apply for ELS. Anyone living in Calderdale aged 16 or over can apply for an ELS award.

If you do not normally live in Calderdale but need help to return home then we may be able to help you.

However some people, in certain circumstances, cannot receive an ELS award

Please note that we will only make **a maximum of two ELS awards in a 12 month period.**

How do you decide if ELS can be awarded?

We look at everything that you have told us:

- What help you need
- Whether you have asked for something we cannot help with

- The kind of crisis you are in
- Whether an award will stop serious damage or serious risk to you or your family and
- Whether there is other help that you can use.

When would I get a decision?

If you apply for an ELS award before 2 pm we will ring you back the same day to let you know our decision and advise what happens next. If you contact us after 2 pm we will ring you back on the next working day.

How do I apply?

Applications are by telephone only. Please contact us on **0845 120 6092**.

You can apply for this service Monday to Thursday 8.45 am to 5.30 pm and Friday 8.45 am to 5 pm.

You will need to advise us of your national insurance number when you ring.

(Information from Calderdale Council website)



Judicial review bid will ‘shine a light on PIP injustice’

The latest legal challenge to the government’s welfare reforms will “shine a spotlight” on the “injustice” of its new disability benefit, according to one of the three activists spearheading the case.

Steven Sumpter and two other disabled campaigners have asked the courts for permission to challenge the government’s decision to tighten eligibility for personal independence payment (PIP) for people with the highest mobility needs.

Their legal challenge was announced as the government began its lengthy rollout of PIP, which is replacing working-age disability living allowance (DLA). New claimants in some parts of the north-west and north-east of England will be the first to experience PIP instead of DLA.

The new, tighter PIP rules were suddenly announced in December by Esther McVey, the Conservative minister for disabled people, prompting anger from campaigners who said the change had come “out of nowhere”.

All three of the disabled people taking the legal action currently claim the higher rate of the mobility component of DLA, but fear they will lose their right to claim the equivalent higher rate of PIP.

Under DLA, a person is entitled to the higher rate of the mobility component if they are “unable or virtually unable to walk”.

Claimants are usually considered to be “virtually unable to walk” if they cannot walk more than around 50 metres, but the alterations to the regulations announced by McVey in December saw this key criteria reduced from 50 to 20 metres.

Government figures made it clear that the overall package of changes announced in December would see – by 2015 – 20,000 fewer people eligible for the enhanced mobility rate than under the previous draft version of the PIP regulations, with this gap rising to 51,000 by 2018.

Law firms Public Law Solicitors and Leigh Day – representing the three disabled campaigners – argue that Iain Duncan Smith, the Conservative work and pension's secretary, failed to consult on the change to 20 metres, denying disabled people the opportunity to explain the likely impact on their independence.

The court will decide within a few weeks whether to grant a judicial review. If it does give permission, the case will be heard in July.

The government's figures show that 428,000 fewer people will be able to claim the PIP enhanced mobility rate by 2018 than would have been able to claim the DLA equivalent. Steven Sumpter can walk short distances with a stick, but otherwise uses a wheelchair. He was awarded the DLA higher mobility rate last year, and uses it to lease a Motability car, which he says restores much of his "freedom and independence".

Although he cannot walk more than 50 metres without experiencing pain and exhaustion, he can usually walk more than 20 metres and so believes he will not qualify for the enhanced rate of the PIP mobility component when he is reassessed.

He said: "If I do not qualify for the enhanced rate of mobility then the biggest change is that I will lose my Motability car.

"That means that I will have to rely on my wheelchair and public transport for every trip to the shops, to the doctor, to the hospital, and that means that every trip will turn into an hours-long ordeal of exhaustion and pain that will leave me stuck in bed for days afterwards.

"It means that I will only go out for the essential trips and will stay isolated the rest of the time and that will affect both my physical and my mental health."

He called on the government to abandon its introduction of PIP, but added: "If we are successful then the consultation will have to start all over again, but given the arrogance of the government I see no reason why they would pay attention to a new consultation any more than they paid attention to the one that they already did."

He said he saw the judicial review as "a tool to give time to shine a spotlight on the injustice of PIP and bring attention to the arrogance of the government".

Karen Ashton, from Public Law Solicitors, who is representing Mr Sumpter, said the judicial review would not force DWP to abandon PIP.

She said: "What we are hoping to achieve with the case is either a reformulation of the regulations so that they use 50 metres as the benchmark threshold for eligibility for the enhanced mobility payments, or that DWP at least consult again before making a final decision on this issue."

If the judicial review is successful, the court will have to decide what action to take over the new claimants who have already gone through the PIP assessment.

Ashton said: "It is difficult to predict with any certainty at this point what that action will be and how those new claimants will be affected.

"But, ultimately, if the case does result in the use of a 50 metre threshold in the new regulations, we would expect that to be applied at some point to all claimants both new and old."

A Department for Work and Pensions spokesman said: "We had strong feedback from our consultation that the criteria was unclear, which is why we have now clarified the rules. "Individuals who can move more than 20 metres can still receive the higher rate, if they cannot move these distances safely, reliably, repeatedly and in a reasonable time period. "We acknowledge the action being taken. The department will follow the correct procedure and respond in due course."

(Disability News Service April 2013)

Housing advice

Introduction

The Housing Options Service, based at Doorways, offers free and confidential advice to anyone who has housing problems, or who is homeless or threatened with homelessness. There is an experienced team of housing advisers who can advise on a range of housing issues including:

- rent and mortgage arrears
- benefits
- rights of landlords and tenants
- local housing options
- possession proceedings
- relationship breakdown
- domestic violence
- Applications for social housing, Pennine Housing 2000 and other housing associations.

Who can use the service?

Anyone who is over the age of 16 can approach the Housing Options Service with any housing related problem.

If you have a problem that needs urgent attention, we will see you normally within the same day. Alternatively, we will arrange an appointment for you at a time to suit you.

If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness, we will see you on the same day you contact us. Depending on your circumstances, we will refer you to the Temporary Accommodation and Support Service team or to a hostel.

Temporary accommodation and support

The Temporary Accommodation and Support Service team provides accommodation for those who are and who, it is believed, may be eligible for assistance with temporary accommodation under homelessness legislation. Before accommodation can be provided a

homeless person must be interviewed by an adviser at Doorways. For more information, contact the Housing Options Service on 01422 392460.

Opening hours

You can access the service through one of the following ways:

- you can come to Doorways for drop-in at the times below to be seen that day, **or** a Housing Advisor will contact you by telephone within 1 working day of your enquiry or at a time to suit you. You will be able to discuss your housing issues freely and any advice given will be followed up with a letter confirming that advice if appropriate. In some cases, an appointment will be made for you to meet with an advisor.

To access this service, please telephone or speak to reception staff at Doorways.

Drop-in times

Day	Times
Monday	10am - 12.30pm
Wednesday	10am - 12.30pm
Friday	10am - 12.30pm

- **E-mail**

doorways@calderdale.gov.uk

- **Telephone**

01422 392460**Fax**

01422 392461

- **Address**

Doorways

18-20, The Square

Woolshops

Halifax HX1 1RJ

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a new single payment for people who are looking for work or on a low income.

Universal Credit will help claimants and their families to become more independent and will simplify the benefits system by bringing together a range of working-age benefits into a single payment.

It will be introduced in 2013 and will replace:

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- Housing Benefit

The differences between Universal Credit and the current system

The main differences between Universal Credit and the current welfare system are:

- Universal Credit will be available to people who are in work and on a low income, as well as to those who are out of work
- most people will apply online and manage their claim through an online account
- Universal Credit will be responsive – as people on low incomes move in and out of work, they'll get ongoing support, giving people more incentive to work for any period of time that is available
- most claimants on low incomes will still be paid Universal Credit when they first start a new job or increase their part-time hours
- claimants will receive just 1 monthly payment, paid into a bank account in the same way as a monthly salary
- support with housing costs will go direct to the claimant as part of their monthly payment

When Universal Credit starts

April 2013 – start of Universal Credit pathfinder

Starting in April 2013, DWP, with our delivery partners in HMRC and local authorities, is introducing Universal Credit for claimants within certain areas of the north-west of England.

October 2013 – introduction of Universal Credit

We will introduce Universal Credit in a managed way, progressively rolling it out nationally from October 2013. The transition from the current system of benefits and tax credits to Universal Credit will be gradual and it is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

Additional support for Universal Credit claimants

Giving evidence at the Work and Pensions Select Committee on 17 September 2012, Ministers announced 3 additional areas of support for Universal Credit claimants.

Help with budgeting

DWP will explore the feasibility of new types of bank accounts or other financial products to help benefit claimants' budget and manage their money. These financial products could help make sure people's essential bills are covered – helping them to build up their credit rating and break the cycle of financial exclusion.

Supported accommodation housing costs

Help towards housing costs for those living in supported housing that satisfies our definition of 'exempt accommodation' will be provided separately from Universal Credit. DWP wants to continue to provide a flexible system to help meet the higher costs often associated with providing supported accommodation.

Supported accommodation is:

- a resettlement place
- accommodation provided by a county council, housing association, registered charity or voluntary organisation where that body or person acting on their behalf provides the claimant with care, support or supervision

Self-employment start-up period

We recognise the need for claimants who are setting up a business to be given time to establish themselves and find sources of support. Therefore where a claimant has been self-employed for less than 12 months, a start-up period will be granted.

This means that claimants will not be required to look for work or satisfy requirements to be available for work, and we will not assume a minimum level of income from self-

employment (known as the 'Minimum Income Floor'). This will give them time to concentrate on developing their business.

Claimants will be allowed a new start-up period every 5 years rather than once in their lifetime.

(Information from GOV UK website)

Disability Rights UK Advice Lines

Disabled Students Helpline

Telephone: 0800 328 5050

Opening hours: Tues 11.30 – 13.30 & Thurs 13.30 – 15.30

Email: students@disabilityrightsuk.org

Provides advice to Disabled students who are studying in England,

Independent Living Advice Line

Telephone: 0845 026 4748

Opening hours: Mon & Thurs 9.00 – 13.00

Email: independentliving@disabilityrightsuk.org

Provides advice on: Getting direct payments, including information on:

- individual budgets/personalisation
- funding from social services in relation to the care needs of the disabled (that also involves issues around appealing against the decision of social services)
- general advice on employing personal assistants

Do you want to help us?



We are always interested in recruiting new Trustees onto our Management Committee and if anyone reading this is interested and has some skills that would be useful to our organisation, please contact Tony Kay (Manager) for further details on how to become involved.



easyfundraising is the easiest way to raise money for Calderdale DART. Shop with any of over 2000 well known retailers listed on **easyfundraising.org.uk** and a percentage of what you spend is passed to Calderdale DART at no additional cost to you. Retailers include Amazon, M&S, Vodafone, eBay, Tesco, Viking and many more. Please register to support us today – <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/calderdaledart>



Thank you for supporting our organisation; since we joined local giving we have raised approximately £4,000

Your support is important to us so we want to tell you about Localgiving.com, the fundraising website we use.

Donating to us through Localgiving.com lets you claim Gift Aid*, giving us an additional 25% at no extra cost to you!

When you donate through Localgiving.com, you can send us a message and we can respond, telling you about the work we are able to carry out thanks to your generous gift.

To make a donation go to:

Localgiving.com/calderdaledart

Or visit any page on our website and click on the “make a donation” banner
Thanks again for your generosity and support. We hope you’ll continue to support us through Localgiving.com

Whilst every effort is taken to ensure that the information given is accurate, Calderdale DART cannot accept responsibility for the description or other circumstances relating to information given in this newsletter