

Public Document Pack

Working with communities to improve the quality of life for all in Argyll and Bute
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9 August 2022

SUPPLEMENTARY PACK 1

**BUTE AND COWAL COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP - BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on
TUESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2022 at 10:00 AM**

I enclose herewith additional item 5h (**Partner Updates - Department for Work and Pensions**) which was not included on the Agenda for the above meeting.

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director

ADDITIONAL ITEM

5. PARTNERS UPDATE

(h) Department for Work and Pensions (Pages 3 - 12)

Bute and Cowal Community Planning Group

Charles Dixon-Spain (Chair)
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DWP Partner Update August 2022 - Bute & Cowal CPG

Count of customers – Universal Credit and Legacy benefits (Stats Xplore 09/08/22)

Universal Credit – Number of People on UC by Age Group at June 2022 (all conditionality groups)

Jobcentre Plus	18 – 24	25 – 39	40 – 49	50 – 59	60+	TOTAL
Campbeltown	114	323	192	155	92	876
Dunoon	158	457	249	216	99	1179
Helensburgh	157	466	239	195	114	1171
Oban	202	701	350	287	176	1716
Rothesay	73	239	155	133	83	683
TOTAL	704	2186	1185	986	564	5625

Universal Credit – Number of People on UC by Conditionality Group at June 2022

Jobcentre Plus	C'town	Dunoon	H'burgh	Oban	Rothesay	TOTAL
Searching for work	179	293	206	382	146	1206
Working – with requirements	164	193	243	295	116	1011
Working – no requirements	207	194	228	416	100	1145
No work related Requirements	282	407	407	518	260	1874
Planning for work	5	19	21	19	22	86
Preparing for work	36	66	58	89	38	287
TOTAL	873	1172	957	1137	536	5609

Jobseekers Allowance as at November 2021 – Argyll & Bute

Male	124
Female	54
Total	178

Employment & Support Allowance as at November 2021 – Argyll & Bute

Phase of claim	
Assessment phase	116
Work Related Activity Group	311
Support Group	2211
Total	2638

Income Support as at November 2021 – Argyll & Bute

Statistical Group	
Lone Parent	49
Carer	114
Total	163

Dunoon & Rothesay Job Centres continue to work with local employer to support their recruitment, either hosting employers on site or advocating on behalf of our customers to support them into paid employment.

Both Job Centres continue to work with partners to identify suitable customers for No One Left Behind opportunities, funding which employers can access via the Scottish Government.

Provision

DWP has purchased provision for 25 customers who are currently on a health journey. This provision is open to customers across Argyll & Bute and will be delivered virtually by the provider. The aim of this provision is to support customers in their employability journey with the aim of moving them closer to the labour market.

Get Britain Working Website [\(link\)](#)

Following a successful pilot, the Get Britain Working website developed by Staffline / PeoplePlus has been rolled out across the country. The website provides the quickest, easiest way to search thousands of job vacancies and book directly onto guaranteed available interview slots.

- Vacancies across the whole of the UK in multiple industries with thousands of employers on a temporary and permanent basis
- Guaranteed interviews available for DWP claimants
- Easy to use fuss free, online chatbot available 24/7
- New employers and vacancies added every week
- Search for jobs based on postcode and industry
- Check available guaranteed interview slots and book online - over 20,000 to choose from with new slots added daily
- The participant receives reminders about their interview slot Post interview feedback is provided

 [GBW Claimant and Deskaid Flyer](#)

New benefits checker launched on GOV.UK

An online tool to help people find the benefits and financial support they might be eligible for has been launched. People will answer up to 10 questions to find out what support is available. The results page will show things they might be eligible for, with links to more information.

This [first version of the checker\(link\)](#) includes a selection of benefits and other sources of financial support. A wider range of support from across central government, local government and the NHS will be included in the next few months.

[How to verify your identity for Universal Credit\(link\)](#) If you want to claim Universal Credit you must verify your identity. This guide for claimants and people supporting them explains how to do that.

Cost of Living Payment

Over £15bn in further support has been announced targeted particularly on those with the greatest need. This package is in addition to the over £22bn announced previously, with government support for the cost of living now totalling over £37bn this year. This means that almost all of the eight million most vulnerable households will get £1,200 of one-off support in total this year to help with the cost of living, with all domestic electricity customers receiving at least £400.

- Energy Bills Support Scheme doubled to a one-off £400:
- £650 one-off Cost of Living Payment for those on means tested benefits:
- £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment
- £500m increase and extension of Household Support Fund

This means that, combined with other support, millions of low-income households across the UK will receive at least £1,200 from the Government by Christmas to ease Cost of Living pressures.

- £326 – the first of two cost of living payments – will automatically hit seven million bank accounts between 14 and 31 July 2022. Those on Tax Credit and no other benefits will receive their first payment by autumn.
- Second instalment of £324 will follow from the autumn, with separate payments for pensioners and disabled people also coming later this year

Read the [full press release](#) and [Cost of Living guidance](#).

Also, you may have seen in the media that there has been a significant increase in scammers attempting to obtain personal information from customers by sending out texts suggesting that customers are eligible for Cost of Living payments.

Please remind customers that they do not have to do anything. If they are eligible:

- they will not need to apply for the payment
- they will not need to call us
- the payment to them is automatic
- DWP will never ask for personal details by SMS or email.

Please help us spread the message by using the assets on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

The toolkit for shareholders has been updated to include adaptable assets for you to add your own branding, as well as downloadable posters, social media and newsletter copy. We encourage you to share this material with your networks.

[Cost of Living Stakeholder Toolkit 15.07](#)

[Cost of Living Payment \(link is external\)](#)

[Energy Bills Support Scheme explainer\(link is external\)](#)

[Millions of most vulnerable households will receive £1,200 of help with cost of living\(link is external\)](#)

[Overall government support for the cost of living: factsheet\(link is external\)](#)

Please find attached 2 factsheets you may find helpful and a link below to the HMT (Her Majesty's Treasury) press notice.

 **[Energy Profits Levy Factsheet.pdf](#)**

 **[Support Measures Factsheet.pdf](#)**

Full details of the eligible benefits and tax credits for the various extra payments are available on [Gov.uk](#)

Cost of living: managing your debts [\(link\)](#)

People worried about the cost of living or their debt payment plans are being urged to speak with their trustees, insolvency practitioners, or a debt adviser. The government understands that people are worried about the impact of rising prices and its effect on household incomes. The government's [MoneyHelper\(link is external\)](#) has lots of free information and resources to help you manage your money in uncertain times and how to keep up with essential bills and payments. If you are worried about debt, speaking to a [trained and experienced debt adviser\(link is external\)](#) about your situation could help you decide what to do. And if you are concerned about missing a payment towards your [Individual Voluntary Arrangement\(link is external\)](#), [Income Payments Agreement or Income Payments Order\(link is external\)](#) having early conversations is the best first step to resolving your money issues and avoiding missing payments.

New benefit to help with winter fuel bills – Scotland [\(link\)](#)

A guaranteed annual winter heating benefit of £50 will be paid for the first time in February 2023 to around 400,000 low income households. Low Income Winter Heating Assistance will be the Scottish Government's 13th benefit and replaces the UK Government's Cold Weather Payments.

Special Rules for End of Life

As outlined in the [Queen's Speech](#) on Tuesday 10 May fast-track benefit access is to be extended to those nearing the end of their life for Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance.

The Social Security (Special Rules for End of Life) Bill will mean that people considered by a clinician as having 12 months or less to live (rather than the current six months) can have fast-tracked access to these benefits.

The extended fast-track access means those eligible are not subject to a face-to-face assessment, or waiting period, with the majority of individuals receiving the highest rate of those benefits.

In [April 2022](#) the same changes were introduced for people on Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance.

Get help arranging child maintenance digital service

[Get help arranging child maintenance](#) is a new online service which supports separated parents to understand their options around making financial arrangements for their children. It has replaced Child Maintenance Options in England, Scotland and Wales. The

service is available 24/7 and explains customers' options and includes information about family-based arrangements as well as the [Child Maintenance Service](#) (CMS).

The digital and telephony services have been streamlined so customers can now make their application in one sitting as there is no longer a need to arrange a call-back. The new service is also quicker to use, taking only 15-20 minutes as opposed to 45 minutes previously.

Customers who are unable to use the online service or have no one to help them can speak to a CMS case worker on 0800 171 2345 which is available 8.00 -16.00 Monday to Friday. If your organisation has a website, please arrange for relevant changes to be made to ensure readers are signposted to the new service.

Help with the costs of childcare

A new cross-government Childcare Choices advertising campaign was recently launched. The digital and radio campaign will seek to ease the pressure on working families by encouraging take up of the range of government support available to help with the costs of childcare.

The Childcare Choices campaign brings together all the support in one place and covers:

- Universal Credit
- Tax-free childcare
- 30/15 hours free childcare

More information about each of these offers can be found on the [Childcare Choices website](#).

Winter Fuel Payment

If you were born on or before 25 September 1956 you could get between £250 and £600 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'. [The amount you'll get\(link is external\)](#) includes your 'pensioner cost of living payment'.

This is between £150 and £300. You'll only get this extra amount in winter 2022 to 2023. This is in addition to any [Cost of Living Payment\(link\)](#) you get with your benefit or tax credits. Claims will be accepted until 31 March 2023.

DWP publishes plan: Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System

In May the Government published Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System, which sets out the Department for Work and Pensions' plan to tackle the growing challenge posed by those seeking to exploit the public purse.

The publication sets out transformative plans to take strides in protecting the taxpayer from those who are intent on stealing from public funds. From investing £613m over the next three years to boost the Department's specialist counter-fraud response, to pursuing a range of legislative reforms, the Department intends to identify, investigate, and recover losses more effectively, saving the taxpayer billions.

[Find out more](#)

Resettlement

This publication provides guidance for businesses considering making offers of employment to people coming to the UK from Ukraine.

Any offer of employment opportunities are completed via the [Vacancy information questionnaire\(link is external\)](#), which need to be returned to [offerwork@homeoffice.gov.uk\(link sends e-mail\)](mailto:offerwork@homeoffice.gov.uk), and your organisation will be contacted by the National Employer and Partnership Team in the Department for Work and Pensions within 5 working days, to discuss the roles available.

Job opportunities will then be shared across the DWP Jobcentre Plus network and with the Refugee Employment Network (REN), a charity which works with organisations across the UK to support refugees into work.

More than 1,000 Ukrainian pensioners who recently arrived in Britain are already receiving financial support through Pension Credit

The figures follow emergency regulations laid by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) in March 2022 which enabled Ukrainians to immediately access benefits and other support upon their arrival.

Minister for Pensions Guy Opperman said: 'Our priority is ensuring those arriving from Ukraine can find safety here and get the support they need.'

' I urge those hosting elderly Ukrainians – and all those across the country with older relatives and friends – to check with them and see if they could be eligible for this extra financial assistance.'

HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) urges businesses to move to new customs IT platform now to continue trading(link is external)

HMRC is urging businesses to move to its new customs IT platform now to continue trading, and is writing to businesses to support them with the changes.

The letters and emails include further information about making the move to the UK's single customs platform – the Customs Declaration Service – and set out the steps businesses must take now to ensure they can continue trading. They also signpost to online resources to support businesses through the process

Best Start Grant School Age Payment applications now open - Scotland(link is external)

Families have been urged to check whether they are eligible and apply for the Best Start Grant School Age Payment as applications open for children old enough to start primary school

This one-off payment of £267.65 is to help at a key stage in a child's life and can be used for anything from a new pair of shoes to books or arts and crafts materials.

Best Start Grant School Age Payment is available to families who get Universal Credit, tax credits or certain benefits with children born between 1 March 2017 and 28 February 2018.

Visit mygov.scot/beststart or call 0800 182 2222 to find out more or apply.

Accessing a free TV licence made easier for low-income pensioners

New measures to save over-75s on Pension Credit from having to obtain paperwork in order to get a free TV licence have been outlined. Currently those affected are required to obtain and share documentation with the BBC to prove they are in receipt of Pension Credit. Under the new plans – expected to come into effect next year - the BBC will be able to verify automatically whether a person applying for a free TV Licence is on Pension Credit with DWP. This change will support eligible pensioners, struggling to keep on top of their bills, to claim the £159 annual saving more quickly and with less hassle.

The Government will not be sharing customer data with the BBC, but instead will be verifying whether free licence applicants fit the BBC's eligibility criteria. For more information, please visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Pension Credit toolkit[\(link\)](#)

The revised Pension Credit toolkit: advice and guidance for stakeholders - now includes a new ZIP file of posters and flyers to download and use to promote Pension Credit

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(09/08/22)

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