

# Public Document Pack

**Argyll and Bute Council**  
**Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal Agus Bhòid**

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3 November 2022

## **SUPPLEMENTARY PACK**

**OBAN LORN & THE ISLES AREA COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP - MICROSOFT TEAMS on WEDNESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2022 at 2:00 PM**

I enclose herewith **Department of Work and Pensions Update** which was not included on the Agenda for the above meeting.

Douglas Hendry  
Executive Director

## **ADDITIONAL ITEM**

- (j) Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Update (Pages 3 - 10)

### **Oban Lorn & the Isles Area Community Planning Group**

Kevin Champion (Chair)

Contact: Stuart Mclean, Committee Manager - 01436 658717  
Karen Campbell, Senior Committee Assistant - 01631 567855

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## DWP Partner Update November 2022 - Oban Lorn & the Isles CPG

### Count of customers – Universal Credit and Legacy benefits (Stats Xplore 31/10/22)

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

Jobcentre Plus	18 – 24	25 – 39	40 – 49	50 – 59	60+	TOTAL
Campbeltown	105	323	194	158	107	887
Dunoon	157	475	251	220	116	1219
Helensburgh	155	488	246	200	122	1211
Oban	210	738	381	294	177	1800
Rothesay	81	244	168	156	90	739
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>2268</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>1028</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>5856</b>

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

Jobcentre Plus	C'town	Dunoon	H'burgh	Oban	Rothesay	TOTAL
Searching for work	164	268	196	374	151	1153
Working – with requirements	162	202	224	311	109	1008
Working – no requirements	212	213	255	430	124	1234
No work related Requirements	307	445	462	560	278	2052
Planning for work	10	16	15	23	16	80
Preparing for work	30	71	61	108	52	322
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>1215</b>	<b>1213</b>	<b>1806</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>5849</b>

**Jobseekers Allowance at February 2022 – Argyll & Bute**

Male	119
Female	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>

**Employment & Support Allowance at February 2022 – Argyll & Bute**

<b>Phase of claim</b>	
Assessment phase	113
Work Related Activity Group	331
Support Group	2238
<b>Total</b>	<b>2682</b>

**Income Support as at February 2022 – Argyll & Bute**

<b>Statistical Group</b>	
Lone Parent	44
Carer	106
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>

Oban Job Centre hosted a mini recruitment event on 29/9/22, customers were given an opportunity to meet with recruiting employers. Six employers attended this event and feedback was positive from both customers and employers.

A similar event was held in Lochgilphead at the outreach facilities on 26/10/22 which was attended by 3 employers and again the feedback was positive.

DWP has purchased provision for customers who are on a health journey which will start on 7/11/22 and run to 20/1/23. This gives customer across West Scotland District access to more tailored support, and the aim of this provision is to increase confidence and motivation, as well as giving customers access to resources to help them better understand and maintain their health.

DWP have procured a short course for 6 customers which starts on 28/11/22 and will run for 3 weeks. Through this, customers working with Work Coaches in Oban Job centre will have the opportunity to undertake training and certification which will enhance their prospects of gaining employment in the retail/customer service sector.

**Update****New Telephone Number - New Style Employment & Support Allowance**

From 12/9/22 the telephony number to call will be 0800 055 6688. This is a shared line, with New Style Employment & Support Allowance, joining New Style Jobseekers Allowance and Maternity Allowance new claims. Once connected to the line, callers will be given all 3 options to choose from.

From 12/9/22 any calls made to the old number (0800 328 5644) will get a recorded message directing them to the new line. The Benefit Enquiry Line telephony number (0800 169 0310) remains unchanged and should continue to be used for all enquiries after a new claim has been made. Text and Relay line numbers also remain unchanged.

### **Managed Moves to Universal Credit**

In April DWP announced plans to resume the programme to move all benefit claimants over to Universal Credit by 2024.

From 9<sup>th</sup> May we did so in Bolton and Medway, then expanded this discovery phase to include Falmouth and Truro. This extended to Northumberland in mid-September. During the discovery phase we will send a Migration Notice to a small number of claimants on legacy benefits to let them know that they need to move across to Universal Credit, explain how the process will work and what they will need to do.

Everyone moving over from legacy benefits as part of this process will have their entitlement to Universal Credit assessed against their current claims, with transitional protection provided for eligible claimants whose initial Universal Credit entitlement would have been less than their entitlement to legacy benefits at the point of moving to Universal Credit. These will continue unless their entitlement changes.

[Easy read: Universal Credit guides](#) There are two new easy read guides available on GOV.UK, 'Before you apply for Universal Credit' (UC3ER) and '**How to apply for Universal Credit**' (UC4ER) – English and Welsh versions.

These easy read guides help people with learning disabilities to understand what Universal Credit (UC) is, who can get UC and how to apply for UC.

A dedicated helpline – signposted on the migration notice claimants receive – will provide support for people to make their Universal Credit claim, and guidance will also be available online including on the [Understanding Universal Credit website](#) Those in need of further support can also visit their local jobcentre.

Additional support remains available for those in need, including the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments.

### **Second Cost of Living Payment and toolkit**

The government announced on 3/10/22 that households receiving DWP benefits will receive the second payment of £324 will automatically be paid into the bank accounts of those eligible, meaning they will not need to do anything to receive the money. Most of these payments will be made by 23/11/22.

Our [Cost of Living Stakeholder Toolkit](#) includes everything organisations need to communicate the second Cost of Living Payment with a range of resources such as easy read information sheets, suggested newsletter and social media copy, FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) and a British Sign Language information video.

continuing through to 23/11/22. The second payment will automatically be paid into the bank account of those who receive a qualifying benefit. Full details can be found on our website [Cost of Living Payment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

A **new website** providing information on the wide range of advice and financial support available to people in Scotland has been launched [Accessing help for cost of living](#). Developed by the Scottish Government as a “one stop shop” to help those struggling with the cost of living crisis, the website includes information on help available for households to meet rising energy, housing and other costs. It also provided details on accessing Scottish and UK social security payments, including online benefit calculators, as well as wider health information.

### **Help for Households**

A further toolkit has also been created [Help for Households toolkit](#) “Help for Households” is a cross government initiative launched in response to the pressures around the cost of living. This toolkit contains suggested messaging and assets to help organisations inform the public about the wide range of support available and where they can find help.

### **Winter Fuel payment video**

DWP has created a short video answering key questions about Winter Fuel Payments. This video is available on our [YouTube channel](#) now.

We recognise that there is a concern about rising energy costs. As a result, we have experienced more people searching for information about Winter Fuel Payments and/or contacting DWP to ask about it. Most of those eligible do not have to claim their Winter Fuel Payment as it is awarded automatically. We would encourage you to share this video help answer frequently asked questions about Winter Fuel Payments. British Sign Language versions will be available soon.

### **Disability Cost of Living Payment stakeholder toolkit**

Over the next few weeks, six million disabled people in the UK will receive a one-off £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment as part of the Government’s Help for Households support. Those who had confirmed payment of their disability benefit for 25 May don’t need to do anything and will receive the £150 automatically by their usual payment method, with the vast majority to be paid by early October.

Our [Disability Cost of Living Payment toolkit](#) for stakeholders includes everything organisations need to communicate the Disability Cost of Living Payment with a range of resources such as easy read information sheets, suggested newsletter and social media copy, FAQs and a British Sign Language information video and wider Help for Households information.

### **Government outlines plans to help cut energy bills**

New support for households, businesses and public sector organisations facing rising energy bills in Great Britain and Northern Ireland has been announced this week.

Through the [Energy Bill Relief Scheme](#), the Government will provide a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices for all non-domestic customers (including all UK businesses, the voluntary sector like charities and the public sector such as schools and hospitals) whose current gas and electricity prices have been significantly inflated in light of global energy prices. This support is in addition to the [Energy Price Guarantee](#) for households, with further measures announced to strengthen support for families across the United Kingdom, including those in rentals or park homes.

As with the Energy Price Guarantee for households, support will be provided automatically and customers do not need to take action or apply to the scheme to access the support. [Read the full press release](#)

### **Fuel Direct**

From 1/4/22 to 1/4/23, DWP introduced a temporary change to [Fuel Direct](#) to protect claimants given unprecedented energy prices. During this period, supplies can no longer request new deductions or increased payments from a claimant's benefit to pay for ongoing fuel consumption.

For claimants to who their ongoing fuel usage directly from their benefits, the amount they pay was not automatically increased if their bill went up in April 2022 and will not automatically increase when the price cap changes in October 2022. If claimants use Fuel Direct and feel they're able to pay their increased bills, they should contact DWP to amend their existing arrangement.

Universal Credit claimants can use their UC Journal to make this request of call 0800 328 5644. Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance and Employment Support Allowance claimants can call 0800 169 0310. For Pension Credit, claimants can call 0800 731 0469. Anyone struggling to pay their energy bills should contact their energy supplier to discuss available options. [Please visit GOV.UK for more information.](#)

## **Administrative Earnings Threshold – additional Job Centre support for low earning households**

On 26/9/22 the Government raised the Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET) which will see approximately 114,000 Universal Credit claimants move from the Light Touch regime where most claimants do not need to engage with the Job Centre, into regular contact with a dedicated work coach. The changes aims to help more low-earning households to increase their incomes and improve their pay and prospects.

The earnings threshold will be increased to £464 per calendar month for individual claimants and £782 for couples, having previously been set at £355 per calendar month for individuals and £567 for couples. Claimants who earn below the new threshold will also have access to training and skills provision.

Those who are impacted will be contacted by DWP about what it means for them, at the end of their first full assessment period after 26/9/22.

It is important to understand that most claimants affected by the AET rise will already be in work and some may already be working as much as they can, depending on their individual circumstances. Initial meetings with work coaches will be to discuss what is reasonable and may include work preparation to support claimants in preparing to increase their earnings when they are able to. Claimants will be able to agree an individual claimant commitment which reflects their circumstances.

A further increase to AET will be implemented from January 2023 as announced in the [Growth Plan](#)

## **National Go Live – Adult Disability Payments**

Adult Disability Payment (ADP) is the replacement for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for customers living in Scotland. ADP new claims launched on 21/3/22 in three local authority areas and this was further expanded in June and July. From 13/6/22 DWP also began transferring selected PIP customers living in Scotland to ADP.

ADP launched nationally across the who of Scotland from 29/8/22. All customers living in Scotland making new claims will now claim ADP instead of PIP.

DWP continues to transfer PIP customers living in Scotland to ADP; and in addition, has started to transfer Disability Living Allowance (Working Age) customers to ADP.

[Further information and how to claim](#)

## **Broadband Social Tariff**

A new service has been introduced by DWP which will allow internet service providers to verify – with customers' permission – whether they are in receipt of a relevant benefit and therefore eligible for extra financial support. The Government has called on all broadband providers to offer and promote [social tariffs](#) – discounted broadband and mobile deals for people on Universal Credit and other benefits.



The scheme is already supported by Virgin Media O2 who have announced that they will use the system to verify eligible customers signing up to their Essential Broadband tariff. The company will also waive early termination fees for those moving from existing tariffs.

Customers on social tariffs could in some cases save over £100 a year. The new system will simplify the process of getting a social tariff by removing the need for customers to prove their entitlement to broadband providers as regularly as every month.

## **Health Adjustment Passport**

The [Health Adjustment Passport](#) (HAP) is now available on GOV.UK and can be used by those with a disability or health condition to help identify what support and changes (known as [reasonable adjustments](#)) they may need when they are in work or moving into work. This could include support from [Access to Work](#), such as funding for specialist equipment, support getting to and from work or support when in work.

The HAP is owned by the individual, who can decide how they want to use it and completion is voluntary, with support from a work coach if appropriate. You may wish to promote the HAP to your networks and consider hosting the HAP link on your own websites.

## **DWP deals with influx of Pension Credit claims**

Following the success of DWP's campaign to increase the take-up of Pension Credit, the service has received an unprecedented number of claims. Additional resources are being deployed to ensure claims are dealt with as quickly as possible. Once an application has been received claim decisions will be sent out within 6 weeks. People can be reassured successful claims will be backdated to the date the application was made. It is important those who are entitled do not miss out. Pensioners can check their eligibility on [GOV.UK](#) and DWP urges anyone who believes they may be eligible for Pension Credit to make a claim.

**END**

**(31/10/22)**

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