

Benefits

Finding your way and avoiding sanctions



West of
Scotland
Housing
Association

Finding your way through the benefits system can be confusing. There are lots of different benefits and rules, however there are some common issues that you should be aware of.

Applying for benefits

You will need to complete an application form for most benefits. Some of these are quite complicated, our Welfare Rights Team can help you with this. Our team understand the scoring systems used to assess applications and can help to ensure that you don't miss out anything important.



Assessments & Claimant Commitments

In some cases the assessment is a simple process of reviewing the information you have provided in your application. For others you may need a telephone interview or a face-to-face meeting. Where the benefit is dependant on a health condition or a disability, you may be assessed by medical services. We strongly recommend that you seek advice from our Welfare Rights Team in advance of the meeting. For some benefits such as Job Seekers Allowance you will need to meet with a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Job Coach and agree to a set of requirements or Claimant Commitments. Once you have signed this Claimant Commitment you will be expected to meet the targets you have agreed and provide evidence of this. It is very important that you don't agree to something that you are unlikely to achieve as this could affect your benefit. We strongly recommend that you seek our Welfare Rights Team's advice in advance of your meeting and consider taking someone with you on the day.

Sanctions

For some benefits, if you fail to meet the commitments you have agreed you may be sanctioned, which means that some or all of your benefit will be stopped for a specified period of time. For example, If you miss a meeting with your Job Coach or don't apply for as many jobs in a week as you agreed to in your Claimant Commitment, and you don't have good reason, you may lose money. However you always have the right to appeal a decision and we can help you with this.

Appeals & Mandatory Reconsiderations

If you have been unsuccessful in your application for a benefit or have been sanctioned, you have the right to challenge the decision. It is really important that you do this as soon as you receive your decision letter. Our Welfare Rights Team can assist you with this process. Firstly, you can request a Mandatory Reconsideration. If you do not make your request within a month of the date on your sanction letter, you may have NO further right of appeal. If you are unhappy with the outcome of your application for Mandatory

Reconsideration we can also ensure you are supported through the full appeals process.

How to Contact Us

Our Welfare Rights Team is here to help you. We can also signpost you to other specialist Agencies who can also provide advice and assistance. Please use our service – we are trained to help you through the benefit system to make sure you get all the benefits you are entitled to.

Contact us by phoning us on **0141 550 5662**.

Did you know?

In 2016/17 the Welfare Rights Team secured over **£350,000** in backdates of welfare benefits and housing benefits for WSHA tenants.

Contact us

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