



Advice Bureau Weekly Update

Connecting Scotland

Connecting Scotland is a Scottish Government programme which was set up in response to Coronavirus. Phase 2 has now been launched. The first round of applications will be open until 5th of October. The awards and delivery of devices will take place from November onwards.

The eligibility criteria for Phase 2 are as follows:

This phase of Connecting Scotland aims to provide iPads, Chromebooks and support to develop digital skills for individuals who are:

1. digitally excluded – do not have an appropriate device and/or are not connected to the internet at home; **AND**
2. on low incomes so cannot afford to buy a device or pay for internet access;
3. and **ARE EITHER**
 - a. households with children or where a child is normally resident (this includes pregnant women with no child in the household): **OR**
 - b. care leavers up to the age of twenty-six (in line with eligibility for aftercare support)

For information on how to access this please contact our HERO adviser, Ainsley on: **0141 881 2032 / 07594156780**

Face to Face Appointments

The Bureau will be admitting clients for appointments in the near future; in preparation of this, appointments will now be in 90 minute slots giving plenty of time for rooms to be sanitised after each client, further to this, appointment times have also been staggered to ensure clients are not gathering outside. Currently each adviser has their own individual calendar, this has now been supplemented with a Bureau calendar that provides up-to-date availability of the interview rooms that are suitable for face-to-face appointments.

With this new system in place ERCAB will soon be able to provide vital face-to-face help for those most in need of our assistance.

Social Media

We are actively engaging on social media as a means of keeping in contact with clients and stakeholders. Our accounts are as outlined below:

Twitter: [@EastAdvice](#)

Facebook: [East Renfrewshire CAB](#)

ASAP 10 Year Anniversary

East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau is this week celebrating the 10th anniversary of a special project which delivers vital advice and support to people who have served in the armed forces. The Armed Service Advice Project (ASAP) was set up in 2010 and is run across Scotland by the Citizens Advice network. This week the service announced it had helped a total of 15,950 clients nationally over the decade, and had delivered for them a total of £17.6 million gain in welfare benefits, wages and grants. The local ASAP service, one of the original areas, helped 1076 of those, and delivered £2,216,160 of the total gain.

All at ERCAB would like to thank Mark Oswald our ASAP adviser for the last 3 years who is leaving us to take up his traineeship. Mark has done an excellent job and had some outstanding results for his clients. This was recently acknowledged by one of our partner organisations:

Dear Mark,

Firstly, thanks for letting me know of your move – I hope it is well deserved advancement or at least a move into something that suits your career/personal needs! I have worked with a number of your predecessors and colleagues in other areas and hugely appreciate the work that ASAP does. I know your efforts are not always recognised/appreciated by the beneficiaries but from my own experience, ASAP's input can be life changing. Thank you very much for your personal efforts supporting the veterans I have referred in your direction and for your support to me and SBMC along the way.

Rosie Caulfield will take up ASAP post as of 1 September.

Social Security Scotland – Best Start Grant

Social Security Scotland has set up a package of benefits called the Best Start Grant. The best start grant is made up of three payments: Pregnancy and Baby payment, Early Learning payment and School Age payment.

You are eligible for the Best Start Grant:

- if your child is the right age for a payment
- whether you're in work or not, as long as you're on certain payments or benefits
- as long as you're the parent of a child, or the main person looking after the child

You can apply for the Pregnancy and Baby Payment from 24 weeks pregnant up to the day your baby is 6 months old. You will be paid £600 for your first child and £300 for any child after.

You can apply for the Early Learning payment when your child is aged between 2 years old and 3 years 6 months old. For this payment you'll get £250 for each child you can get the payment for.

When you need to apply for the School Age Payment depends on when your child was born, you cannot apply for the School Age Payment for a child born before 1st March 2014. For this payment, you'll get £250 for each child you can get the payment for.

For information on how to apply visit: [mygov.scot - Best Start Grant.](#)