



# East Renfrewshire Citizens

## Advice Bureau Weekly Update

06/05/2022

### Case Study – UC Help to Claim

A client recently contacted the UC Help to Claim helpline; he lives with his partner and three young children. He was supported by the helpline to make an online application for Universal Credit. It transpired he had been dismissed by his employer and he received no pay, notice or explanation. Due to the actions of his employer, this placed the client in financial distress and his partner does not get paid for another 3 weeks. He could have applied for an advance on his Universal Credit; however, the client is in arrears with his rent and council tax meaning that requesting an advance would put the family into further debt.

The client contacted his local council who advised him he was not entitled to any assistance from the SWF, other than applying for an UC advance. Nevertheless, the Universal Credit Help to Claim helpline made an online application, on behalf of the client, for a crisis loan. This was submitted based on the grounds under exceptional circumstances – had it not been for the actions of his former employer the client would not have found himself in such a precarious position. The client was awarded £400 from the Scottish Welfare Fund. The UC HTC supports clients from the date their UC application is submitted to receipt of the first correct payment of UC.

This case also highlights the importance of supporting clients who may not know the correct questions to ask when enquiring about, in this case, financial assistance available from his local council. This resulted in the client receiving incorrect information. The client's lack of knowledge should not be a barrier precluding him from receiving the assistance he is entitled to.

### NHSGGC – Inpatients Visiting

From 30 April, inpatients across NHSGGC hospitals will be able to benefit from the support of at least one visitor at a time (in most circumstances) following the easing of visiting restrictions.

This is a great step forward, but we are reminded that essential visiting may be reintroduced on a temporary basis to help protect staff, patients and visitors until the situation can be resolved; especially where a new COVID-19 outbreak is being managed.

*For full details on updated visiting arrangements go to: [www.nhsggc.scot/your-health/covid-19/patients-hospital-appointments-and-visiting](http://www.nhsggc.scot/your-health/covid-19/patients-hospital-appointments-and-visiting).*

### Scottish Census Extended

Homeowners across the country have been given a short extension to complete their Census form. The deadline is now 31st May; giving people extra time to voice their opinions on essential services in the local community.

It is a legal responsibility to fill this in and you could be faced with a fine if you fail to do so. Here at ERCAB we can assist with completing and submitting your Census form, so please get in touch to make an appointment with one of our advisers. You can do so by calling [01418812032](tel:01418812032), emailing address below or by popping into our office.

### Shopping Card Pilot

Over the past few months, ERCAB have been participating in a pilot scheme for the Scottish Government – with the purpose of eradicating the need for foodbanks.

Frontline advice workers in ERCAB often report that where client requires immediate access to food and other essentials, a referral to a food bank is the most practical way to support them.

When someone needs to use a food bank, there is usually a secondary, important need for welfare rights and money advice. ERCAB supported this pilot as our money debt & benefit advisers in our office and at outreach facilities can take a holistic, person centred approach to people's financial health and linking this to the food vouchers initiative will offer positive outcomes for those in need.

Food cards can provide greater choice and dignity but will not tackle the drivers of food insecurity or prevent future need in and of them. In order to achieve these objectives, vouchers must sit alongside wider holistic support services.

***We have now exhausted the £40,000 assigned to East Renfrewshire (approx. £18,000 issued in the last month) and are participating in overview/analysis with CAS & Scottish Govt to assess the pilot, and how & if it can be progressed.***

Clients can also get in contact with the bureau via:

**Email - [ere-bureau@eastrenfrewshirecab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:ere-bureau@eastrenfrewshirecab.casonline.org.uk)**

You can also keep up to date with recent news from ERCAB via our social media platforms. Please feel free to distribute the contact details for our advisers provided on our Facebook page.

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