

THE INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTRE



Semington, near Trowbridge

01380 871007

www.ilc.org.uk



Latest Benefits Information – 11/01/2021

Universal Credit

You will generally have to claim Universal Credit online via the Gov.uk website. You will need bank/building society details, income and savings, rent, childcare costs if applicable and an email address. You will also need to verify your identity with proof such as a driving licence, passport or debit/credit card. If you cannot use digital services you can contact the Universal Credit helpline on 0800 328 5644 or use the Help to Claim phone service on 0800 144 8444 (England). This is administered by Citizens Advice.

Note: Be aware that if you are currently in receipt of tax credits, they will not be payable once you claim Universal Credit. If you find you are not entitled to Universal Credit you will not be able to reclaim tax credits. It is recommended to seek advice before you claim Universal Credit in this situation.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

If you have been refused PIP and feel that the telephone medical assessment was not accurately carried out or recorded, you can make a complaint as well as requesting a Mandatory Reconsideration (asking them to look again at the decision). You are entitled to a copy of the medical assessment and you can ring PIP to ask for this - it is perhaps advisable to obtain the assessment report before you make the complaint. To make a complaint you should contact PIP, either via the phone number on the decision letter or send a written complaint to the address on the letter. You should then receive a phone call to discuss your complaint. If you are not happy with the response you can ask that your complaint goes to the Complaints Resolution Manager. You could also contact your MP to make them aware of your dissatisfaction.

Discretionary Housing Payment

If your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing element is not covering your rent, you may be able to claim additional financial help through a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP). It is short term help until your circumstances change or improve and is paid at the discretion of the Local Authority. If your house is under occupied (Bedroom Tax), or there are restrictions on the amount of rent covered, or there is a risk of homelessness, it is worth applying, particularly if someone in the household is ill or disabled and you are looking for more suitable accommodation. You will need to make the claim to your Local Authority and they require a Financial Assessment as part of the claim.

Tribunals

As the third national lockdown starts in England, it has been confirmed that no-one will be required to attend a Tribunal (unless it is in the interest of justice). In most cases, Social Security Tribunals will continue to be carried out by phone. Our Benefits Advisor can advise and support you with the appeals process

Contact Us

If you need help with any aspect of welfare benefits, please contact us on **01380 871007** or at **welcome.ilc.semington@googlemail.com**.

Although our Benefits Advisor is not able to continue with face-to-face appointments during lockdown, she can still give advice by phone or email. She can also help with claims for benefits such as Personal Independence Payment, or medical assessment forms for Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit. This can be done over the phone. If someone is unable to complete the form themselves, our Benefits Advisor can still help by typing up the relevant information and posting the notes to the client who can then send them with the form. She can also advise about challenging a decision, either by Mandatory Reconsideration or by making an appeal to the Tribunals Service, as well as give general advice about entitlement.

To see previous editions of this newsletter, please visit the news section on our website at **ilc.org.uk**

Sheila Bluer
Benefits Advisor

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