

Capita's 2nd National Conference

Housing Benefit in Scotland

Wednesday 5th December 2012 – Edinburgh



Chair: Keith Dryburgh
Social Policy Officer
Citizens Advice Scotland

Speakers Include:

John Giblin
Housing Delivery Division
Department for Work and Pensions

Graeme Russell
Housing Services Director
Dunedin Canmore Group

Alison McKenzie-Folan
Director, Policy and Customer
Wigan Council

Carol McHarg
Board Director
First Alliance Ayrshire Credit Union

Nicola Thom
Executive Director
Irvine Housing Association

Karen Allan
Access to Housing and Customer Strategy
Manager
The City of Edinburgh Council

Natasha Clough
Head of Innovation and Digital Inclusion
BT Digital Champions

Contributors

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About the Event

The **Welfare Reform Act** ushers in the biggest change to the welfare system in over 60 years, with the introduction of **Universal Credit and direct payments from October 2013**. This programme of change for the housing benefit system has far-reaching implications for claimants. **Capita's 2nd National Housing Benefit in Scotland Conference** comes at a crucial time to provide guidance on mitigating the risks of impending reform.

The conference programme offers clarification on the **practical implications of the reform and a likely timetable for implementation**. Key experts provide guidance on overcoming the challenges of **under occupancy, financial and digital inclusion**, and improving **partnership working with the private rented sector**.

Sessions include the lessons learnt by early implementers with **input from the Edinburgh Direct Payment Demonstration Project and cross-border learning from a Wigan-based Universal Credit Pathfinder**.

Bringing together leading practitioners and key stakeholders, this conference also covers:

- **Government policy and draft regulations update** on plans for implementation
- **Targeting vulnerable tenants early** to support them through the transition
- Proactive **partnership working with the private rented sector**

Take the opportunity to **engage with early adopters** and innovative thinkers to **address the challenges ahead**. Attend this event to gain advice on **implementing strategies to manage the transition to the new housing benefits system**.

Benefits of Attending

- Gain advice and guidance from the **Department for Work and Pensions** on budgets, allocation and how discretionary housing payments should be used
- Hear from a **Universal Credit Pathfinder Council** about **early preparation work** and plans for future implementation, as well as how they established a **social letting agency with Citizens Advice**
- Benefit from the experiences of the **Scottish Direct Payment Demonstration Project** already making tenants more responsible for their budgets
- Explore best practice on how to **ensure greater financial inclusion through local partnership working and establishing relationships with credit unions**
- Take away valuable advice and guidance from BT Digital Champions on their work with housing associations to **facilitate digital inclusion**, reduce costs and **ensure tenants can access their benefits and pay rent on time**
- Gain insight into how the **private rented sector can remove the barriers for housing benefit claimants**



Who Should Attend

Representatives from Local Authorities, Housing Providers, Voluntary and Community and Private Rented Sectors including:

- Chief Executives and Senior Management Teams
- Councillors
- Heads of Housing Management and Services
- Finance Directors
- Welfare and Benefits Advice Teams
- Housing Policy Teams
- Rent and Arrears Teams
- Housing Advice and Options Teams
- Finance, Revenue and Support Services Teams
- Customer Service Teams
- Homelessness Teams
- Sheltered and Supported Housing Teams
- Tenant Participation Teams

Forthcoming Events

Transforming Social Housing Allocations – Friday 19th October – Central London

Rent Arrears – Monday 19th November – Central London

Housing Chief Executives Forum – Tuesday 27th November – Central London

Sponsorship and Exhibition Opportunities

We offer a range of flexible packages which offer your organisation a platform to network and communicate with key organisations in the public sector.

For further information please contact Matt Turton on 0207 960 7717 or email matt.turton@capita.co.uk

09.20 Registration Tea and Coffee

09.50 Chair's Opening Remarks

Keith Dryburgh, Social Policy Officer
Citizens Advice Scotland

Keynote Address

10.00 Housing Benefit Reform: Putting Policy into Practice

- Addressing changes to the discretionary social fund
- Timescales for Universal Credit implementation
- Update on the Universal Credit partnerships

John Giblin

Housing Delivery Division

Department for Work and Pensions

10.20 Questions and Discussion

10.30 Tackling the Practical Issues Associated with Under Occupancy

- Communicating the changes to tenants
- Identifying and targeting most vulnerable tenants
- Incentivising moving and downsizing
- Developing a strategy to mitigate the risks of under occupancy

Karen Allan

Access to Housing and Customer Strategy Manager

The City of Edinburgh Council

10.50 Questions and Discussion

Transition to the New System

11.00 Examining the Results from the Early Implementation of Direct Payments

- Supporting tenants to make the adjustment
- Partnership working to prevent rent arrears
- Reducing the risk and impact to landlords
- What changes should be made to internal systems?

Graeme Russell, Housing Services Director
Dunedin Canmore Group

One of the six Direct Payment Demonstration Projects

11.20 Questions and Discussion

11.30 Networking Tea and Coffee Break

12.00 Making the Transition to Universal Credit – Lessons Learnt So Far

- Early preparation and planning update
- Developing schemes to protect local residents
- Practical solutions to ensure IT and administration works smoothly

Alison McKenzie-Folan, Director, Policy and Customer
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

One of the four Universal Credit Pathfinder

12.20 Questions and Discussion

12.30 Interactive Problem Solving Session: Addressing the Challenges Ahead and Managing the Changes

Delegates break up into groups to share common issues, challenges and ideas. Take this opportunity to discuss and come up with solutions together.

Karen Allan, Access to Housing and Customer Strategy Manager, The City of Edinburgh Council

Graeme Russell, Housing Services Director

Dunedin Canmore Group and

John Giblin, Housing Delivery Division

Department for Work and Pensions

Driving Forward Claimant Inclusion

13.05 Engaging, Educating and Empowering Tenants to Ensure Digital Inclusion

- Provision of internet access and online services through partnership working
- Making support available for tenants via a help-desk facility
- Bringing jobs to the community
- Ensuring the move to Universal Credit is smooth for tenants and housing associations

Natasha Clough, Head of Innovation and Digital Inclusion
BT Digital Champions

13.25 Questions and Discussion

13.30 Networking Lunch

14.30 Encouraging and Developing Financial Capability

- Offering financial support and helping tenants maximise income
- Establishing debt support groups
- Facilitating money advice services

Tony Quinn, Project Coordinator

Greater Easterhouse Money Advice Project

14.55 Questions and Discussion

15.05 Partnership Working with Credit Unions to Mitigate Risk

- Developing a workable business partnership
- Identifying a business model and cost analysis
- Experiences and lessons learnt so far

Carol McHarg, Board Director, First Alliance Ayrshire Credit Union and **Nicola Thom**, Executive Director Operations
Irvine Housing Association

15.30 Bridging the Gap Between Social Housing and the Private Rented Sector

- Creating equality of opportunity within the private lettings market
- Facilitating housing advice and housing outcomes
- Why deposits can be a bad thing
- How tenancies were sustained in spite of LHA reduction

Angela McLachlan, Director of Operations

Orchard and Shipman Group

15.55 Session Questions and Discussion

16.05 Chair's Closing Remarks and Close of Conference



Booking Form

Housing Benefit in Scotland

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BOOKING SOURCE CODE: MKNW PDF

DELEGATE DETAILS (Please use BLOCK CAPITALS and complete in full)

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Address
Postcode

1st Delegate

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Forename	
Job Title	
Organisation	
Department	
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Dietary/Access requirements	

2nd Delegate

Surname	Title
Forename	
Job Title	
Organisation	
Department	
Email	
Telephone	
Dietary/Access requirements	

3rd Delegate ***BOOK A 3rd DELEGATE @ 1/2 PRICE**

Surname	Title
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Public Sector @ £350.00 plus VAT No. of delegates
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*Discounts cannot be combined
Only charities registered with the OSCR are eligible for this discount

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TERMS & CONDITIONS

CANCELLATIONS confirmed in writing 14 days before the conference date will be refunded, minus an administration fee of £50.

We regret that no refund can be made after that date, although substitutions can be made at any time.

Capita are not able to offer refunds for cancellations arising from events outside of our control.

VENUE AND REGISTRATION DETAILS will be sent within 14 days of the event date. We cannot be held responsible for non arrival of this information, if you have not received within 7 days of the event date, please call us on 0870 400 1020.

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