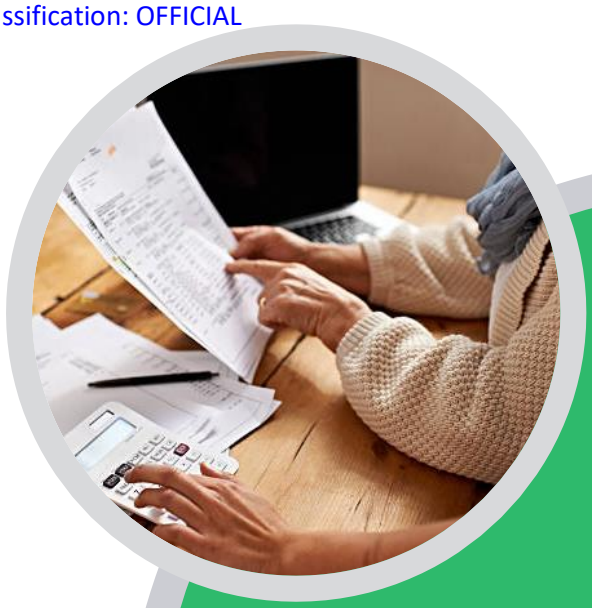

Welfare Rights Newsletter

Autumn 2024

Find out inside how we can help get benefits to the people who need them.

Argyll and Bute Council

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Autumn 2024

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Welfare rights – how we can help you

- **We help people get the benefits they are entitled to. Many people claim benefits at some point in their lives, often when their circumstances change. Our service is free, confidential and includes: advice and information on all aspects of the welfare benefits system**
- **Advice or help on how and when to apply for benefits including completion of benefit application forms**
- **Benefit checks to ensure clients are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to**
- **Advice and assistance with challenging decisions including representation at benefit appeal tribunals where appropriate**
- **Signposting to other help and support available**

In 2023/24 people in Argyll and Bute accessed more than **£4.5 million** of additional income through benefit entitlement thanks to help from our Welfare Rights Team. Already in 2024/25 we have helped people access just over **£2.6 million**.

Contact Welfare Rights please:

- Call us on **01546 605517**
- Complete our online form
- Or email us at welfare.rights@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Benefit news

Winter Fuel Payment changes

Winter fuel payments are now means-tested. This means that: to be entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment – worth £200 (or £300 if age 80+), you have to be State Pension age (66) and receiving:

- Pension Credit (either Guarantee or Savings), or
- Tax Credits

in the qualifying week which is 16th - 23rd September.

You have until 21 December to qualify for pension credits which could make you eligible also to receive winter fuel payments (as pension credits can be backdated for 3 months), and other benefits.

NOTE: Mixed aged couples will also be entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment if they are receiving certain benefits between 16 - 23 September. Contact us for more information.

Deadline for claiming Pension Credit

Even if someone is entitled to just 1p a week, this would then entitle them to the Winter Fuel Payment as well as other help such as maximum Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction, a free TV Licence if they are age 75 or over, Free NHS dental treatment, vouchers for glasses, Cold weather Payments, free school meals if they have dependent children, social tariffs for broadband and telephone.

Following these announcements, the Department for Work and Pensions is urging pensioners to check their eligibility for Pension Credit in order to secure this year's Winter Fuel Payment.

Where someone is worried about how they are going to pay for their fuel bills this winter they can contact Welfare Rights who will arrange an appointment to ensure their income is maximised.

Pensioner age disability payment

Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP) is replacing Attendance Allowance in Scotland.

PADP is administered by Social Security Scotland (SSS); Attendance Allowance is currently delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

PADP is for people of pension age **who have a disability, terminal illness or long-term health condition** that means they need help looking after themselves or supervision to stay safe. It is not means-tested and is worth either £290.60 or £434.20 every 4 weeks depending on the needs of the person who gets it.

If you receive this you do not need to take any action as your award will be automatically moved from the DWP to Social Security Scotland. This will happen in phases. People who already receive attendance allowance, will move to PADP in phases, with the first expected to be transferred in early 2025.

For new claimants in Argyll and Bute, PADP will be available from 21 October.

If a person is entitled to PADP it may mean they could be entitled to means tested benefits such as Pension Credit.

Carer's support payment

Carer Support Payment (CSP) is replacing Carer's Allowance (CA) in Scotland. This is planned to happen between February 2024 and spring 2025 as part of Scottish devolution

Your benefit will move from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to Social Security Scotland if you:

- get Carer's Allowance
- live in Scotland

Social Security Scotland's CSP replaces CA for people in Scotland. If you already get CA, you don't need to apply as your award will transfer automatically.

The payment will be available for new claimants in Argyll and Bute and across Scotland from 4th November 2024.

People may be eligible if they:

- are 16 or over
- provide 35 hours or more of care a week to someone of any age who is getting certain disability benefits
- earn £151 per week or less on average after some deductions
- live in an area the benefit is available

Find out more at [Carer Support Payment - mygov.scot]

Managed migration to universal credit (UC)

From September 2024 the Department of work and Pensions (DWP) started sending out Migration Notices to claimants who are getting Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Many of these claimants will be able to make the move onto UC without any support – although we do recommend that they contact a Benefits Adviser to:

- make sure their current legacy benefits are maximised – many ESA claimants miss out on the Severe Disability Premium (and therefore could miss out on any potential Transitional Protection),
- understand the implications of moving onto UC, which could include a higher rate of deductions and/or conditionality for a partner,
- consider whether there is a best time to claim within the three month claiming window (particularly important if becoming a mixed age couple during this period)

If you would like help with moving to UC, the DWP has developed an Enhanced Support Journey, which includes phone calls, home visits, extending the claimant's deadline day, case conferences and more.

You can find more information can be found here: Universal Credit if you receive a Migration Notice letter - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Out and about

The Welfare Rights Team works closely with a variety of community groups and organisations to provide talks and training on a range of welfare rights issues.

In 2024/2025 we have attended and provided information at various events and groups across Argyll and Bute including the islands. These have generally been well attended and have generated a number of referrals.

To find out more and book, please contact us on: **01546 605517**

Or email us at welfare.rights@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Debt counselling/Money advice

The Debt Counselling/Money Advice Service is available to anyone and covers the whole of Argyll and Bute. There are various options of temporary or permanent solutions depending on individual circumstances.

If assistance is required please contact the service on **01546 604176**

Help and support contacts

To contact Welfare Rights please:

- Call us on **01546 605517**
- Complete our online form
- Or email us at welfare.rights@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Cost of living support – money, bills and benefits information

Cost of living support

Debt counselling/Money advice service: **01546 604176**

Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice Bureau: **01546 605550**

info@abcab.org.uk

Help to Claim Universal Credit: **0800 0232 581**

Bute Advice Centre: **01700 502 784**

info@buteadvice.org.uk

Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) provide Welfare Rights advice to their tenants, Call **0800 028 2755** to make an appointment with an adviser.

welfare.rights@acha.co.uk

Fyne Homes Welfare Rights: **0345 607 7117**