



We're here to help you with your housing and homelessness queries.

## January 2019 eBulletin

### Service updates

NHAS event - Health and housing: let's talk about children and families

Jane Cook, MHCLG health and homelessness advisor, Maxine Jenkins, specialist health visitor and Michaela Des Forges, Homeless Link policy manager will be joining us as speakers as we host our first [event aimed at health and social care staff in Manchester](#), on the 27<sup>th</sup> February. Spaces are filling up fast – to book your place today, email [nhas@shelter.org.uk](mailto:nhas@shelter.org.uk).

### Training

Cross-sector training

Staff from local authority housing teams and those working in public authorities are now able to book onto the same webinar sessions. Find a suitable course on the website and reserve your place online through the training calendar.

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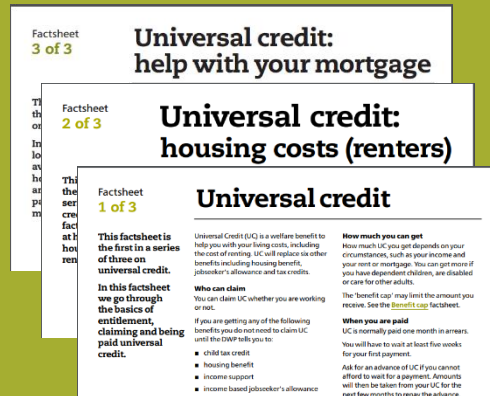


## Focus on: Welfare benefits

Recently we were approached by an advice agency calling about a client who had made a homeless application. The client was in temporary accommodation and had been offered permanent accommodation. The client would need to tell the council about accepting the property in a short while but they were worried as they had some historic rent arrears from an old council tenancy. No action had been taken so far, but the client wanted to know if the DWP could deduct the arrears from any claim for Universal Credit (UC) that they may make. The arrears were not statute-barred so she could take steps to recover these if it chose to do so.

Our consultancy line adviser\* explained that for the DWP to make direct deductions to the client's benefit, the arrears would have to relate to the client's current accommodation. The DWP cannot make a deduction from the client's UC payments if the arrears relate to a different property. The adviser\* then went on to clarify when the DWP can deduct from UC and by how much, for future reference, and advised where they could find details of local debt agencies.

\* Pete is one of our welfare benefit and housing debt specialists and introduces himself and the team on a [recent blog post](#), with guidance on 'natural migration' to Universal Credit.



We also have three factsheets on our website relating to UC which you may find useful to share with your clients. You can access these through the [factsheets section of the website](#).

## News, updates and statistics

### Rough sleeping strategy: delivery plan

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have published a plan setting out how the 61 commitments from the [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) are to be delivered.

## Guidance for local authorities – [improving access to social housing](#) for victims of domestic abuse

This statutory guidance is intended to assist local authorities to ensure that victims of domestic abuse who are living in refuges, and other forms of safe temporary accommodation, are given appropriate priority when they apply for to access social housing.

## [NHS Long Term Plan – what it means for housing and homelessness](#)

On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2018 the NHS [Long Term Plan](#) was released, outlining how an additional £20bn, up to 2023, should be spent.

## Homes meeting a national quality standard – research paper showing the impact on emergency hospital admissions

Rodgers SE, Bailey R, Johnson R, et al. [Emergency hospital admissions](#) associated with a non-randomised housing intervention meeting national housing quality standards: a longitudinal data linkage study.

## Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations: external review

An [independent review of the Disabled Facilities Grant](#) in England, conducted by the University of the West of England.

## [Security deposit cap reduced](#) to save renters hundreds of pounds

Private renters are set to benefit from new measures reducing the amount tenants have to pay up front to secure a home from 6 weeks' rent to 5 for annual rentals of under £50,000

## [Joseph Rowntree Foundation annual report: UK Poverty 2018](#)

The report examines how UK poverty rates have changed in our society over the last few years, as well as over the longer term. The research focuses particularly on changes to poverty among children and workers, as well as giving an overview of trends among pensioners and other groups.

## [Civil Justice statistics](#) for England and Wales, July-September 2018

Mortgage and landlord possession claims in the county court decreased by 6%, to 36,600, compared with the same period in 2017.

## Record-breaking [£1.5m penalty for "Slumlord Millionaire"](#)

A rogue landlord must pay £1,500,000 or spend nine years behind bars after justice caught up with him at Harrow Crown Court 30 November.

## Grants and benefits from [Let's Talk](#)

Funding has been provided by energy companies to assist households in energy debt as part of their commitment to help with energy bills and usage.

## Department of Work and Pensions memo: changes made to the Immigration (EEA) regulations 2016

This memo provides guidance on the changes made to [the Imm \(EEA\) Regs 2016](#) which came into effect in July 2018.

## [Universal Credit escalation route](#) for third parties

Guidance for private and social landlords from the Department of Work and Pensions on how to escalate

## Commentary on a home that was unfit to occupy

In *Baillie v Savage* [2018], the High Court held that under the terms of a rent suspension clause the tenant was not required to pay rent when the risk of a further collapse of a wall rendered the property unfit for habitation. [Nearly Legal article](#).

## When does accommodation become unsuitable to continue to occupy?

Court of Appeal review of *R (Aweys) v Birmingham 2007* in *Safi v Sandwell BC 21 December 2018*.

## Complaints to the Ombudsman

Nov 2018 – [pregnant woman granted permanent accommodation](#) more than one year after first contact made to council for housing assistance.

Young person's homeless journey results in council [reviewing policies and procedures for accommodating 16 and 17 year olds](#).

[Disrepair in temporary accommodation](#) prompts an introduction of a policy for monitoring repairs in temporary accommodation properties.

[Suitability of temporary accommodation](#) leads to review of homelessness policies and procedures.

## What's new on [Shelter Legal](#)

- Basic protection/excluded occupiers
- Benefit rates 2019/20
- Treated as not liable for rent
- Support for Mortgage Interest
- Eligibility for Universal Credit

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Thank you for reading,

The team at NHAS

## Who we are

**We are here to help local authorities, local citizens advice, public authorities and advice agencies with their housing and homelessness queries. Working together with the aim of preventing homelessness, we give expert advice, training and support to those working at the frontline**

Our telephone consultancy service is open 9am – 6pm Monday to Friday, our trainers deliver training courses across the whole of England and our website holds a wealth of information, including past eBulletins, factsheets and guides to assist you with your housing and homelessness queries. You can find out more here: [www.nhas.org.uk](http://www.nhas.org.uk)

## You are on the NHAS mailing list

If you'd like to be added to or removed from our distribution list, or have problems accessing any of the materials in the bulletin, please email [nhas@shelter.org.uk](mailto:nhas@shelter.org.uk)

Please remember to add [nhas@shelter.org.uk](mailto:nhas@shelter.org.uk) to your email address book to ensure that our emails are not placed in your junk mailbox.

NHAS is funded by the Ministry of Health, Communities and Local Government. We support the prevention of homelessness by enabling frontline providers to deliver good quality housing and homelessness advice.