



Preventing homelessness and improving housing through expert advice, training and support to those working at the frontline

Here to help local authorities and advice agencies on 0300 330 0517

Government releases

- [Mortgage and landlord possession statistics: October to December 2014](#)
- Council of Mortgage Lenders report that [2014 repossessions are down by 26%](#), to the lowest annual figure since 2006
- [English Housing survey 2013/14](#): a national survey of people's housing circumstances and the condition and energy efficiency of housing in England
- Legal Aid Agency: [contract amendments for new anti-social behaviour injunction](#)
- [Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund prospectus](#) inviting councils to bid for funding so that they can offer cash incentives to tenants eligible for Right to Buy
- [February edition of DWP news publication Touchbase](#)
- DCLG issue statement on [proposals to implement intervention measures in Rotherham](#)
- DCLG press release about [new support for social tenants who want to work](#)
- DCLG announce [£10 million fund to support women facing the threat of domestic violence](#)
- DCLG press release: [Landlords will be required by law to install working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their properties](#)

Universal Credit updates

- DWP: [National roll out of Universal Credit, including LA and postcode areas](#)
- DWP [Universal Credit claimant survey - Nov to Dec 2014 interim findings](#)
- DWP progress report on implementation: ["Universal Credit at Work - how we are restoring work incentives, renewing fairness and transforming lives"](#)
- DWP [report assessing what difference Universal Credit has made to the employment and earnings of new claimants in the first 4 areas](#)
- DWP: [EU jobseekers barred from claiming Universal Credit](#)
- [Public Accounts Committee](#) report that "little progress has been made on the roll-out of universal credit with just 0.3% of the eligible population receiving it by October last year"

NHAS Housing Debt Casework (HDC)

The HDC team is a specialist housing debt and welfare benefits advice service for local authorities, bureaux and member advice agencies to help clients struggling to pay their housing costs. We can support you to work through your client's housing debt case, or you can refer the case to us and we will work directly with the household (with their agreement).

HDC case study regarding EEA nationals and eligibility for benefits

Local Authority Caller's Enquiry

A single man from Lithuania has been resident in the UK since 2001. After working part-time for about a year, he became unemployed and has been street homeless for around 3.5 years, without claiming residency. He is currently in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance and has been receiving this since before March 2014.

The client has the chance of accommodation but will he be entitled to Housing Benefit or would he need evidence of residency first?

Advice Provided

If the client is in receipt of income based Employment Support Allowance rather than contributions based Employment Support Allowance, which seems likely from the information provided, he will be exempt from the habitual residence test and right to reside test, applicable to EEA nationals.

This in turn will mean that he is entitled to Housing Benefit because income based Employment Support Allowance is one of the passported benefits for the purposes of claiming housing benefit.

Recent HDC feedback

"From my very first contact by phone, I can honestly say that I was overwhelmed by the kindness, understanding and help I was given. Ultimately, at a time of great uncertainty and stress, I cannot thank you enough for your support and for negotiating a solution to our problem. It has been a real pleasure to deal with and organisation such as Shelter, who have such a team of extraordinary staff."

For initial advice or to make a HDC referral call the consultancy line on **0300 330 0517**.

Annual Rough Sleeping statistics

The DCLG's [annual rough sleeping statistics for England for Autumn 2014](#) reports the total rough sleeping count is up by 14% on the previous year, with an increase of 37% in London:

Year	England rough sleeper estimate	London rough sleeper estimate
2010	1,768	415
2011	2,181	446
2012	2,309	557
2013	2,414	543
2014	2,744	742

[Homeless Link analysis](#) suggests that, regionally, the north east of England has seen the biggest percentage increase in rough sleeping since the previous year's statistics.

NSPCC & the Anna Freud Centre



The NSPCC have written an exclusive blog for the NHAS, drawing from their report [All Babies Count: Spotlight in Homelessness](#) with the Anna Freud Centre on how babies can be affected by homelessness.

The **attached NHAS blog** piece explains why pregnancy and babyhood are critical life stages, and sets out how policy and practice might be improved to better support vulnerable babies and their parents.

NHAS Webinars for March

We still have places available in the following three courses:

Date	Time	Course
18/03	11:30-12:45	Advising & Assisting Non Priority Clients: What's happening in your area
26/03	11:30-1	Persons from Abroad and changes to benefit entitlement
30/03	11:30-12:45	Assured Shorthold Tenancies: Section 21 Notices – an overview

To get a fuller flavour of our webinar offering, you can download a copy of the webinar schedule for the current quarter (ending March) at <http://nhas.org.uk/Training>.

For any further webinar information or to book, please email nhaswebinars@shelter.org.uk.

Welcome to our newest NHAS advice agency members

Worcester Students' Union	Kiveton Park Independent Advice Centre
Holme Wood Advice Service	Manningham Project

An overview of the Public Services (Social Value) Act

The Public Services (Social Value) Act, introduced on 31 January 2013, requires commissioners who procure services to consider social, economic and environmental benefits. [This publication](#) produced by the Cabinet Office provides an overview of the Act and includes:

- a number of case studies
- practical guidance on how to apply the Act
- a framework and principles for measurement

Recently published

- Financial Conduct Authority consultation paper on [proposed changes to consumer credit rules and guidance](#)
- StepChange report "[Safe Harbours](#) - Why we need a new extended breathing space guarantee to help people in temporary financial difficulties recover from debt"
- StepChange report "[Council tax debts](#) - How to deal with the growing arrears crisis tipping families into problem debt"
- Hometrack: [UK Cities House Price Index](#)
- [Liverpool City Council introduce licensing scheme for private landlords](#)
- Research into the work of [West Cheshire Foodbank](#)

Member spotlight: GIPSIL



GIPSIL (Gipton Supported Independent Living Limited) provide support and housing to young people and young parents in Leeds.

Find out why GIPSIL use our consultancy line service fortnightly, and value our training so highly, in **this Spotlight feature**.

Important legal updates

- In [MR v North Tyneside Council and Secretary of State for Work and Pensions \[2014\] UKUT 34 \(AAC\)](#), the Upper Tribunal held that, as the care of their child was shared equally between two parents, the child could only be said to live in the home of the parent in receipt of child benefit for the purposes of applying the size criteria
- In [TG v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions \[2015\] UKUT 50 \(AAC\)](#), the Administrative Appeals Chamber of the Upper Tribunal has ruled that the government acted unlawfully when it extended the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS) for A8 nationals for its final two years of operation

- In [Ben Hoare Bell Solicitors & Ors, R \(On the Application Of\) v The Lord Chancellor \[2015\] EWHC 523 \(Admin\)](#), the High Court ruled that regulations brought in by Chris Grayling, the Lord Chancellor, in April 2014 to cut legal aid funding for judicial review are unlawful. More detail is available at [NHAS news](#)
- The judgment in [Akerman-Livingstone v Aster Communities Ltd \[2015\] UKSC 15](#) suggests that in future a disabled tenant should be able to put forward a defence to a claim for possession on the basis of discrimination under s15 and s35 Equality Act 2010 and have this considered in detail by the Court

Money Debt Advice support

From 1 January 2015, some commercial debt management firms are no longer allowed to offer debt management plans (DMPs) or debt advice on behalf of their customers. Money Debt Advice has produced various sources of information for consumers and professionals in this situation:

- [Microsite](#)
- Helpline: 0300 330 2222
- [Other debt management resources \(leaflet and Q&As\)](#)

Impacted clients are being directed to either [StepChange](#) or [National Debtline](#) for independent advice on DMPs.

National Homelessness Advice Service



Free housing consultancy line: providing housing advice and confirmation in writing - available Monday to Friday between 9am to 5pm - 0300 330 0517

Note: You can also email the advice line at NHASConsultancy@Shelter.org.uk or use the callback facility in the members section of the website

Reminder: If you've received the NHAS Outcomes survey, please make sure to complete it before the end of March

Training from housing and homelessness experts: providing face to face courses, webinars and 'bitesize', podcasts & briefings - <http://nhas.org.uk/Training>

Housing Debt Casework (HDC): supporting you to help households with housing related debt. For initial advice or to make a referral, call 0300 330 0517

Note that the way you access bitesize training will change in the near future, we will update you with more information directly via email and in future bulletins so please watch this space

We hope you find our e-bulletins useful, please share the information with your colleagues. 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.

Regards,
The NHAS Team

NHAS is a partnership between Citizens Advice and Shelter, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. We support the prevention of homelessness by enabling frontline providers to deliver good quality housing and homelessness advice.

Free Telephone Consultancy Line for Local Authorities and Advice Agencies 0300 330 0517
<http://www.nhas.org.uk/>