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### Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

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**Time and Date**

10.00 am on Wednesday, 9th December, 2015

**Place**

Committee Rooms 2 and 3 - Council House

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**Public Business****1. Apologies and Substitutions****2. Declarations of Interest****3. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)

(a) To agree the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st October, 2015

(b) Matters Arising

**4. Welfare Reform Update** (Pages 9 - 44)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator with appendices from the Welfare Reform Working Together Group

Councillor Gannon, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources has been invited to the meeting for the consideration of this item along with the following representatives:

Martin Buxcey and Debbie Patten, Department for Work and Pensions  
Janet Gurney, Coventry Law Centre  
Gavin Kibble, Coventry Food Bank  
Alan Markey, Chair, Working Together on Welfare Reform Group  
Tim Rees, Community Development Worker, Foleshill Baptist Church

**5. Update on Combined Authorities**

The Chief Executive will report at the meeting.

Councillor Maton, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment has been invited to the meeting for the consideration of this item.

**6. Outstanding Issues**

All outstanding issues have been included in the Work Programme

7. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2015/2016** (Pages 45 - 52)

Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator

8. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

**Private Business**

**Nil**

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Chris West, Executive Director, Resources, Council House Coventry

Tuesday, 1 December 2015

Notes:1) The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Liz Knight, Democratic Services, Council House, Coventry, telephone 7683 3073, alternatively Tel: 024 7683 3073 Email: liz.knight@coventry.gov.uk

2) Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Liz Knight no later than 9.00 a.m. on the day of the meeting, giving their reasons for absence and the name of the Council Member (if any) who will be attending the meeting as their substitute.

3) Scrutiny Board Members who have an interest in any report referred to this meeting, but who are not Members of this Committee, have been invited to notify the Chair by 12 noon on the day before the meeting that they wish to speak on a particular item. The Member must indicate to the Chair their reason for wishing to speak and the issue(s) they wish to raise.

Membership: Councillors N Akhtar (Deputy Chair), J Blundell, G Duggins (Chair), T Khan, R Lakha, J Mutton, M Mutton, K Taylor and D Welsh

By invitation Councillors D Gannon and K Maton

Please note: a hearing loop is available in the committee rooms

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter for this meeting OR if you would like this information in another format or language please contact us.

**Liz Knight**

**Tel: 024 7683 3073 Email: liz.knight@coventry.gov.uk**

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee held at 10.00 am on**  
**Wednesday, 21 October 2015**

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)  
Councillor N Akhtar (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor J Blundell  
Councillor R Lakha  
Councillor J Mutton  
Councillor M Mutton  
Councillor K Taylor  
Councillor D Welsh

Other Members: Councillor A Lucas, Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership  
Councillor J McNicholas, Deputy Cabinet Member for Business  
Enterprise and Employment

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's: D O'Shaughnessy, J Venn

Place: D Cockroft, C Knight, D Nuttall

Resources: V Castree, L Knight

Other Representatives: Richard Brookes, London Midland  
Steven Fisher, London Midland  
Hamish Glen, Belgrade Theatre  
Gary Hall, Culture Coventry  
Richard Howarth, Network Rail  
Roger Medway, Culture Coventry  
Ian Walters, Consultant, NUCKLE

## **Councillor Phil Townshend**

The Chair, Councillor Duggins referred to the sad and untimely death of the Deputy Leader of the City Council, Councillor Phil Townshend and to his support for Scrutiny, attending meetings when opportunities allowed. Members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

## **Public Business**

### **36. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest declared.

### **37. Cultural Trust Review**

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Director of Place which provided a summary of the performance and the operating context for the Belgrade Theatre Trust and Culture Coventry in 2014/15. Hamish Glenn, Chief Executive of the Belgrade Trust and Gary Hall, Chief Executive and Roger Medway, Culture Coventry attended the meeting for the consideration of this item and the Chief Executives provided further details on the performance of their Trusts.

The briefing note referred to 2012 Cultural Review undertaken in response to the need to generate savings arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review to ensure a viable future for the cultural attractions managed by three trusts. The review recommended the merger of the Coventry Heritage Arts Trust and the Coventry Transport Museum which led to the launch on Culture Coventry in August 2013, with the Belgrade Theatre continuing as a separate trust. These measures aimed to save £665,000 per annum for the Council. Reference was made to the Council's mid-term financial strategy and the further saving now required, which were the subject of a consultation exercise at the current time.

### **Belgrade Theatre**

The Belgrade Theatre was an Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation and was a producing theatre with specific objectives relating to its ACE grant. The Belgrade had seen a phased reduction in its grant from the Council of £272,000 per annum from 2014/15. In response the theatre had worked towards a greater emphasis on earned income to secure sustainability with a 62% turnover from earned income in 2014/15, up from 30% then 46% in previous years. In 2014/15 151,000 people experienced a live performance across 113 productions with an average ticket price of £13.28. The theatre had successfully widened its audience base whilst maintaining levels at over 40% of tickets being sold at concessionary prices. In 2015 the theatre celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Theatre in Education, a movement started at the Belgrade.

Hamish Glen referred to the £6.6m contribution to the local economy generated by the Belgrade, highlighting that for every £1 of Council funding £4.98 was generated. He also raised concerns regarding the Council's mid-term financial strategy which required further saving by the cultural trusts from 2017 and outlined the implications which could include the loss of ACE funding if objectives couldn't be met.

Members raised a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- If there was capacity to increase the level of earned income
- Further information about the £6.6m contribution to the local economy
- If there were potential saving to be had from joint working between the two trusts
- Further details about the interaction with other theatres in the city
- The potential change from a producing theatre to a presenting theatre as a consequence of future financial cuts
- The likelihood that Arts Council grants would be reduced in any case due to the current public spending cuts
- Further details about the £5m turnover of business and future plans.

### **Culture Coventry**

The Culture Coventry Trust supported the Coventry Transport Museum, the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, the Priory Visitor Centre, the Lunt Roman Fort and the Old Grammar School. The development of this new Trust had progressed concurrently with the £9.5m development and refurbishment programme at the

Coventry Transport Museum and the 12<sup>th</sup> Century Old Grammar School, which was completed in June 2015. Reference was made to the complexities of the scheme which resulted in the closure of the museum for four weeks in total and the closure of the conference space which impacted on income generation in 2014/15.

Since 2013 the Culture Coventry Board had focused on securing an attractive visitor offer and a balanced budget to ensure the successful delivery of the required savings of £393,000 per annum. As both the Transport Museum and the Herbert remained free to visitors, improvements had been made to the shops and product lines at both locations. Also, in 2014/15 Culture Coventry had secured an additional £50,000 funding from ACE to create a new interactive exhibition space at the Lunt Roman Fort. The Committee were informed that over 24,000 students had visited the museum sites between 2012 and 2015. Following some previous fluctuations, visitor numbers at the Herbert were up by 11% in 2014/15. Visitor numbers had consistently increased at the Transport Museum since 2007 but fell by 30% in 2014/15 due to the development works.

Gary Hall referred to the recent reductions in staffing numbers and to the aim to attract half a million visitors to both the Transport Museum and the Herbert. He also raised concerns about the Council's future savings targets which could result in the closure of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum.

Members raised a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- The plans to close the Priory Visitor Centre which had been earmarked for closure to save £100,000 per annum
- Had consideration been given to charging visitors to the Transport Museum and the Herbert
- Whether there were proposals for income generation for the Lunt Fort
- The potential benefits for joint working so reducing back office costs
- The marketing of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum

Councillor Lucas drew attention to the 50% cut in Council funding, emphasised that savings had to be made and future decisions would be taken based on what was best for Coventry residents.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) The performance and current operating contexts of the Belgrade Theatre Trust and Culture Coventry be noted.**

**(2) A briefing note be circulated to the Committee and to the members of the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) providing a detailed explanation of the £6.6m contribution to the local economy generated by the Belgrade Theatre.**

**38. NUCKLE - Arena Railway Station**

The Committee considered a briefing note of the Executive Director of Place which explained the reasons for the delays in opening the Arena Railway Station; the

issues in respect of event trains; and how it was proposed to move forward. Richard Brookes, Commercial Director and Steve Fisher, Head of Regional Services, London Midland, Richard Howarth, Network Rail and Ian Walters, the Council's consultant on NUCKLE attended the meeting for the consideration of this item along with Councillor McNicholas, Deputy Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment with special responsibility for Transportation.

The briefing note indicated that NUCKLE (Nuneaton, Coventry, Kenilworth and Leamington) was the name given to a package of rail projects to radically upgrade north-south services through Coventry. The ultimate aim was to create a rail corridor with high quality services connecting the East Midlands/North East through Coventry to the Thames Valley and South. The project had been split into a number of phases with the first phase being the building of new stations at Coventry Arena and Bermuda Park, improvements at Bedworth and a new bay platform at Coventry with associated track and signal changes to enable more frequent services. The intention was to deliver phase 1 as a whole but due to an overheated signalling market meaning significantly increased signal costs, phase 1 became unaffordable. In light of the potential loss of significant European Regional Development funding and the Department of Transport funding, Cabinet, at their meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 gave approval to split phase 1 as follows:

- 1.1 the construction of two new stations and improvements at Bedworth
- 1.2 the building of the bay platform at Coventry and the associated works and the crossover at the Arena.

These issues delayed the start of the project by a year.

The Committee were informed that the new stations were completed by the end of July but the opening date had been delayed due to Network Rail requiring a cabinet to be climate controlled; staffing issues at London Midland; Network rail's requirement for signalling and commissioning plans; and the submission of the entry into service documentation.

The main purpose of the Arena Station was to serve the day to day needs of Ricoh Arena, the Arena Retail Park and local residents rather than the demand for major sporting events. The aim of phase 1 was two trains per hour between Coventry and Nuneaton with a minimum of two coach trains. Currently services could run once per hour until the bay platform was complete, expected to be Autumn 2017. Reference was also made to the lack of availability of diesel rolling stock which was unlikely to be available until December 2017.

The Committee were informed that the Arena Station was capable of supporting sufficient services to move over 3,000 people to and from events. A six coach platform had been provided along with queuing facilities. The current lack of train capacity had been the reason for the Safety Advisory Group's decision to close the station for an hour after major events. It was possible for event organisers to charter trains to enhance normal services.

Three further actions were currently being pursued to ensure that the Arena Station could support the ambitions of ACL/Wasps: (i) encouraging the provision of events trains, (ii) the delivery of the bay platform and associated infrastructure as soon as possible and (iii) engaging with partners to investigate alternative diesel rolling stock options.

Members raised a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- When was the station likely to be open
- Further information about the availability of diesel rolling stock
- Could event trains be scheduled into Coventry station without the bay platform
- Further details about the delays in electrification projects that would have released diesel rolling stock
- Concerns about how the situation looked to members of the public
- Further details about the proposals for the crossover at the Arena
- Was there potential for using the quieter platforms 2 and 4 at Coventry Station
- Concerns about the length of time it would take before phase 1.2 was complete
- Whether there was capacity for chartered trains to operate at Coventry Station on event days
- When would the Entry into Service documentation be submitted
- A concern that the public had not been fully informed about the decision and implications to deliver phase 1 of the project in two parts
- The financial costs of using chartered trains and the costs of train fares compared to the costs of using the bus or car parks
- Once the bay platform is operational at Coventry Station, what will happen to the existing capacity that has been released
- In light of the significant time it has taken to reach this stage of the project, the need to have a date for when phase 1.2 will be completed
- The challenges still to be faced.

**RESOLVED that:**

**(1) The issues set out in the briefing note and raised at the meeting be noted.**

**(2) The Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment and the Deputy Cabinet Member with special responsibility for Transportation be requested to ensure that both Council Members and the public be kept fully informed of all developments during the different stages of the NUCKLE project, making particular use of the local media.**

**(3) The Cabinet Member for Business Enterprise and Employment and the Deputy Cabinet Member with special responsibility for Transportation be requested to ensure that the Entry into Service document is complied with, completed and submitted as a matter of urgency.**

**39. Update on Combined Authorities**

The Committee received an oral update at the meeting from both the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Lucas and the Assistant Director, Policy, Jenni Venn on the latest progress on the Combined Authority.

The Committee were informed that Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, the last of the 7 metropolitan authorities, had confirmed their commitment as a

member and approved the scheme for the West Midlands Combined Authority, at their Council meeting the previous day. The scheme was to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government today. A launch event had taken place the previous day at the House of Commons. The next stage in the process was a formal consultation by the Secretary of State on his proposals leading to Parliamentary approval, with the West Midlands Combined Authority being set up from April 2016.

Discussions were still on-going regarding the devolution deal with Government which was a separate issue. Councillor Lucas emphasised that she was not prepared to sign anything that wasn't in Coventry's best interests. Any devolution deal would require a unanimous decision by all the constituent members. She clarified that Government had determined that the devolution discussions would be progressed in a confidential manner.

**RESOLVED that progress on this issue be noted.**

40. **Outstanding Issues**

The Committee noted that all outstanding issues had been included in the work programme.

41. **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee Work Programme 2015/2016**

The Committee considered their work programme for the current municipal year.

**RESOLVED that the work programme be noted and consideration be given to scheduling meeting dates for the City Centre Leisure Centre Development and the Coventry, A Top 10 City items.**

42. **Any Other Items of Public Business**

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.40 pm)





Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee**

**Date: 9 December 2015**

**Subject: Welfare Reform**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 The Welfare Reform Working Together group, made up of agencies from across the City, listed in Appendix 1, have produced information for the Committee on Welfare Reform.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:
- 1) Consider the content of the reports and presentation.
  - 2) Support the continued work of the Working Together on Welfare Reform Group
  - 3) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The Government has introduced wide scale changes to the welfare system. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee has dedicated several meetings to the subject and the aim of their consideration of the Welfare Reform agenda has particularly been to explore:
- What are the combined implications of changes on individuals and communities that decision-makers need to understand?
  - What can be predicted about future impacts that need to be planned for now?
  - How do we make sure that actions being taken now are providing long term sustainable solutions for people, not short term fixes?
  - How is the city's approach to services and support being co-ordinated to avoid either duplication or gaps?
  - Is the Council doing everything required to discharge its responsibilities for elements of the welfare reform agenda?
- 3.2 The Welfare Reform Working Together group, made up of agencies from across the City, will be presenting information on a number of areas. Data contained within the attached documents includes
- Appendix 1 – The Welfare Reform – Working Together Group, its membership and remit.
  - Appendix 2 – Welfare Reform report by the Welfare Reform Working Together Group which contains information under each section on suggested actions to mitigate effects, which will be useful when Members are considering recommendations.
  - Appendix 3 - Welfare Reform Timeline.
  - Appendix 4 – Case studies on the impact of welfare reform changes on individuals, including the impact of those in work.

- Appendix 5 - Council Tax Support and Welfare Reform Factsheet containing data on the number of people who have felt the changes and hotspots of areas in the City most affected.
- Appendix 6 - Report of Survey into the Impacts of Welfare Benefits Reform, November 2015 by Wendy Eades that covers upcoming challenges and changes including information on implementation of Universal Credit.
- Appendix 7 - Welfare benefit related highlights in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement November 2015.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Welfare Reform Working Together Group**

#### **Strategy and key priorities**

The impact of government Welfare Reforms have been a key priority for the Coventry Partnership since 2013. The Welfare Reform Working Together Group (WRWTG) brought partners together to raise awareness of the impacts within the city and to work together to mitigate these where possible. (A list of current members is attached.)

Over the past two years, the group has worked to develop and clear and consistent messages around the reforms, helping to ensure that local people are made aware of the changes and that those directly impacted understood how they would be affected. This has included the production of leaflets around individual aspects of the reforms, such as Universal Credit, Sanctions and the Benefit Cap, alongside general information about where to get help and advice. The group has also run a series of events and 'pop-up' shops to highlight the changes. In addition, training sessions and discussion forums have been organised to ensure that partner organisations also understand the cumulative effects on the most vulnerable people in the city.

Over the past year, the WRWTG has refined its action plan and focused on its communication strategy. With the imminent launch of Universal Credit in Coventry (7<sup>th</sup> December), the key focus recently has been on the production of public information, training events and other awareness raising activities with partners.

WRWTG also seeks to engage with other agendas within the city. In particular, we maintain close links with the Employment, Skills and Financial Inclusion Network.

The main roles of the group are:

1. To provide a regular forum for reporting news, raising issues, discussing problems and identifying solutions with partners.
2. To agree and effect a Communication strategy and plan that delivers information on the changes occurring and suggesting actions so that those affected are better able to respond.
3. To agree actions across partners that will lead to mitigation of any negative effects and accentuates any positives. The intention will be that decisions and actions agreed together will have more impact than organisations working separately.
4. To coordinate work/analysis on the impacts of welfare reform and to evaluate findings with discussion and agreement on how this should affect our plans going forward.
5. To ensure that the City has a robust framework going forward and we are well placed with the introduction of Universal Credit.

<b>Welfare Reform Working Together Group members - November 2015</b>		
<b>Members</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
Abigail Oddy	Whitefriars Housing	Service Manager, Rents
Alan Markey	Coventry Independent Advice Services	Director
Amanda Wilson	Ashram Moseley Housing Association	Income Manager
Anna Hollis	Midland Heart Housing Association	Operations Manager
Bernie Kelly	Whitefriars Housing	Area Service Manager
Emily Burn	Insight Team	Senior Analyst
Daksha Piparia	Coventry CAB	Head of Campaigns and Targeted Services
Dan Cubitt	DWP	Partnership Support
Dunleavy Mary JCP BTWT4	DWP	Partnership Manager
Ed Hodson	Coventry CAB	Research and Campaigns Coordinator
Francis Healy	Ashram Moseley Housing Association	Head of Locality
Karen Gist	Revs & Benefits Dept. CCC	Training and Appeals Manager
Rachael Hartopp	Revs & Benefits Dept. CCC	Housing and Council Tax Manager
James Harrison	Warwick University	Associate Professor
Janet Gurney	Coventry Law Centre	Benefits Advisor
Ayaz Maqsood	Housing Manager, CCC	Head of Housing Strategy
Kim Mawby	City Centre and Development Services	Employment Manager
Darren O'Shaughnessy	CCC	Communication Officer
Philip Monk	Coventry Law Centre	Solicitor
Tim Savill	Revs & Ben	Service Manager
Sophie Parkes	Coventry CAB	Campaigns and Communications Manager
Sue Bent	Coventry Law Centre	Director
Terri Lennon	Orbit Housing	Welfare Reform
Tim Coleman	RadioPlus	Station Master
Tim Rees	Community Development Worker	Foleshill Baptist Church
Tina Wukics	Partnership for Coventry	Support Officer
Wendy Eades	Warwick University	PhD Research Student

## **Appendix 2**

# **WELFARE REFORM**

### **1. Introduction**

This paper provides an overview of the welfare reform changes to date and the planned changes announced in the July 1015 budget which are now in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2016 currently being debated in parliament.

It looks at the impact of these reforms on people in Coventry so far and gives some indication of what can be expected as a result of the recently announced reforms with some suggestions for actions that could be taken to mitigate these effects and some case studies to illustrate the real impact of welfare reform on local families in various circumstances.

### **2. Benefit Cap**

The Benefit cap was implemented in September 2013 and the original plan was to cap the annual income of households who were out of work so that they did not receive more than the average earnings of a working household. For families living in Coventry the cap is currently £26,000 per year (equivalent to £500 per week). There is a lower cap for single people although it is understood that this does not affect anyone in Coventry currently. The number of families currently affected is around 120. It is known that the cap disproportionately impacts on single parents who are mostly women and on certain minority groups.

The cap is implemented by the City Council reducing the level of Housing Benefit. The cap therefore does not currently affect those who do not receive any Housing Benefit (i.e. owner occupiers and others living rent free). The impact of the cap is also limited by the level of the Housing Benefit paid so that the total income of some of those affected is not in fact reduced to £500 per week. Some families are protected from the cap (e.g. if they are working and claiming Working tax credit or if they or a member of their family is receiving certain disability benefits). By reducing the level of Housing Benefit paid to these families the potential effect of the benefit cap is to increase rent arrears and to make families vulnerable to homelessness.

#### **Action to mitigate the effects**

Advice agencies in Coventry have worked with Coventry City Council and the local social housing landlords to raise awareness of the ways in which an exemption to the benefit cap can be obtained and are working with a number of local families to achieve this. We have produced a leaflet and launched a helpline to provide support and are monitoring the outcomes of this action. The leaflet campaign has been targeted and has been issued by the local authority so that it goes only to those currently affected by the cap.

In addition, we have taken steps to raise awareness among social landlords so that they can begin to identify those who will be affected after April and take action now to claim those benefits in appropriate cases to provide some protection. Our intention is to relaunch the leaflet when the benefit cap levels are reduced so that we can assist those additional families who are affected by the cap. It will be more challenging to run the same campaign for those whose cap is imposed through

Universal Credit. However we would like to explore whether the City Council could assist in identifying these families by perhaps including an appropriate question in their Council Tax Support claim forms. Some families will be unable to gain an exemption to the benefit cap by working or by claiming disability benefits and these families are likely to remain heavily reliant on reducing their expenditure to make up the rent shortfall as well as claiming Discretionary Housing Payment.

### **Future changes**

In the July budget the Government announced that the benefit cap would be reduced to £20,000 for families (equivalent to £384.61 per week) for families in Coventry from April 2016. It is likely that the reduction will be introduced across the UK in a phased basis and so it is likely that the start date in Coventry will be later than April 2016. The Government are estimating that 5 times the number of claimants who are currently affected by the cap will be affected after the changes and this will mean that we can expect around 600 families to be affected by this aspect of the change.

The benefit cap level of £384.61 per week means that almost all families with 3 children will have their benefit capped and some families with 2 children will have their benefit capped. Changes will mean that DWP will be able to stop core benefit money, instead of just housing benefit, therefore removing the current artificial limit. This will mean that yet more local families will be affected with the numbers increasing from a low initial number until the full impact is achieved by around 2020.

### **3. Freezing of working age benefits**

In the July 2015 budget the government announced that they would be freezing all working age benefits for 4 years from April 2016. This freeze does not affect disability benefits. This change is included in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill.

There is little specific action that can be taken against this but advisors assisting those affected will need to ensure that all benefits are paid correctly and will also need to take action to assist with money management and debt problems. An increasing reliance on Discretionary Housing Payment may result.

### **4. Introduction of Personal Independence Payment**

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is being replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and to date the majority of DLA claimants have not been reassessed for PIP although this process is beginning to gather momentum. Although we do not have local figures for the number who have been transferred is about 30 %. The process of reassessing those on indefinite awards of DLA started in October 2015 and is planned to end by 2018.

To date nationally 23% of claimants who are reassessed lose all of their DLA entitlement and some others can also expect to see a reduced entitlement. There will also be some who see an increased entitlement and increases in daily living awards are frequently being achieved at appeal stage in Coventry. The structure of PIP means that it is more likely that the reduction in entitlement will affect mobility awards rather than care/daily living. A reduction in PIP entitlement also has a knock on effect on to entitlement to increased premiums paid on other benefits as well as for carers

claiming cares allowance. For those who are reliant on Motability cars a reduction in their entitlement to mobility component will also mean that they will lose their vehicle.

### **Action to mitigate the effects**

The support of advisors for those who are going through the PIP conversion process is crucial to maximising their chances of success and also ensuring that any additional passported benefits are correctly claimed and paid. This support ranges from assisting with completing forms to mandatory reconsiderations and representation at appeals. The local tribunal service has informed us that around 33% of the appeals heard locally at present are PIP appeals. The number of appeals being heard at present locally is gradually increasing largely due to increasing numbers of PIP appeals. The local tribunal service are expecting PIP appeals to increase to a level in 2016 where 50% of the appeals heard will be PIP appeals. The Law Centre estimates its rate of success at PIP appeals to be 80% and without representation the average rate of success at appeals is around 50%. It is therefore crucial that all advisors in Coventry continue to prioritise casework to provide support to people going through the transition of DLA to PIP.

## **5. Conversion of Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disability Allowance to Employment and Support Allowance**

Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Severe Disability Allowance (SDA) claimants are having their award converted to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). The medical assessment applied as part of this process is more rigorous than that used by IB and ESA with the result that many claimants are losing their entitlement to ESA. This conversion process was supposed to have been completed but has been delayed due to problems arising with ATOS who are no longer carrying out the medical assessment and have been replaced by Maximus. It is estimated that around 10% of claimants have yet to undergo the conversion process and there is a stated intention that this will be completed by April 2016.

A number of reports have suggested that there are serious negative impacts on mental health for those who are going through the ESA conversion process ranging from an increased incidence of consultations with GPs to an increase in the number of suicides.

### **Action to mitigate the effects**

Advice workers in Coventry are supporting people who are undergoing this conversion process by assisting with form completion, mandatory reconsiderations and appeal representation. In addition we have provided workshops and pop up shops to explain this process to claimants and to enable them to understand this and put their cases forward effectively. The rate of success on conversion appeals where the Law Centre represents is around 75% with around 50% successful without representation. There is a marked increased success rate at all stages where claimants are adequately supported so it is essential that this work continues to be prioritised. A successful outcome and the support of an advisor also helps to prevent or reduce the negative impacts on self-esteem and mental ill health resulting from this process.

## **6. Genuine Prospects of Work test**

This new test is affecting EU nationals who are out of work for more than 6 months and prevents them continuing to receive Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Housing Benefit (HB) after this date if they have not acquired a permanent right to reside by having 5 years' legal residence in the UK or if they do not have a derived right through another route (e.g. as a carer of a child in education).

The DWP nationally are interpreting the genuine prospects of work test as being satisfied only if a job has already been secured. It can be challenging for EU nationals to understand the rules and satisfy this test particularly as they may not be provided with an interpreter to assist them at the interviews arranged before the test is applied.

We are not aware of any local figures indicating the numbers affected. The impact of this test is very serious as some claimants are denied access to all benefits and so are unable to maintain their accommodation or to provide for any essentials for themselves. Those affected are finding it very challenging to remain in the UK and have few options. They can be prey to being exploited by others as a result of their situation. Many of those affected most seriously will be in their 50s or early 60s and may have health problems preventing them being well enough to work.

There are in addition a number of ways in which access to benefits will be restricted further for EU nationals under Universal Credit. These changes will prevent many claimants who are too ill to work or who have young children or are pregnant from being able to get restrictions in their claimant commitment in the same way as non EU nationals. Many more EU nationals and their partners will be expected to be looking for work for up to 35 hours per week and consequently it can be anticipated that those who are not in a position to work will be subject to sanctions. The Government are currently considering further steps that could be taken to restrict access to benefit still further for EU nationals.

### **Action to mitigate the effects**

Advisors are assisting to ensure that DWP are correctly interpreting this test and ensuring that claimants with language problems have explained their situation fully and that we have fully explored arguments to prevent the application of this new test. This has led to some claimants continuing to receive benefits. In other cases we may be able to secure payment of other benefits which are outside the test such as Personal Independence Payment or Carers Allowance. These will not be enough to live on permanently but may provide a cushion until the claimant or partner is able to secure employment or to decide on their future course of action.

Cases are being taken through the appeals system but none has been successful as yet. The Law Centre is looking for a case which could lead to a successful challenge of the interpretation of the test as it is currently being applied. It is likely that there is also an increased demand for support from Children's Services as a result of this test.

## **7. Benefits and Children**

A number of measures were included in the July 2015 budget which impacted on benefits being paid to support families with children. Most of these changes are in



the Welfare Reform and Work Bill and so the details may be subject to change. These are:

1. Third and subsequent children born after April 2017 are to be excluded from claims for Tax Credits and Universal Credit unless they are part of a multiple birth or born as a result of rape. Additions will still be paid if these children are disabled. It appears that the way this change will be applied is to all those who make new claims after April 2017 and so the effect may be wider than the original stated impact as it could be applied to children born before April 2017. Housing Benefit will also be similarly affected. The family element of Child tax Credit and the equivalent in Universal Credit will be removed from April 2017 (worth about £10 per week)
2. A reduction in the level of Tax Credits is to be achieved by reducing the sums that can be earned before reducing the level of Tax Credits awarded. This issue has been the focus of considerable debate and it appears that steps will be taken to reduce the impact of this potentially by imposing further cuts on Housing Benefit. No details of these alternatives are available at the time of writing.
3. Universal Credit will be reduced by removing the work allowances (earnings disregard) from the calculation for those without children and disabilities from April 2016 and by reducing the work allowances for those with children and disabilities. This will mean that Universal Credit will no longer offer any substantial advantage to those in work other than the fact that they will not need to transfer from one set of benefits to another.
4. From April 2017 lone parents in receipt of Universal Credit will be expected to undertake work preparation once their youngest child is aged 2 and will be expected to be ready to enter employment when their youngest child is aged 3. Currently they are expected to look for work when their youngest child is aged 5. This will be supported by the provision of increased levels of free childcare for children aged 3 and 4.

Action to mitigate the effects

Currently advisors are waiting for the precise details of these changes after the Welfare Reform and Work Bill is enacted. It will be difficult to fully mitigate these effects but we will need to take steps to ensure families understand these changes, ensure that the benefit calculations are correct, and challenge any decisions that can be challenged.

There will be an increased emphasis on those benefits which are outside the scope of these changes such as Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance to ensure these are claimed by as many people as possible to mitigate the effects of these cuts. There will also be an increased need for money and debt advice to assist those families whose available income is reduced.

## **8. Sanctions**

Sanctions have been a significant factor for many Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and ESA claimants over the last 2 years. Currently figures indicate that the number of sanctions being imposed is reducing although it should be noted that the official figures do not include sanctions numbers for Universal Credit which are not being reported officially but which anecdotally are known to be high.

The Government has recently responded to the most recent Works and Pensions select committee report on sanctions and has outlined a number of policy changes they plan to make to reduce the impact of sanctions. These include trialling a new system to give claimants a warning notice before they are sanctioned and some changes to make it easier to get hardship payments and for these to be paid earlier in the sanction period. These changes have yet to be implemented. The Government has also recently put into place changes to ensure that Housing Benefit payments do not stop when claimants are sanctioned.

There are some concerns about the way that sanctions are operating under Universal Credit and these are that a much wider group of claimants are subject to a claimant commitment as a condition of receiving benefit. This includes claimants who are in work and claiming Universal Credit as a top up of their earnings. Claimants and their partners can still be expected to look for more work if it is considered that they are able to work for 35 hours per week. The claimant commitment conditions for Universal Credit claimants are far more onerous than those which apply for JSA claimants. Under Universal Credit sanctions are applied consecutively rather than overlapping as is currently the case. It is significantly more difficult to claim Hardship Payments under Universal credit than under JSA and ESA and under Universal credit Hardship Payments are loans which have to be repaid at the end of the sanction.

#### **Action to mitigate the effects**

The Law Centre is currently operating a sanctions hotline for 15 hours per week to support claimants in Coventry who have been sanctioned. This has been widely publicised throughout the City. Our policy is to encourage all claimants to challenge all sanctions including any past sanctions we come across that have happened in the last 13 months and we are taking all of these cases through the appeals process. The success rate in these cases is that 90% are overturned.

Unfortunately, a relatively low number of claimants are challenging their sanction decisions. It is difficult to get the message out to claimants who have been sanctioned at the right time as these are often claimants who are not at that point in touch with advice agencies. Unfortunately, our experience is that the DWP are discouraging people from challenging their sanction decisions despite the fact that so many challenges are successful.

We have put forward proposals to the local DWP to produce a local information sheet which they could distribute to people who have been sanctioned locally to make them aware of where to go for advice but DWP have refused to consider this locally although this has been agreed in other areas.

The Law Centre has also done work with foodbanks to raise awareness of the importance of challenging sanction decision and also to raise awareness of the ways that sanctions will change under Universal Credit. We are concerned that unless the regime is substantially changed and more people start to challenge their sanction decisions, foodbanks are likely to see a considerable increase in demand.

It is important that the sanctions hotline continues to operate and that advice agencies continue to encourage local claimants to challenge their sanction decision.

## **9. Reduced payments for people who are sick and have limited capability for work**

Currently as part of the ESA medical assessment claimants who are accepted as too ill to work are categorised as having limited capability for work or having limited capability for work related activity. They are placed in the work related activity group or support group respectively. These categories attract additional sums with an extra £29.05 per week being paid for those in the work related activity group. The Government are intending to remove this additional sum from new claimants in this category from April 2017. This change is included in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill and so may be subject to change.

### **Actions to mitigate the effect**

Advisors can take action to ensure that wherever possible claimants are placed in the support group and inevitably this will mean an increase in the number of claimants who will want to challenge their decisions. Some claimants may be able to offset some of this effect by claiming Personal Independence Payment. Advisors would need to look at raising awareness of this issue before April 2017 and could also perhaps mitigate the effects by trying to speed up medical assessments during the run up to this period. The number of claimants being placed in the Support Group is currently increasing and this will help to protect people against this change and also assists in protecting against the benefit cap.

## **10. Support with mortgage interest payments**

From April 2018 it is intended that support with mortgage payments paid to owner occupiers who are in receipt of means tested benefits will be paid in the form of a loan which will be secured against the claimant's property and recovered on sale. This change is part of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill and will affect both current and new claimants.

### **Actions to mitigate the effect**

Advisors will need to reconsider this when the Bill is enacted. It is unlikely that much can be done to assist this group but it would be important to ensure these changes are publicised to ensure claimants are aware of this before they are affected and can plan adequately taking this into account.

## **11. Changes in Benefit for Young People**

A number of changes are pending:

1. From April 2017 the Government are removing the automatic entitlement to housing costs paid under Universal Credit (equivalent to Housing Benefit) There are exemptions for vulnerable people.
2. From April 2017 there will be a new youth obligation with stronger day one work requirements and a loss of benefit for those who are not in training, apprenticeship or community work placement after 6 months from April 2017.
3. Young people are also being transferred from DLA to PIP at age 16 and are often experiencing an income reduction as a result at this point.

### **Actions to mitigate the effect**

The changes to the vulnerability definition are not too dissimilar to the current system so it is likely that many of those affected will be able to avoid the loss of entitlement to their benefits by some determined advocacy on their behalf. However this change could pose a potential threat to income for some specialist housing providers locally and so we need to ensure that these agencies are aware of the details of the new rules and the arguments that can be put forward. In theory it appears that where these arguments fail this should be because it is considered that claimants can return to live with their parents so this be an option for some. The risk is that there will be an increase in street homelessness among young people.

The changes in the youth obligation may lead to an increase in the number of young people who find it extremely difficult to sign on and instead remain dependent on their families for financial support. It is likely that parents will approach advice agencies for support in these scenarios rather than the young person concerned and it will be important to ensure that the youth obligation being offered is operated in a way that is fair and reasonable. There may be a need for advocacy work to support those who are affected.

## **Appendix 3**

### **WELFARE REFORM TIMELINE**

#### **AUTUMN 2015 ONWARDS**

##### **The Summer Budget – 8 July 2015**

The government announced a number of welfare measures as part of the Summer Budget. These measures will be phased in and will not affect any claimants until April 2016 at the earliest, with many changes affecting only new claimants. The main changes include:

- A four-year freeze to working age benefits whilst still protecting pensioners, and benefits related to the extra costs of disability
- Lowering the Benefit Cap to £23,000 in London and £20,000 elsewhere
- A package of reforms to Tax Credits and Universal Credit, including reducing some entitlements
- Support for children through Tax Credits and Universal Credit will be limited to two children from April 2017. Equivalent changes will be made to the Housing Benefit rules.
- Reducing income threshold from April 2016 – so the level of earnings at which a household's Tax Credits and Universal Credit award starts to be withdrawn for every extra pound earned will be reduced from £6,420 to £3,850
- Increasing Tax Credit taper from April 2016 - the rate at which a person's or households tax credit award is reduced - the taper rate will be increased from 41% to 48%.
- Parents with a youngest child aged 3, including lone parents are expected to look for work if they want to claim Universal Credit
- Reform to housing and housing support - including removing the entitlement to housing support in Universal Credit for those aged 21 or under, lowering rents in the social rented sector, and social tenants on higher incomes (over £40,000 in London and over £30,000 outside London) being required to pay higher (market rate or near market rate) rents. Support for Mortgage Interest payments will be changed into a loan and there will be a four-year freeze to Local Housing Allowance rates.
- From 1 April 2017, new claimants of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who are placed in the Work-Related Activity Group will receive the same rate of payment as those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and the equivalent in Universal Credit. Existing ESA claimants will be unaffected

October 2015

##### **Current National Minimum Wage (NMW) Rises**

- From 1 October 2015, the adult rate of the National Minimum Wage (NMW) rises by 20 pence from £6.50 to £6.70 per hour, as recommended by the Low Pay Commission (LPC) in March 2015.
  - the rate for 18 to 20 year olds increases by 17 pence to £5.30 per hour
  - the rate for 16 to 17 year olds increases by 8 pence to £3.87 per hour

- the apprentice rate increases by 57 pence to £3.30 per hour
- National Living Wage will be introduced - starting at £7.20 an hour for people over 25. Rising to £9.00 an hour by 2020
- Universal Credit youth obligation for 18-21 year olds to either apply for training or attend work placements from six months after the start of their claim.
- Abolishing automatic entitlement to Housing Support for new claims in Universal Credit for 18-21 year olds who are out of work, from April 2017. (exemptions will exist for some groups)
- Free childcare entitlement will be doubled from 15 hours to 30 hours a week for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds.

### **Tax Free Childcare**

The new Tax-Free Childcare scheme due to be launched in autumn 2015 has been delayed and will now be introduced in early 2017. When it is introduced, it will support parents' childcare costs and replace the existing Employer Supported Childcare Scheme.

### **Pension Credit modified**

Universal Credit is replacing Housing Benefit and Child Tax Credit so if you are over Pension Credit age you will get help with your housing costs and costs of bringing up a child through a new modified Pension Credit.

If you are currently claiming Housing Benefit and are over Pension Credit age you will be moved onto the new modified Pension Credit, between October 2015 and October 2017.

Update: This has been delayed and may not take place until 2017

### **Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payment**

Claimants still receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA) will start to be contacted to claim Personal Independence Payment instead.

DWP will randomly select DLA claimants in receipt of an indefinite award or a fixed term award, and notify them about what they need to do to claim PIP.

DWP will invite claims as early as possible from recipients who have turned 65 after 8 April 2013, when PIP was first introduced. If you turned 65 before 8 April 2013 you will remain on DLA.

All DLA claimants will have been invited to claim PIP by late 2017.

April 2016

### **Bereavement Support Payment**

The current bereavement benefit system will be replaced with a single system of Bereavement Support Payments (BSP).

## **Universal Credit - Childcare element**

An additional £200m of support will be provided within Universal Credit, which is equivalent to covering 85% of childcare costs for households qualifying for the Universal Credit childcare element where the lone parent or both earners in a couple pay income tax.

This is planned to be phased in from April 2016 as childcare support moves from tax credits into Universal Credit. Details will be set out in future spending reviews.

## **Benefit Cap**

The government in the 2015 summer budget put forward proposed plans to reduce the Benefit Cap to £23,000 in London and £20,000 elsewhere from April 2016.

The aim of extending the Genuine Prospect of Work (GPoW) assessment is to ensure that all EEA nationals claiming income-based JSA are treated in the same way, regardless of when they made their claim to benefit

## **Freeze on Working-age benefits**

From April 2016 government plan to introduce a four-year freeze to working age benefits whilst still protecting pensioners, and benefits related to the extra costs of disability. See Summer Budget 2015 page

## **New National Living Wage**

From April 2016 New National Living Wage will be introduced- starting at £7.20 an hour for workers aged 25 and above. Rising to £9.00 an hour by 2020. See Summer Budget 2015 page

## **Cut to in-work Tax Credits**

From April 2016, the level of earnings at which a household's tax credits and Universal Credit award starts to be withdrawn for every extra pound earned will be reduced from £6,420 to £3,850. See Summer Budget 2015 page

Tax credit taper – The rate at which a person's or household's tax credit award is reduced will be increased from 41% to 48% . See Summer Budget 2015 page

## **Reduction in Social Sector Rents**

The government will reduce rents paid by tenants in social housing in England by 1% a year for 4 years from 2016.

## **Freeze to Local Housing Allowance**

There will be a four-year freeze to Local Housing Allowance rates for 4 years from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

## **Limiting backdating in Housing Benefit**

From April 2016, Housing Benefit claims will be backdated for a maximum of 4 weeks.

## **Support for Mortgage Interest(SMI) Waiting Period Increased**

From 1 April 2016, the SMI waiting period will change from 13 weeks and will return to the pre-recession length of 39 weeks, but the capital limit will be maintained at the higher level of £200,000.

## **Removal of Pension Credit Assessed Income Period**

From 6 April 2016 households on Pension Credit will now need to report all changes in their circumstances that will affect their benefit as they happen. Pensioners aged 75 and over who have an indefinite assessed income period in place will not be affected by the change unless the assessed income period would end under current rules. For more information see [GOV.UK Pension Credit factsheet](#)

During 2017

## **Tax Free Childcare**

Tax Free Childcare is to be introduced as a replacement for employer supported childcare ([childcare vouchers](#)).

The government will contribute up to 20% of the first £10000 of registered childcare costs per child, per year. This equates to a maximum of £2000 per child, per year.

The scheme will be available to people who have an annual income under £150,000 and are not receiving help with childcare via tax credits. It is expected to reach more people than the current scheme.

For further details see our [Tax Free Childcare information sheet](#).

## **Tax Credits Support for children reduced**

Government proposed in the summer budget 2015 that support for children through Tax Credits and Universal Credit will be limited to two children from April 2017. Equivalent changes will be made to the Housing Benefit rules. [See Summer Budget 2015 page](#)

## **Tax Credit Family Element removed**

Tax Credit Family element proposed change: People starting a family after April 2017 will no longer be eligible for the Family Element in tax credits. The equivalent in Universal Credit, known as the first child premium, will also not be available for new claims after April 2017.

## **Universal Credit requirements for parents to look for work**



Parents with a youngest child aged 3, including lone parents are expected to look for work if they want to claim Universal Credit.

### **Reduction in payment for ESA Work-Related Activity Group Claimants**

From 1 April 2017, new ESA claimants who are placed in the Work-Related Activity Group will receive the same rate of payment as those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and the equivalent in Universal Credit. [See Summer Budget 2015 page](#)

### **Universal Credit Youth Obligation**

18-21 year olds who are on Universal Credit will have to either apply for training/ apprenticeships or attend a work placements from six month after the start of their claim. Apart from certain exempt groups ( those considered to be vulnerable) – proposed introduction from April 2017 .

### **Free Childcare Extended**

Free childcare entitlement will be doubled from 15 hours to 30 hours a week for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds from September 2017.

### **Universal Credit Housing Support removed for young people**

Reform to housing and housing support proposed- including removing the entitlement to housing support in Universal Credit for those aged 21 or under from April 2017. [See Summer Budget 2015 page](#)

### **Higher Income Social Tenants to Pay Higher Rents**

The Summer Budget 2015 put forward plans to require social tenants on higher incomes (over £40,000 in London and over £30,000 outside London) to pay higher (market rate or near market rate) rents. The government will consult and set out the detail of this reform in due course. [See Summer Budget 2015 page](#)

April 2018

### **Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) payments**

The government announced in the summer budget 2015 that from April 2018, new SMI payments will be paid as a loan. Loans will be repaid upon sale of a claimant's house, or when claimants return to work.

2021

The Government has recently indicated that Universal Credit will be fully in place by 2021 with all claimants receiving the legacy benefits fully transferred on to Universal Credit.

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## Appendix 4

### Case Studies

#### Case study 1: Benefit Cap

Abdul and his family of 8 children are of Somali heritage. 7 of the 8 children are dependent on him. He has had to give up work as a taxi driver due to worsening unstable diabetes. He also has hearing loss and back problems. The family live in housing association accommodation. The family receive Employment Support Allowance (assessment rate as he has not yet had a work capability assessment), Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit. His rent is £119.00 per week. His income exceeds £500 so after the grace period (allowed as he was not previously on benefits) he has his HB reduced to the minimum payment of 50 pence per week due to the Benefit cap. He has claimed Personal Independence Payment which has been refused and is waiting for an appeal. He also has a daughter with problems of anaphylaxis due to allergic reactions and eczema who has had a previous award of Disability Living Allowance which has been refused on renewal.

He has rent arrears of £900 initially. He has had some discretionary housing payment towards his rent arrears but they have refused to continue paying. He is managing to pay £58 per week towards his rent liability.

He has a number of possible routes to gain an exemption from the cap:

- PIP award for him
- DLA award for his daughter
- Employment and Support Allowance to be paid at Support Group rate.

His first PIP appeal fails but his health has deteriorated further since that claim so a second claim is made and this is successful. The DLA appeal for his daughter is outstanding. He was found fit for work at the ESA medical and this has been appealed. His daughter's appeal has a high chance of success.

The rent arrears escalated to £1600 before this award comes through and there is a possession hearing arranged. Fortunately the second PIP decision comes through and gains him an exemption before the family are evicted. There is some backdating of his HB award as a result which reduces the arrears to around £600. With his extra income he is able to make regular payments towards the remaining arrears and the threat of eviction is removed. This decision results in an increase in his weekly income of £208.70 (made up of PIP, Housing Benefit and Carers Allowance for his wife).

Future challenges facing this family:

1. If the **ESA appeal** is unsuccessful we will transfer the family on to Income Support and claim through his wife as the carer as he will be at severe risk of sanctions if he has to claim JSA

2. Abdul will have to face **regular renewals** and risks to the ongoing PIP award (and ESA if awarded) as they are reassessed from time to time. If he loses the PIP the benefit cap will affect this family again.
3. When this family are transferred on to **Universal Credit** a claimant conditionality group will be assigned to both him and his wife. If he has no ESA then he will have full conditionality applied and will be expected to look for work for 35 hours per week (or less if vulnerability is accepted). This is despite the award of PIP. The risk of sanction will be very high.
4. If the family are moved on to Universal Credit after April 2017 (as is likely) the **Universal Credit award will be for only 2 children** as the protection for children born before April 2017 does not apply if a new claim for Universal Credit is made after April 2017 unless the wording is changed in the current Welfare Reform and Work Bill. This will be very serious for this family and will cause serious hardship and the risk of eviction is likely to return as they could be facing an income shortfall of £267 per week if they still have 5 dependent children at this point.

## Case Study 2: Genuine Prospects of Work

Artur and Nina are a couple from Poland in their late 50s. They came to the UK in May 2010 and worked for one month when they first arrived for someone who did not pay them wages. They escaped from this employer and lived for 2 years in the park without claiming benefits being supported by a local church and foodbank. For the last three years they have been signing on and claiming Job Seekers Allowance and trying to improve their English. They live in privately rented accommodation and are paid Housing Benefit. They have no other family here and have no children. Nina has a number of health problems including dementia and a successful claim for Personal Independence Payment has been made. No attempt has been made to switch her claim from JSA as this would have been likely to lead to an earlier loss of benefit and application of the Genuine Prospects of Work (GPOW) test. She would anyway only be able to claim ESA during a period of temporary inability to work and her health problems are clearly not temporary. However Artur is assisted to claim Carers Allowance and stops claiming JSA. The Carers Premium is paid on Nina's JSA claim.

Artur has had an extremely large hernia for some time but has refused an operation as he cannot leave his partner due to her confusion. Artur and Nina are assisted by the Law Centre to approach social services and care is arranged for Nina while Artur has his operation. He has the operation and is advised by his consultant that he must not work or carry anything heavy for at least 6 months.

Nina is called in to the Job Centre for an interview for genuine prospects. Her benefit is refused and Housing Benefit payments also stop. Artur attempts to make a claim for ESA with Nina as a dependent. This claim is also refused. They are then paid only PIP and Carers Allowance and at this stage they seek advice and are currently being assisted with mandatory reconsiderations (MRs) against the GPOW decisions. These MRs are likely to be refused and appeals are also likely to be refused.

Artur and Nina are not considered to have 5 years' lawful residence in the UK due to the 2 years that they lived in the park and did not work or claim benefits. They have

only 3 years lawful residence as this is calculated under the rules. They do not meet any of the exemption tests.

Artur is desperately looking for work in a car wash despite being advised by his consultant not to work. However he is repeatedly told by prospective employers that he is too old.

The couple have a small amount of money saved from their PIP (they were advised at the time to save some because they would be affected by this test) and so they are able to use this to pay their rent for the time being. However this is just temporary and unless Artur is able to secure employment soon they are likely to lose their accommodation and will again become homeless.

If Artur is able to secure employment they will be able to claim Housing Benefit and Working Tax Credit to top up their wages.

Future challenges:

- At the stage of moving on to Universal Credit (if they have not by then achieved a permanent right to reside) they will both be subject to full work conditionality requirements. Under Universal Credit EU nationals who have a right to reside as a worker or someone with a temporary period of inability to work (this is the case here) they only have an entitlement to Universal Credit on the basis of full conditionality. This would mean that both of them would be expected to spend 35 hours per week looking for work (in Artur's case the hours required would depend on the level of his employment and earnings but if part-time at national minimum wage he would be expected to look for more work). The risk of sanctions from being unable to meet this test is very high particularly for Nina who is effectively unable to look for work.
- Universal Credit will need to be claimed by computer and they will need to notify any changes in circumstances by computer. Artur and Nina have no computer skills and realistically are unable to acquire computer skills. They may become dependent on paying someone to do this for them or they will be at risk of disruption to their payments.

### **Case Study 3: PIP conversion**

Edward is in his late 40s took early retirement from work due to ill health 3 years ago. He has type 1 diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome and depression. He is married. He is in receipt of Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) paid at Support Group rate. He also has an underlying entitlement to Carers Allowance. His partner is also disabled and is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance paid at middle rate care component and lower rate mobility component. They have a disabled son aged 25 living at home who is in receipt of Income Related ESA paid at Support group rate and DLA paid at lower rate care and lower rate mobility components. They own their own property and the ESA includes an allowance towards mortgage interest.

Edward had a previous award of higher rate mobility of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and middle rate care component. When his award ran out he did a renewal

claim to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and his award was reduced to only standard rate of mobility of PIP. His weekly income was reduced by £90.75 per week. Edward appealed against this decision and was represented at the hearing. The appeal hearing was successful and his previous rate of payment was put back in place as he was able to secure the minimum points needed to secure the award. It is unlikely that the appeal would have achieved as good an outcome without representation and it should be noted that he has not achieved any excess points which would indicate a robust award which should be safe at reassessment.

#### Future Challenges:

- Edward's wife and son are both in receipt of DLA and will both need to go through the PIP conversion process. They may also experience reductions in their awards.
- All three will have periodic renewals and medicals for their ESA and PIP awards and so will continue to experience uncertainty around their awards.
- Edward and his son will have to go through a process of conversion to Universal Credit. Universal Credit does not recognise the possibility of being both a carer and disabled which is Edward's status. He will receive transitional protection on his old rate of benefit as this will be higher than Universal Credit because of this but this will mean that his benefit is frozen and will eventually reduce. The eventual loss will be £34.60 per week.
- Universal Credit includes extra money for disability only for people who have been through a work capability assessment. Edward's wife has not undergone this assessment and so would be required to attend an ESA medical assessment. The outcome of this will determine the award of an extra allowance for this and her claimant conditionality level and whether she has to undertake any activity to find or prepare for work.
- There is a risk of losing their extra allowance for being in the support group after conversion to Universal Credit should either Edward, his wife or his son not get into this highest group. There is no allowance from April 2017 for being in the lower group only for new Universal Credit claimants.
- After April 2018 the payment they receive towards their mortgage interest will be converted into a loan secured against their property.

#### Case Study 4 couple in low paid work

Alan and Gina have two children aged 3 and 5 and live in social housing in a 3 bed semi. Their rent is £125 per week. They pay Band A council tax. Alan is working 35 hours and is paid at the minimum wage at the over 25 rate.

Their weekly income is as follows:

Year	Wages (net)	CB	CTC	WTC	HB	CTS	Total Income	Rent	Council Tax	Net income
2015-16	216.45	34.40	117.40	50.63	48.17	nil	467.05	125.00	19.70	322.35
2016-2017	232.68	34.40	117.40	27.59	52.59	nil	464.66	125.00	19.70	319.96

The above assessments assume that benefit rates are not increased in April 2016 and that Council tax and rent does not increase in April 2016.

Future challenges:

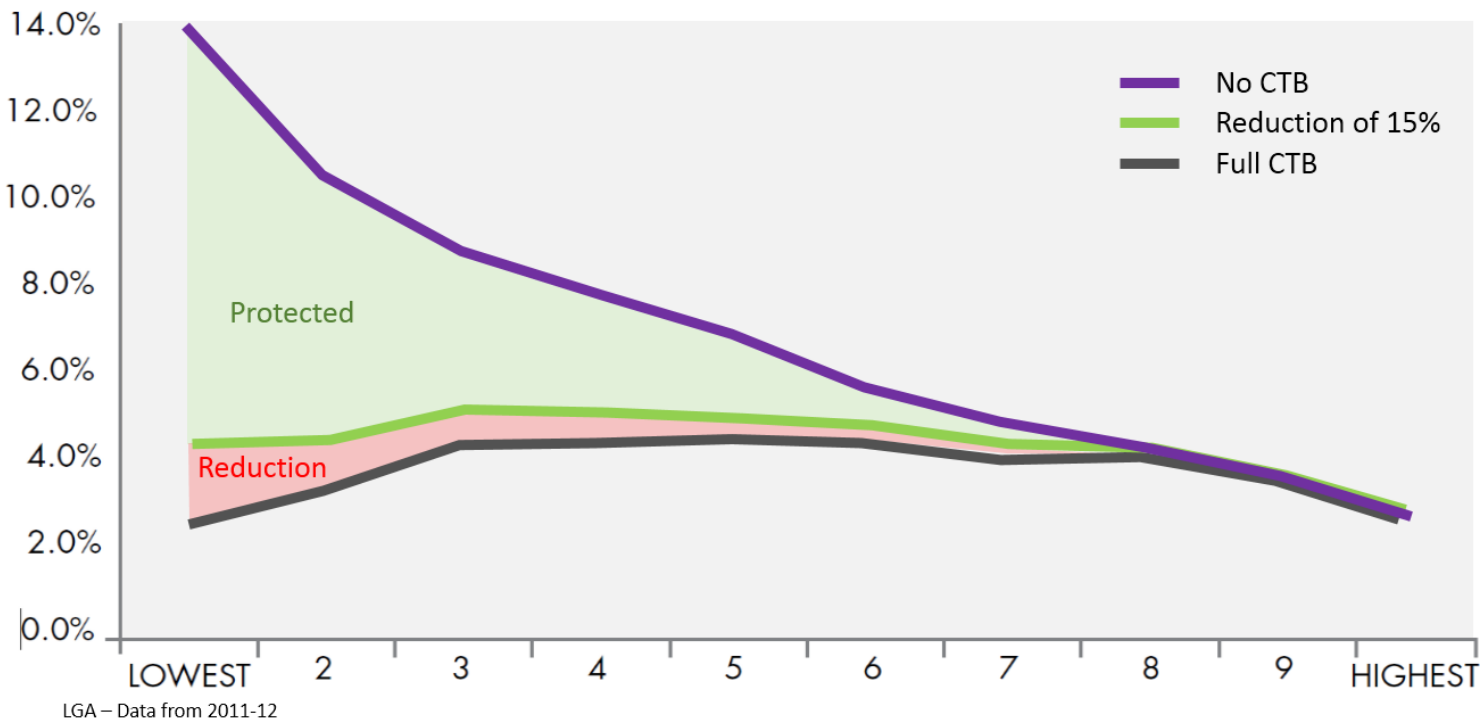
- When Alan and Gina are transferred on to Universal Credit benefit will be conditional on both Alan and Gina accepting a claimant commitment. Alan will be deemed to be meeting his conditionality threshold but Gina will be expected to look for work potentially for 35 hours per week. She will be at risk of sanctions if she does not comply with the work search requirements.
- The Universal Credit earnings disregard will be reduced from April 2016.
- Further cuts in Housing Benefit are being mooted as an alternative to the Tax Credit cuts in April 2016 this will mean that there will be a loss of income from the HB rather than WTC. The amounts involved cannot be determined at present but could potentially mean that Alan and Gina are even worse off.

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# Council Tax Support and Welfare Reform Factsheet

## Council tax as a proportion of net household income after housing costs by income decile



120 homes with their benefit capped at £26,000 will see an average £2.89 a week reduction in their Council Tax Benefit (£150.28 a year)



2,035 under-occupied homes will see an average £2.61 a week reduction in their Council Tax Benefit (£135.72 a year)

Source: CCC September 2015

## Impact of welfare reform on residents who are likely to claim Council Tax Benefit

### Other Housing Benefit Changes

- 8,668 households**  
LHA room rate change - £120 and £360 reduction a year
- 21 households**  
Four bedroom cap - £947 reduction a year
- 219 households**  
Abolishing the £15 excess - £780 reduction a year
- 698 households**  
Extension of the shared room rate (under 35) - £1,392 reduction a year

### DWP changes

- 3,528 people**  
Estimated impact of Incapacity Benefit changes - £1,543 reduction a year
- 9,600 people**  
Estimated impact of Employment and Support Allowance changes - £1,479 reduction a year
- 2,948 people**  
Estimated impact of Disability Living Allowance changes - £3,640 reduction a year

Source: CCC estimates

### Other Changes

- 1,900 households**  
Non-dependant deductions - £1,121 reduction a year
- 28,500 households**  
Tax credit - £812 reduction a year

Source: Sheffield Hallam

### Total estimated loss

- £2.6 million**  
Localisation of Council Tax Benefits
- £112 million**  
Total estimated impact of pre-2015 cuts

Source: Sheffield Hallam

### July 2015 Budget changes linked to those claiming CTB

- £26,000 to £20,000**  
Further benefit cap reduction
- 18-21 years olds**  
Housing benefit not paid automatically and a youth obligation that they 'earn or learn'

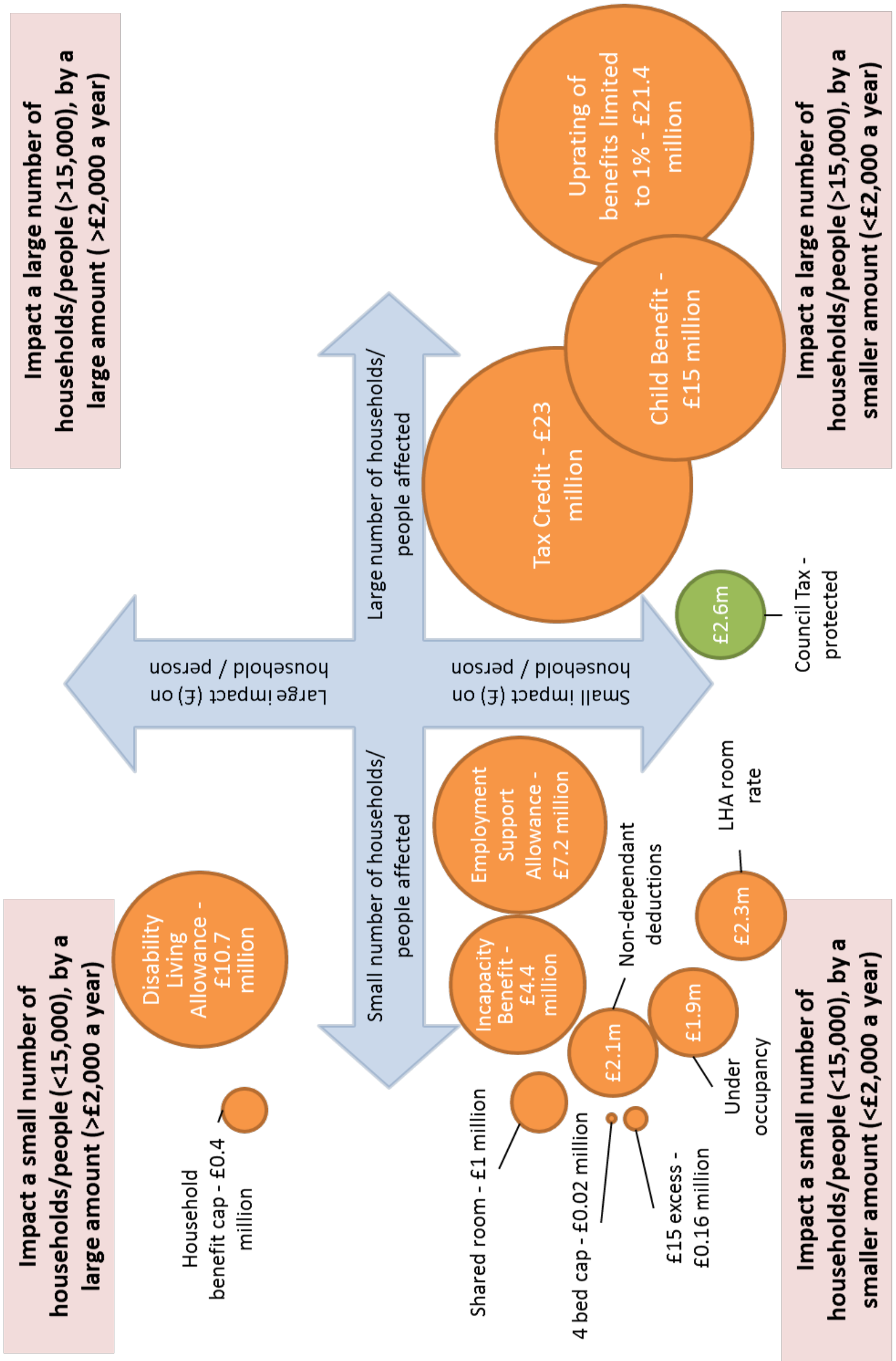
**3,160 work-related ESA claimants**  
ESA claimants on work-related activity aligned with JSA rate - noted to be a 30% cut

**Changes to Tax Credits**  
27,800 families in Coventry receiving an average £6,622 in CTC and WTC - IFS estimate the loss to be £1,000 a year to working people

**Frozen**  
All working age benefits frozen

# The Impact of Welfare Reform on Coventry

Note: size of the circle represents the impact on the economy



# Headline data for Coventry

- Both JSA and ESA sanctions have fallen after previous increases. Note that some of the JSA fall will be influenced by fewer claiming JSA.
- 2,053 (7%) fewer people claim housing benefit than two years ago. In 2011 17% of those claiming housing benefit were in work, this has risen to currently 24%.
- 8,020 residents had a ESA Work Capability Assessments between October 2010 and June 2014, 23% were found fit for work compared to 19% nationally.
- In May 2015 there were 3,483 PIP claimants, 43% were reassessments. The PIP award rate was 47% as of July 2015
- As of May 2015 there were 8,800 working age DLA claimants in Coventry
- Employment levels within the city have picked up in the last two years after seeing little if any recovery post-recession

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## Appendix 6

### **Report of Survey into the Impacts of Welfare Benefits Reform, November 2015 Wendy Eades, Postgraduate Research Student: Centre for Human Rights in Practice, University of Warwick**

#### **Introduction**

A Survey into the impacts of welfare benefit reform was developed, in conjunction with members of the Evaluating the Impact of Welfare Reform group, and distributed to people accessing local advice services and agencies over a 4-week period in March/April 2015. Services distributing the Survey were: Coventry CAB, Coventry Law Centre, the Job Shop, NW and NE Children's Centres, Whitefriars Housing Association and Coventry Independent Advice Service.

This Survey forms the initial phase of the research project 'Measuring the Impact of Welfare Reform on vulnerable people in Coventry'. The main purpose of the Survey was to identify people willing to participate in longitudinal research over the next 2 years to explore how welfare reform and public sector spending cuts have affected vulnerable individuals in the city, particularly those affected by cumulative changes to benefits. The Survey identified immediate findings reported on below (full statistical findings and full verbatim transcript of comments available).

This report was taken to the Coventry Partnership Welfare Reform Working Together Group in July 2015 and has been shared with other partner agencies contributing to the research.

The survey asked respondents to indicate which benefits they received, for how long, and if they had been affected by any of the key welfare reform policies implemented since April 2011 (the 'Bedroom Tax', Benefit Cap, migration from DLA to PIP or from Incapacity Benefit to ESA, benefit delays or benefit sanctions). They were given an opportunity to provide more detail about how the benefit changes had affected them. They were also asked about their awareness of Universal Credit and their access to, and confidence in using the Internet. Respondents were asked to describe their household, age group and ethnicity. Finally, they were asked to indicate their interest in being interviewed over 12-18 months.

237 people responded to the survey, including a good mix of ages and ethnic background (51% described themselves as White British/Irish, 15% African Black/Black British and 10% White European, 19% other ethnic categories). 110 respondents provided additional comments, most of which described adverse effects from benefit changes.

#### **Participants in Longitudinal Research**

108 (46%) of survey respondents expressed an interest in being interviewed about the impacts of welfare reform. In follow up telephone calls, 59 (25%) confirmed that they are willing to be interviewed.

Research is forecasting that those on disability benefits, young people aged 18-24 and lone parents with dependent children are likely to be particularly susceptible to the cumulative impacts of Welfare Reform, therefore the intention is to prioritise these client groups. 49% of respondents received disability benefits, 30% were lone parents and 14% young people, but a smaller proportion of the last two groups expressed interest in being interviewed, so agencies may be approached to ensure greater representation in those interviewed.

Initial interviews will be conducted January – March 2016. Repeat interviewees will be selected from the initial sample, incorporating an even spread of the priority groups. The same cohort will then be interviewed at least twice more over the following 18-month period and interim reports of findings from each set of interviews will be presented to the members of the Welfare Reform groups, culminating in a Final Report in 2017.

## **Survey Findings**

**1) Access to the Internet and confidence in using it** is becoming essential for individuals claiming benefits, hence its inclusion in the Survey. 70% of respondents stated they had access, either via a computer (59%), smartphone (38%) or tablet (14%), at home, but only 40% felt confident in using for to apply for jobs or benefits, or to manage personal finances. 7% said they didn't have access to the Internet and 8% couldn't or wouldn't use computers and were reliant upon help from friends, family or advice services to help them apply for benefits – 25% used their local library. An increase in the number of online benefit applications shouldn't therefore presuppose that all claimants will be able to complete them (and report changes in circumstance) independently. These findings rather suggest that the 'digital by default' policy espoused by the government may be problematic for many individuals and may place additional burdens on advice services.

**2) Awareness of Universal Credit:** Respondents were also asked about their awareness of Universal Credit: 54% did not feel well-informed about it and 26% did not feel they would be better off with it. 55% of respondents stated they did not know. Whilst unsurprising, given the timing of the Survey, the rollout of Universal Credit to Coventry in December 2015 indicates a need for urgent awareness-raising and preparation of potential recipients. Universal credit will impose more stringent conditionality requirements on working age claimants and require recipients to take more responsibility for managing their own finances, the implications of which need careful explanation.

**3) Effects of Benefit Changes:** A number of respondents commented on how the benefit changes had increased their stress levels and/or led to significant mental and physical health problems, particularly those already experiencing disability and poor mental health. 49% of respondents were on disability benefits specifically Employment Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, and many sought help from advice services because their benefits had been significantly reduced. Many respondents on disability-related benefits commented on how the changes to their benefits had increased their stress and anxiety:

"My wife is on Incapacity Benefit - threatening to stop benefit. I've had to go on antidepressants because of the stress caused by all of this. Still waiting for a letter about the Carers Allowance for wife." (DLA)

"I was found fit for work when I was assessed for ESA in 2013 and my money was stopped. I felt suicidal and saw my GP several times. I won my appeal but only got WRAG and appealed further." (ESA and DLA)

These kind of comments are associated with the complex and protracted cycle of migration from one type of disability benefit to another, and the requirements for reassessment or mandatory reconsideration of benefits, increasing levels of anxiety and stress on people with disabilities or chronic health conditions. This confirms the need to conduct further research into the 'lived

experiences' of this client group, who have been identified as particularly susceptible to cumulative adverse impacts of welfare reform by recent research. 16% of respondents stated they had experienced benefit delays, and 12% had been sanctioned. Some respondents described the seriousness of the impact of this on their lives:

"Claimed PIP 14/10/13. Award by tribunal 16/3/15 Long delay. Currently claiming JSA as failed work capability assessment & have appealed. Sanctioned for JSA as not available for work."

"I was on Incapacity Benefit of £136 per week despite being unfit for work this has now stopped due to the 365-day limit. Placed on Contributory ESA. I am £136 per week worse off since March 2014. Over £7000 per year."

#### **4) Effects of Bedroom Tax and Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support changes: 37**

respondents reported that they had been affected by the Under Occupancy Charge (or 'Bedroom Tax'). 11 commented that they had experienced the removal of, or reduction in Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support, and 13 respondents commented on how the Bedroom Tax had affected their finances significantly:

"My daughter has severe learning difficulties and autism, we cannot move house – consultant wrote a letter to Housing benefit but they've cut her money, leading to rent arrears..."

"Changed from ESA (over 4 years) to JSA and HB/CTB removed. Have come to CAB for help because of removal of HB/CTB I have gone into rent arrears and face eviction."

This suggests the need for continuing liaison between Benefits and Revenues department, social housing providers and DWP on decisions to remove or reduce Housing Benefit. Currently, the Council provides some advice and help to tenants on Housing Benefit at risk of eviction. It is unclear what advice and assistance will be provided in the future. Housing Benefit receipt is often dependent on entitlement to other working-age benefits:

"Failed work capability assessment ESA stopped Housing Benefit Council Tax Support stopped. Not well enough to claim JSA Once appeal accepted ESA not reinstated. Facing eviction."

"I have been receiving DLA Higher rate care & lower rate mobility. When reassessed for PIP I was refused both parts. When I transferred from IB to ESA I was only given WRAG but later moved to Support Group However my HB claim was disrupted. I almost lost my house & I was very ill & in hospital I have bipolar disorder & mental health problems"

The complex effects of these multiple changes on individuals' lives also speaks to the need to further develop a Vulnerability Index, in order to identify those claimants most at risk from cumulative benefit changes.

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## Welfare benefit related highlights in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement November 2015

### 1. Chancellor confirms that proposed tax credit cuts will not go ahead, but that welfare cap will not be met from 2016/2017 to 2018/2019

Chancellor George Osborne has today delivered his Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015.

Announcing that tax credit cuts that he'd set out in the [Summer Budget 2015](#) will not now go ahead, Mr Osborne said -

'The improved public finances allow us to reach the same goal of a surplus while cutting less in the early years. We can smooth the path to the same destination.

And that means we can help on tax credits.

I've been asked to help in the transition as Britain moves to the higher wage, lower welfare, lower tax society the country wants to see.

I've had representations that these changes to tax credits should be phased in. I've listened to the concerns. I hear and understand them.

And because I've been able to announce today an improvement in the public finances, the simplest thing to do is not to phase these changes in, but to avoid them altogether.'

- before adding -

'Tax credits are being phased out anyway as we introduce universal credit.'

As a result, the Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 confirms (at paragraph 1.122) that the tax credits income threshold will remain at £6,420 from April 2016 and the tax credits taper will remain at 41 per cent of gross income.

NB - however, as announced in the Summer Budget, the amount by which a tax credit claimant's income can increase in-year compared to their previous year's income before their award is adjusted (the income rise disregard) will still be reduced to £2,500 from April 2016.

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In addition, other welfare benefit and tax credit related measures set out in the Spending Review and Autumn Statement include -

#### 2.1 Universal credit (paragraph 1.123)

- [changes to the universal credit work allowances](#) will go ahead as planned in April 2016;

- the individual threshold in the Minimum Income Floor for the self-employed is updated in line with the National Living Wage.

## **2.2 Housing benefit** (paragraph 1.125)

- the amount of rent that housing benefit will cover in the social sector will be capped to the relevant local housing allowance, including the shared accommodation rate for single claimants under 35 who do not have dependent children - this will apply to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016, with housing benefit entitlement changing from 1 April 2018 onwards;
- from April 2016 housing benefit payments will be limited to four weeks for claimants who are outside Great Britain;
- additional discretionary housing payment funding will be made available to local authorities.

## **2.3 Employment support** (paragraph 1.129)

- universal credit will extend the same jobcentre plus support and conditionality that people on jobseeker's allowance (JSA) get to 1.3 million additional claimants;
- jobseekers will be required to attend the jobcentre weekly for the first 3 months of their claim and the more intensive support of the Help to Work Programme - currently for the long-term unemployed - will be brought forward;
- a new Work and Health Programme will be introduced after current Work Programme and Work Choice contracts end, to provide specialist support for claimants with health conditions or disabilities and those unemployed for over two years;
- spending on Access to Work will be increased.

## **2.4 Pensioners** (paragraphs 1.125, 1.133, 1.134 and 1.135)

- from April 2016, pension credit payments will be limited to four weeks for claimants who are outside Great Britain;
- the basic state pension will again increase by the 'triple lock', rising by £3.35 to £119.30;
- from April 2016, those reaching pensionable age will receive the new, 'single-tier' pension with a starting rate of £155.65;
- the single rate of the standard minimum guarantee will increase by £4.40 to £155.60 per week in April 2016, while the pension credit awards for those currently receiving savings credit will be frozen where income is unchanged.

2.5 Additionally, in relation to the welfare cap, the Office for Budget Responsibility, in its [Economic and fiscal outlook- November 2015](#), finds -

'Our central forecast shows that the terms of the welfare cap are set to be breached in three successive years from 2016/2017 to 2018/2019, with the net effect of policy measures raising welfare cap spending in each of those years, and to well above the 2 per cent forecast margin in 2016/2017 and 2017/2018. The terms of the cap are set to be observed by very small margins in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, with

spending above the cap but within the forecast margin and with the net effect of measures in those years reducing spending.'

Accordingly, Mr Osborne announced (paragraph 1.48) that -

'In line with the requirements of the Charter for Budget Responsibility, and consistent with the Parliamentary accountability for welfare spending intended by the cap, the government will bring forward a debate on a votable motion in the House of Commons.'

NB - the Chancellor also published the results of the [DWP's settlement at the Spending Review](#) which will see the department becoming smaller and more efficient, spending 22 per cent less on administration in real terms, 34 per cent less in real terms on technology and occupying 20 per cent less estate. The settlement also confirms that -

'As the numbers claiming benefits come down, spending on employment programmes can also be reduced. Total spending on employment will be reduced, including not renewing Mandatory Work Activity and Community Work Placements ...'

The [Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 and accompanying Treasury documents](#) are available from gov.uk

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## Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Scrutiny Work Programme 2015/16

<b>8th July 2015</b>
Teenage pregnancy
Child Sexual Exploitation Team including taxi licensing policy
Combined Authority Progress – standing item
<b>29<sup>th</sup> July 2015</b>
Council Plan – Performance Report
<b>9th September 2015</b>
Cultural Trusts Review
Female Genital Mutilation
Combined Authority Progress – standing item
<b>14th October 2015</b>
Domestic Violence and Abuse
Community Engagement and Individual Voter Registration
<b>21<sup>st</sup> October 2015</b>
Cultural Trusts Review
Ricoh Arena Railway Station
Combined Authority Progress – standing item
<b>4th November 2015</b>
Meeting not required
<b>9th December 2015</b>
Welfare Reform
Combined Authority Progress – standing item
<b>13th January 2016</b>
Council Plan Half Year Performance
Equalities
Domestic Violence Perpetrators commissioned service
Combined Authority Progress – standing item
<b>10th February 2016</b>
Coventry Strategic Objectives Plan for Children and Young People who are missing, at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation
Air Quality Action Plan
Annual Canvass Update
Combined Authority Progress – standing item
<b>24<sup>th</sup> February 2016</b>
City Centre Leisure Centre Development
Coventry – A Top 10 City
Marmot
Regulatory Services

<b>9th March 2016</b>
Coventry Drugs Strategy (2015-2017) – Review of Implementation Plan and update on the Family Drug and Alcohol Court
Alcohol strategy
Combined Authority Progress – standing item
<b>20th April 2016</b>
Crime and Community Safety performance
Combined Authority Progress – standing item
<b>Date to be decided</b>
<b>*SB1 and SB3</b>
Asset Strategy
<b>*SB1, SB2 &amp; SB4</b>
Impact of the restructure of People Directorate
<b>*Scruco and SB3</b>
Tourism and Events
<b>Next Municipal Year</b>
Progress on commissioned DVA services

Also if required dates: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Source	Outcomes
<b>8th July 2015</b>	Teenage pregnancy	Following an increase in conceptions in Coventry and a reduction in other areas of the country, the Board would like to look at progress and action in this area of work.	Nadia Inglis, Jane Moore Cllr Ruane		
	Child Sexual Exploitation Team including taxi licensing policy	To look in more detail at the new Child Sexual Exploitation team and the work to address child sexual exploitation, including taxi licensing following the Rotherham report.	Yolanda Corden Andrew Walster Cllr Ruane Cllr Townshend	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
	Combined Authority Progress – standing item	Progress report on Combined Authority, including the communications aspect	Jenni Venn Adrian West Fran Collingham Cllr Lucas	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
<b>29th July 2015</b>	Council Plan – Performance Report	This performance report summarises progress in 2013/14 in relation to the plans priorities and a set of key headline indicators. The Council's equality objectives have also been revised in light of the new Council Plan; the headline equality indicators have been included in this report. Reviewing the plan provides an opportunity to identify any issues of concern for inclusion in the Scrutiny work programme for the coming year.	Cllr Gannon Jenni Venn / Si Chun Lam	Annual report	Additional meeting to look at Coventry becoming a Top 10 City.
<b>9th September 2015</b>	Cultural Trusts Review	Outside bodies and Annual Report – look to hold meeting at one of the Trust venues	Cllr Maton David Nuttall		Item deferred
	Female Genital Mutilation	To monitor action plan and bring to Board if issues			Future reports to contain financial details particularly in regard to

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Source	Outcomes
					financial sustainability
	Combined Authority Progress – standing item	Progress report on Combined Authority, including the communications aspect	Jenni Venn Adrian West Fran Collingham	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
<b>14th October 2015</b>	Domestic Violence and Abuse	To include support to children who witness domestic abuse and also the rise in abuse from older children to their parents and grandparents.	Cllr Dr R Auluck Cllr Lucas		
	Community Engagement and Individual Voter Registration	To look at how members of the community can be involved and engaged in the work of the Council, including individual voter registration	Liz Read	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
<b>21<sup>st</sup> October 2015</b>	Cultural Trusts Review	Outside bodies and Annual Report	Cllr Maton David Nuttall		
	Ricoh Arena Railway Station	To look in more detail at the decision making process and also future development plans for the station	Cllr Maton Cllr McNicholas Colin Knight Mike Waters	Meeting 9/9/15	
	Combined Authority Progress – standing item	Progress report on Combined Authority, including the communications aspect	Jenni Venn Adrian West Fran Collingham	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
<b>4th November 2015</b>	Meeting not required				
<b>9th December 2015</b>	Welfare Reform	Further review of impacts of changes to welfare provision and the services provided by partners in the city.			



Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Source	Outcomes
		Including most recent changes announced.			
	Combined Authority Progress – standing item	Progress report on Combined Authority, including the communications aspect	Adrian West Fran Collingham	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
<b>13th January 2016</b>	Council Plan Half Year Performance	To consider the half year performance. Links to the item on a top 10 City.	Andy Baker		
	Equalities	To review the Council's annual equalities report and identify any priorities or concerns for future action or review.	Surindar Nagra	Annual review	
	Domestic Violence Perpetrators commissioned service	Following their meeting on 14 <sup>th</sup> October Members requested further progress on the DV perpetrators programme, including child perpetrators and referral/waiting times	Isabel Merrifield Cllr R Auluck		
	Combined Authority Progress – standing item	Progress report on Combined Authority, including the communications aspect	Adrian West Fran Collingham	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
<b>10th February 2016</b>	Coventry Strategic Objectives Plan for Children and Young People who are missing, at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation	An update from July to include an update and comparison of timescales and RAG ratings	John Gregg Cllr Ruane	Meeting 08/07/15	
	Air Quality Action Plan	An update on progress on the development of an Air Action Plan, following s briefing note to SCRUCO on 5/11/14, also to cover action	Hamish Simmonds	Scrucro 5/11/14	

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Source	Outcomes
		identified at the meeting on 5/11/14 including congestion and bus lanes.			
	Annual Canvass Update	At their meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> October the Board requested a progress report on the annual canvass, particularly in the context of the boundary review	Liz Read	Scruco 14/10/15	
	Combined Authority Progress – standing item	Progress report on Combined Authority, including the communications aspect	Adrian West Fran Collingham	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
<b>24<sup>th</sup> February 2016</b>	City Centre Leisure Centre Development	To look at the proposals for the new leisure centre and seek reassurances about the finances.			
	Coventry – A Top 10 City	Following the consideration of the Council Plan, Member requested more information on the measures and requirements for Coventry becoming a top 10 city. Members want to know what it would look like for Coventry to be a Top 10 City and how we'd know when we'd met the measures.	Cllr Lucas/ Andy Baker	Scruco 29/7/15	
	Marmot				
	Regulatory Services	At its January meeting, Scruco considered a pilot approach to reviewing risk levels and thresholds for intervention and how this could affect the way the service operates and engages with local people. It was agreed that the outcomes of the pilot and proposals for rolling this approach out be considered at a future meeting early in the 2014/15 municipal year.	Hamish Simmonds	Informal Scruco meeting 10/06/13 and Scruco 22/01/14	

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Source	Outcomes
<b>9th March 2016</b>	Coventry Drugs Strategy (2015-2017) – Review of Implementation Plan and update on the Family Drug and Alcohol Court	<p>Coventry Drugs Strategy was considered at the meeting on 4/3/15. The Board has requested that an update on the Implementation Plan be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Additional performance indicators on other projected benefits such as the links with domestic violence and abuse and how referrals have reduced the prevalence of illegal drugs</li> <li>2) Information on the use and effects of legal highs which are not covered by current misuse of drug laws but can have serious health risks, with legal highs being included in the strategy</li> <li>3) Details of the sharing of information between the partner organisations.</li> </ol> <p>SB2 also requested that progress on the Family Drug and Alcohol Court be reviewed at this point.</p>			
	Alcohol strategy				
	Combined Authority Progress – standing item	Progress report on Combined Authority, including the communications aspect	Adrian West Fran Collingham	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
<b>20th April 2016</b>	Crime and Community Safety	<p>To review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work of the Police and Crime</li> </ul>		Annual review	NB Need to check timing for this meeting

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Source	Outcomes
	performance	Board/ Community Safety Partnership; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performance for 15/16 and the emerging priorities from the strategic assessment; and</li> <li>• proposed Police and Crime Plan priorities, delivery plan and spending plan.</li> </ul>			
	Combined Authority Progress – standing item	Progress report on Combined Authority, including the communications aspect	Adrian West Fran Collingham	Informal meeting 10/6/15	
<b>Date to be decided</b>					
<b>*SB1 and SB3</b>	Asset Strategy				
<b>*SB1, SB2 &amp; SB4</b>	Impact of the restructure of People Directorate	To review whether the changes to the structure of the People Directorate have supported service improvement and savings targets.	Executive Director - People	SB2 Meeting 23 April 15	
<b>*Scruco and SB3</b>	Tourism and Events	Following on from the consideration by Scruco of the Tourism Strategy	David Nuttall Cllr Maton		
<b>Next Municipal Year</b>	Progress on commissioned DVA services	Following their meeting on 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2015, Board Members agreed to receive annual progress updates, including October 2016. To include contributions from the Police and Whitefriar's Housing.	Isabel Merrifield Cllr R Auluck	Scruco 14/10/15	