



# WELFARE RIGHTS *NEWS!*

The Welfare Rights Team are excited to launch our first issue of [Welfare Rights News!](#) We want to keep everyone updated on our activity and what our service can do to assist and serve the people of Perth and Kinross.

This issue looks at our activity from **April to June 2022**.

## NEW START & PROMOTION

We'd like to welcome Chris, Welfare Rights Officer to the team and congratulate Rebecca on her promotion from Welfare Rights Assistant to Welfare Rights Officer.

## BENEFIT GAINS

For the period **April to June 2022** we were able to verify **£1.4m** in benefit gains, that's *additional income* in the pockets of the people of Perth & Kinross.

The **top four** benefit awards were **Personal Independence Payment, Universal Credit, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance**.

## BENEFIT APPEALS REPRESENTATION

For the period **April to June 2022** we assisted our customers with **42 appeals**. We represented at **26** appeal hearings and another **16** appeals were revised without the need for hearing following our involvement.

Our overall success rate for the period was **78%**. Benefit decisions are always worth challenging if you think they could be wrong. Please get in touch and we'll advise.

## MACMILLAN SERVICE

As you may already know we provide an [enhanced welfare rights service to people affected by cancer, their family and their carers](#).

We received **87 referrals** and over **£600k** of our benefit gains went to households affected by cancer.



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## CONTACTS/REFERRALS

From **April – June 2022** we received **1458 contacts** from or on behalf of households that were looking for welfare rights assistance. This is a **37% increase** on the number of contacts we received for the same period last year (**913 contacts**).

Thanks to our colleagues in, IT the creation of our [online form](#) has made our service even more accessible!

The way people are contacting us has changed significantly, over half of all contacts are made using online methods (**54% compare with 36% for the same period last year**). That's a whopping **788 referrals** made to us using our online methods and more than half of the overall contacts we received.

## WELFARE RIGHTS FUNDS

We administer two payments schemes, the Council's [Financial Insecurity Fund](#) and the [Welfare Trust](#).

### The Financial Insecurity Fund

We've administered the Financial Insecurity Fund since its creation during December 2020. The scheme was expanded to include school dinner debt and other child-related debts in July 2021 following a call from a customer who was being pursued for her debt. To-date we have helped over **120 parents** and cleared around **£20k** of school dinner debt. Most of the parents were entitled to [Free School Meals](#) and so should not accrue debt going forward.

**Financial Insecurity Fund** – from April to June we received 350 applications and processed 303 awarding over £95k to eligible households.

**Welfare Trust** – Over the same period we received 113 applications and processed 108 to eligible households.

## WHO'S REFERRING TO US?

Most of the contacts we receive are **self-referrals**.

**Health colleagues** made **162** referrals to us and of those **91** were from **Maternity Services (Midwifery, Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership)**.

**Social Work and Housing** colleagues referred **135** households to us.



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We received **26 referrals for Ukrainian refugees** and **10 referrals** over the period from [Aberlour Sustain – Perth & Kinross](#) through our joint-working initiative, the “Tayside Hardship Project” – these are referrals for households where the children are “on the edge of care”.

**6 referrals** were for **Kinship Carers**.

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

We have well-established links with Partner organisations throughout Perth and Kinross and from April to June we caught up with some of our colleagues from out with the Council and we made some new links to increase our joint-working opportunities.

We want to encourage our **Partner Organisations** to invite us along to any events, team meetings or development days to **increase awareness** of what our service has to offer.

**Community Planning Partnership (CPP)** – we attended the CPP and made a commitment to delivering practical advice sessions to frontline workers from Partner Organisations.

The sessions will be delivered on the following dates and can be booked via [Eventbrite](#). Please encourage your colleagues to come along, spaces are limited!

**Interview with Researcher from Glasgow University** - The Team Leader was interviewed by a researcher from Glasgow University with regard to “*Covid-19 adaptations for migrant & minority ethnic clients*”. The researcher was prompted to contact us after she’d noticed our colleagues from PKAVS mention the work we’d undertaken in response to a factory closure in August 2020. She was looking for examples of local authorities providing inclusive responses to financial need. A follow-up interview has been scheduled for later in the year.

**Pink Saltire** - We agreed a seamless referral pathway using our [online form](#) and agreed that we’d support Pink Saltire’s Community Conversations campaign throughout Perth & Kinross over the summer.

**Perth Stronger Communities** - We delivered a presentation to the Perth Stronger Communities network to raise awareness of our service and how best to access us depending on the needs of the household.



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[Navigate Service](#) - We delivered a talk to families that use the Navigate service which works in partnership with schools and social work to support children's educational needs.

[PKAVS Carers talk](#) - We delivered a talk including a Q&A.

**Ukrainian working group** - We are actively involved in the Council's effort to support the Ukrainian refugees settling in our area.

**Murray Royal Hospital outreach** - We delivered an outreach surgery at Rohallion Ward at Murray Royal offering tailored advice to patients.

## WHAT'S COMING UP?

- Practical Advice sessions in response to the Cost of Living crisis to frontline workers (internal and external).
- Talk to Community Wardens – Practical Advice session on the Cost of Living crisis.
- Community Conversations – Pink Saltire.
- Involvement in research with Glasgow University.
- Health & Wellbeing café in Perth City Centre.
- Pulmonary rehabilitation clinic outreach.
- Talk to Elder Voices, Blairgowrie – older people.
- Talk to teaching staff at Coupar Angus primary school.
- Cornhill Unit, Perth Royal Infirmary to meet with staff and promote the enhanced service we provide to people affected by cancer.
- Talk to the Chinese Lunch Club.

## ESSENTIAL TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT & NETWORKING

### [Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers \(SNSIAP\)](#)

The team has had Type III accreditation for Welfare Benefits since January 2011. We successfully passed our Peer Review June 2021 for the SNSIAP for Welfare Benefits advice, which means that the quality of our casework is of a standard that we could seek re-accreditation to the Scottish Government's Standards. Our full audit takes place during July 2022. We are seeking re-accreditation at Type III for Welfare Benefits. If successful this means that we will be re-accredited to represent at courts and tribunals.



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## Training and development

We're committed to investing in our team and so we attended the following training:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Adult Disability Payment (ADP) Training – delivered by Social Security Scotland
- Severe Disability Premium – Transitional Protection – Universal Credit (UC) – delivered by Child Poverty Action Group

## FACEBOOK – PKC Welfare Rights Team

If you've reached this point on our newsletter then can you please like our Facebook page and share our page in any groups that you think may benefit from our service. We currently have over 4,300 followers, we have followers from throughout the UK (we seem to be firm favourites in Paisley and Aberdeen) and abroad and we don't want anyone missing out, so please follow us and share.

We share information on the benefit system including new benefits, changes to the benefit system and more.





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Thank you for taking the time to catch up with our activity. Hope you are all well and if you need us:

01738 476900 or [www.pkc.gov.uk/wrt](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/wrt) and we also have over 30 web pages dedicated to benefits information: [www.pkc.gov.uk/welfarerights](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/welfarerights).

Our **Annual Report** is also available here: [www.pkc.gov.uk/wrannualreport](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/wrannualreport).