

Welcome

This edition will update you on the Benefit Cap and Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

If there is anything you would like to see in future issues, please let us know. If you would like to receive this newsletter by email then please email us at welfarereform@kettering.gov.uk and put 'Subscribe' in the title. This email can also be used for any queries you have in relation to Welfare Reform.

Benefit Cap

The Government has announced, following a pilot in London, that the national rollout will commence in the Kettering area on the 15th July 2013 and all cases affected will have the cap implemented by the end of September 2013.

This change affects a very small group of customers, all of whom will have been written to by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and Kettering Borough Council will also contact all those potentially affected by the cap.

It is important if you are contacted by us or the DWP about the Benefit Cap that you respond so we can discuss your options as this change may result in a substantial reduction in Housing Benefit for affected customers.

Further details about the cap can be found at www.kettering.gov.uk/welfarereform

Personalised Independence Payments (PIP)

From the 10th June 2013 new claims to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) will cease for customers aged 16 – 64 and customers will need to start claiming PIP. This follows a Pilot that has been running since April 2013.

In order to claim customers must contact the PIP new claims number on **0800 917 2222** (textphone **0800 917 7777**).

The DWP has advised that during the pilot in April and May the initial call to claim PIP is quick and easy for the majority of people. They are only gathering a limited amount of basic information at this stage and it helps if people have the necessary information to hand - details can be found at www.gov.uk/pip.

If a claimant is unable to deal with the DWP over the phone, or can't get help to make the initial claim call, they can request that a paper PIP claim form is sent to them to capture the basic information necessary.

Customers currently receiving DLA will continue to do so, the migration of existing DLA customers to PIP is expected to take place from 2015 with a few exceptions being migrated earlier.

PIP Enquiries

For any other PIP enquiries, please phone the PIP enquiry line **0845 850 3322** (textphone **0845 601 6677**).

Updates

- The room restrictions changes are now fully in place and all affected customers will have received their notification detailing the amount of benefit they are receiving. It is important that affected customers make up any shortfall in their rent and if you are struggling to do this you must contact your landlord quickly to discuss your options.
- In March 2013 the government changed a couple of the rules around the exemption. Approved foster carers may be entitled to an extra room and in certain scenarios where a family member, who normally lives at home, is serving away on operations in the armed forces an extra room may be applicable. If you think that either of these scenarios affects you then please let us know.
- If you believe that we hold incorrect information about the number of rooms in your property please contact your landlord. All the data we hold on rooms has been verified with landlords and we can only look at amending that figure with confirmation from the landlord that a change or error has occurred.
- If you are claiming Housing Benefit or moving in the forthcoming months and want to know how the room restriction may affect you please contact us.
- Finally the new system of Council Tax Support is in place and customers have been made aware of the amount of Council Tax they now need to pay from the 1st April 2013. Again it is important that you make the payments required, or if you are struggling that you contact us immediately to discuss. If you make no payments and do not contact us, then you will incur further costs which will increase the monies you need to pay.

Questions

If you have any questions about the changes outlined above

Phone: **01536 410 333**

Email welfarereform@kettering.gov.uk

or call into any of our offices

Independent Advice

Independent advice can be obtained from the Citizens Advice Bureau which is now located in the main Council office on Bowling Green Road. To book an appointment, please visit or telephone **01536 482281** or you can contact Accommodation Concern who are located in Kettering and can be contacted on **01536 416560**.

Contact details

Kettering Borough Council

Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road,
Kettering, NN15 7QX

Tel: **01536 410 333**

Email: welfarereform@kettering.gov.uk or lcts@kettering.gov.uk

www.kettering.gov.uk/welfarereform or www.kettering.gov.uk/lcts