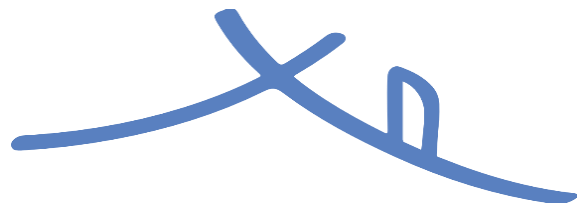


# Raise Benefit Bulletin



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## Case Study

Raise Bulletin by Raise Training 2022

## Client A – Welfare Benefits Team

### Client situation

The client's PIP had been reduced at review. She had been getting Standard rate daily living (SRDL) and standard rate mobility (SRM) but had been awarded just SRDL. The decision notice was dated 22/10/20. She has extreme anxiety, chronic depression, PTSD and epilepsy. She is in receipt of ESA in the support group and includes the severe disability premium.

### How did we help?

In May 2021 we supported the client by assisting them to request a Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) of the PIP decision. We did not receive a reply to this and we chased this up several times by letter over a period of 7 months. Our client's mental health was deteriorating drastically and we had to use our safeguarding procedures on several occasions as the client felt so stressed and suicidal.

At the beginning of January 2022 we sent a complaint to the DWP as they had not replied to any of our letters for 8 months as to the status of the PIP Review process. We outlined clearly the client's mental health state in the complaint. In mid February we escalated the complaint to the Partnership Manager and the Disability Advocates at the DWP. The next day the DWP contacted me by telephone and informed me that a Mandatory Reconsideration had been requested back in January 2021 which I was unaware of and the client could not recall doing this. However the DWP should have informed us of this so that we could take it to appeal stage. We had now missed the appeal deadline of 13 months since the decision was made and so we couldn't appeal this. The Disability Advocate at the DWP stated she would forward my complaint and see what PIP decide. They decided they would look at the MR and make a decision and if the decision was favourable consider how far to backdate the claim.

They also said they could request getting a vulnerable customer champion assigned to the client. This would offer support and aim to ease the PIP process journey.

Within 4 days of escalating the case we were called by PIP with a decision regarding the claim. They awarded the client enhanced rate of daily living and enhanced rate of mobility of PIP for an indefinite period, backdated to May 2021.

### What were the results?

So the client's PIP payments increased from **£60** per week to **£152.15** per week and she received a backdated sum of **£3200**. At the beginning of March the client also received a letter of apology from the DWP and £100 good will payment. The impact of the award on the client's mental and physical health cannot be underestimated as well as the impact on her financial situation due to the cost of her care needs.

***Client said 'I am truly truly grateful for you and the team. These are life changing benefits for me. My gratitude I cannot put into words. May you all continue to do the amazing work you do. You have made my life so less stressful Thank you.'***

***The client also made a £600 donation to Raise!***

## Client B – Debt Team

### Client situation

The client was referred to us by Torus for advice regarding arrears with rent and water. They wanted some advice on how to deal with the debts as the repayments were becoming unmanageable. The arrears accrued following a split with their ex-partner and they struggled to manage all the household bills on their own.

### How did we help?

We made an application for the arrears with United Utilities Trust Fund for help with the debt for water of £2984.47. And made a referral to our Welfare Benefits team for help with benefits as the client has health issues and may have been eligible for PIP which would improve their income moving forward.

### What were the results?

United Utilities Trust fund awarded **£2240.40** reducing the debt to **£744.07** payable by instalments going forward. We advised them to set up payment and see if any further reduction can be made to the payments. The client was happy with the outcome. They are still working with us on their welfare case, as their circumstances may change due to finding employment.

## Client C – Enable Team

### Client situation

The client was previously a volunteer leader of a community group and also a carer. The client was feeling very reluctant to try to gain employment as they didn't feel they had enough experience or skills. They had low self-esteem and were extremely nervous about making a new start.

### How did we help?

RAISE Enable Team through the New Horizons Project helped the client to develop their skills to gain confidence in the workplace environment, develop office based skills and also supported them with CV and interview skills, as well as support to gain employment. This was particularly useful when several temporary vacancies came up in Raise as Welfare Benefits form fillers for disability benefits. The client had not been a volunteer with Raise all that long but was still encouraged to apply. It had been a long time since they had had a job interview so they were a bit nervous about applying, but the support and encouragement they received from Raise staff was great so they applied.

### What were the results?

The client got the job!!!!!!

***Client said 'Now I am more confident and am keen for new challenges. I believe I will now continue to be a great asset for Raise as I can also relate to a lot of the clients, particularly those caring for others as I myself have been a carer for over 10 years. This has enabled me to be empathic as well as understanding of challenges people face. I am now more comfortable on the telephone/Zoom and I love meeting new people. I am more than willing to take on challenges, as well as learn and try new things. My aim is to gain valuable skills for my future employment. Participating in New Horizons has given me my life back. I am in full time employment and able to work independently in an office environment. I am now looking forward to the future and don't find it daunting anymore.'***

## Raise Enable Employment Support

The Enable Team are still looking for referrals from clients who require support with job search, applying for jobs, and finding suitable training to enhance their career and CV. If you have any clients who are interested please send details over to our admin team of Jamie, Aidas and Adam on [Enable@raiseadvice.org.uk](mailto:Enable@raiseadvice.org.uk)

Enable are delivering a Budgeting course online next week, then every Tuesday going forward subject to sign ups, so please refer clients. If you can think of any clients that would benefit from this please refer to Enable team and let Aidas, Tom or Jamie know.

To see more courses available [Training Courses - Raise Advice](#)

# Can you help?

## Enable are looking for venues to deliver Outreach Sessions

RAISE Advice's Enable Employability support team are looking for outreach venues to support unemployed clients in the Liverpool City region aged 18 to 60. We are a small local charity with a small amount of ESF and lottery funding, so ideally if we can use an existing space for free or at low cost these would be ideal, so we can save our funds to help clients back into work.

We are currently running our employability and budgeting sessions online, but with Covid guidelines lifting we are raring to get back to face to face delivery and regular drop ins with our clients. Ideally somewhere that has access to laptops or PCs would be ideal, so then we can fully support our clients with job search activities, as a lot do not have their own PC or laptops at home and struggle on smartphones.

If anyone can help us out we would really appreciate it please call Justina James on 0151 459 1556 or email [jjames@raiseadvice.org.uk](mailto:jjames@raiseadvice.org.uk)

# Raise Achievements, Successes and Client Feedback

## Welfare Benefits Team

**(Theresa Larkins – Welfare Benefits Adviser)** I have managed to get a non-dependent deduction wiped off for a Torus tenant. The client had accrued a lot of rent arrears as she couldn't afford to pay the shortfall.

**(Mike Summers – Welfare Benefits Adviser)** My client is a lone parent with young children. She recently made a UC application and mistakenly listed her children in the wrong place on her application. As a result, the DWP made a decision to apportion her UC housing costs element between 5 people and our client was only getting a fifth of the rent paid. She was accumulating arrears quickly. We contacted the DWP on her behalf and argued that the mistake should have been noticed and should be corrected. The DWP agreed and reassessed her housing costs element. As a result, our client is now getting all her rent paid and arrears were paid from the start of her claim [which had been several months previously]. This resulted in an extra **£382.25** Universal Credit per month and approximately **£1217** arrears being issued.

## Goodbye to Nicole

I am a Student Integrated Practitioner from Edge Hill University and I am on a Social Work Placement at Raise. I have nearly finished and I have learned so much. I have learned things that cannot be read in a book and I have learned things money cannot buy, but the main thing I have learned is how fortunate I am. So many people need our help and I have made a contribution in doing this. I have loved every minute here. I have met so many wonderful people, staff and clients. Everyone has made me feel so welcome and have supported me every inch of the way. I will always remember my time at Raise.

## Enable Team

**(Justina James - Employment and skills advisor & ENABLE team leader)**

"I've really enjoyed this session. I was nervous as it was my first time on a zoom call but everybody put me at ease. I liked the way everyone bounced off each other and gave each other tips and advice. My favourite part was just listening to other people's journeys and how they'll achieve it in the future. I'll definitely be coming next week!"

"The session helped me put a 'dream' into perspective and consider what is the motivation behind my career choice and the steps I need to take to get there."

"The session, particularly Justina's input over her career connections, helped immensely".

## News from Housing Systems

### Energy companies will not be able to request deductions from benefits for ongoing liability.

In response to the energy crisis, the government are going to suspend the ability of energy companies to make requests for Fuel Direct deductions for one year. Claimants will still be able to request them themselves. [Read more here](#)

## News from Rightsnet

### One in three universal credit claimants had more than one day in the last month where they didn't eat at all or had only one meal

As an urgent first step benefits should be increased by at least 7 per cent, keeping pace with increases in the cost of living. In the longer term, we need the government to introduce a commitment in the benefits system to ensure that everyone has enough money in their pockets to be prevented from falling into destitution.

### Equality and Human Rights Commission to require the DWP to improve its treatment of disabled benefit claimants

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has announced that it is drawing up a legally-binding action plan to require the DWP to improve its treatment of disabled benefit claimants. [Read more here](#)

## News from CPAG

### New analysis: families hit by two-child limit face additional £900-plus shortfall this year as costs spiral

Three-child families affected by the two-child limit face an extra shortfall in meeting the cost of raising their children of £938 this year because benefits are lagging behind the surging cost of living and they are only getting support for two children through universal credit, new Child Poverty Action Group analysis finds. The shortfall for families with more than three children affected by the policy will be greater. [Read more here](#)

## News from Citizens Advice

### No Recourse to Public Funds

No Recourse to Public Funds is a condition attached to work, family and study visas which restricts access to much of the welfare safety net for almost 1.4 million people, including around 175,000 children. This includes vital benefits like Universal Credit and child benefit and a range of other support like homelessness assistance or access to refuges that rely on public funds to operate.

Citizens Advice is asking the government to provide people building their lives in the UK with access to the welfare safety net, by removing the NRPF condition for those who are habitually resident here.

[Read more here](#)



# Raise Website & Social Media

Raise has a website! You can find us at [www.raiseadvice.org.uk](http://www.raiseadvice.org.uk) where you can find all the relevant information about Raise. We will also be publishing our monthly bulletin on our new site, however if you prefer a PDF copy, let us know and we can arrange it.

Raise Socials. Give us a follow and share on the links below.

[Raise Advice | LinkedIn](#)

[@RaiseAdvice | Instagram](#)

[@RaiseAdvice | Twitter](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/RaiseAdvice>

## Further support, information and training

Find all **Raise Benefit Bulletins** on our website <https://www.raiseadvice.org.uk/>

**CPAG** produce useful updates for professional in [Welfare Rights Bulletin](#). You can also sign up to receive the paper version at a cost.

The **DWP** produce useful items for professionals in [Touchbase](#): DWP news about work, working-age benefits, pensions and services.

**Newcastle Welfare Rights** provide [benefit bulletins](#) for professionals.

**Housing systems** also provide an [newsletters](#) for Housing Association professionals.

**Citizens Advice** produce useful updates via [Advisor](#).



## About Raise Advice

We are a charity covering Liverpool and the surrounding areas. We receive funding from Registered Social Landlords to provide welfare rights, debt and financial capability advice to their tenants. To make a referral please visit our [Referral Portal](#)

## About Raise Training

We have provided Welfare Rights training to Housing Associations since 2008. Please see our [website](#) for a list of training available. Our training is written with Housing Association tenants in mind and we use our clients to inform the content of all our training material. All of our training can be tailored to meet the learning requirements of your staff. If you wish to speak to us about bespoke training, please email us at [training@raiseadvice.org.uk](mailto:training@raiseadvice.org.uk)