



Ayr Housing Aid Centre

Welcome to Volume 2, Issue 1 of our Newsletter. In this Issue we are covering a range of matters. The picture on the right hand side is from the Farewell party to Sarah Bone (far right) who is off to pastures new. We all wish her and her family all the best in Australia and Haste Ye Back.



If you wish more information about our services please contact us:-

Tel : 01292 288111,

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Centre Update

It has been a busy time for the Centre with our First Home Service's merger and expansion.

Interviews were held and 2 members of staff have taken up Posts, see overleaf.

Universal Credit as it roles out in South Ayrshire will be a hot topic for all our Services. Please see article overleaf.

SERVICE NEWS

Advice, Information & Advocacy Team

Since the Centre's inception in 1987 Advice has been our core work. Along with advising individual service users we continue to give in depth and often detailed advice to various services, internally and externally.

Year on year demand for our services continues to increase from :-

978 cases from July 2012 - June 2013 to **1,031** cases from July 2013—June 2014 and it looks like we will open around 1,000 cases again his year.

This year we have seen an increase in the number of homeless cases coming to see us for assistance to appeal offers of permanent accommodation. However it should be noted that we only submit an appeal in cases where we consider there are strong grounds. Many service users who do not have appeal grounds are given full housing options advice and are advised of their rights.

Advice Service User Feedback

Made me feel more comfortable

Staff were very helpful and supportive

Helpful and considerate

Excellent and advisor was understanding

UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE

Universal Credit is a new, simpler, single monthly payment for people of working age bringing together the benefits and tax credits you might be getting now, whether you are in or out of work.

South Ayrshire's target date is Sept/Oct 2015 but we expect that single jobseekers will be affected first. If you are already claiming any of the below benefits, you should carry on as normal. You will be told when and if you need to do anything different.

Universal Credit will replace:

- ◆ Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- ◆ Income related Employment Support Allowance
- ◆ Income Support
- ◆ Child Tax Credit
- ◆ Working Tax Credit
- ◆ Housing Benefit

If you think this will affect you in the future there are things you can do now to make sure you are ready such as:-

Opening an appropriate type account— Universal Credit will be paid as a single, monthly payment into a bank account. You will need to have an account which can accept payments. If you get help with your rent you will start being paid this to your account. You may wish to ensure you can set up standing orders and direct debits to allow you to pay your bills quickly and on time.

Claiming online—You will need to make your Universal Credit claim and any amendments or changes online. If you are not confident using a computer to complete your form you may have to seek assistance.

Working People—There are no limits on how many hours a week you can work if you're claiming Universal Credit.

Instead, the amount you get will gradually reduce as you earn more, so you won't lose all your benefits at once.

For more information on Universal Credit, including planning and budgeting tools you may wish to visit:-

<http://ucpp.dwp.gov.uk/universal-credit-preparation>

<https://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/categories/universal-credit>

STAFF NEWS

We welcomed Suzanne Slavin, Advice & Tenure Sustainment Manager back from her Maternity leave on 16th April.

Fallon Heggie, First Home Officer joined the Centre from SeAScape on 7th April.

Joanna Wilson is now our Full Time Receptionist from 13th April.

The Centre is pleased to welcome 2 new members of staff, Lyndsay Lewis, Education and Engagement Team Leader and Melanie Goodwin, First Home Officer who have both started in their Posts.

Leica Malkin, Tenant Advice & Information Officer is now on Maternity leave.

COMMITTEE NEWS AGM

The Centre held its AGM on 28.1.15 for the period 1.4.13— 30.6.14. Alex Anderson presented the Chairpersons report, Ethel Riach presented the Treasurers report and John Mulholland presented the Chief Executives report. John stated "this has been a very busy period for the Centre in terms of cases opened and further service development."

David Burns, Head of Housing and Facilities from South Ayrshire Council gave an interesting presentation on a range of issues relating to National and Local housing matters. Following this there was a question and answer session prior to Alex thanking David and all who has attended our AGM.

Other Committee News

The Committee over the past 3 months has undertaken a major review of the Centre's structure taking into account further service development. Alex Anderson chairperson said "the time was right to consider how our structure operates and how this could be improved taking into account changes in our services over the past 3 years."



Please contact Suzanne Slavin, Services Manager for any further information on this publication.

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 Send a PM using our Facebook page

