



Ayr Housing Aid Centre

Welcome to Volume 3, Issue 3 of our Newsletter. In this Issue we are covering:

- Community Benefits
- Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Update on Universal Credit
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Staff News
- Committee News - AGM and new Committee Members

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

Tel : 01292 288111

www.ayrhousingaidcentre.com

E-mail - info@ayrhousingaidcentre.com

Ayr Housing Aid Centre has been involved in a number of community benefits including:

- ◆ Our People/Our Place
- ◆ Lochside Community Church
- ◆ South Ayrshire Beach Clean
- ◆ Collection point for Foodbank

We have a number of Staff Members who participate in Community Benefits in their own time. Some of the Charities they are supporting include:

- ◆ Breast Way Round
- ◆ Café Hope
- ◆ Friends of the Broadway, Prestwick

A big thank you to Staff and Management Committee for their help and support.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Centre held its AGM on 15th March 2018. The AGM was well attended. Detailed Reports were presented by the Chairperson, Treasurer, Chief Executive Officer and the Services Manager.

For further information on the AGM please see Section on Committee News – AGM.

Our Reports can be viewed on our Web Page at: <http://ayrhousingaidcentre.com/reports>



Update on Universal Credit

Since our last newsletter Universal Credit has now fully rolled out in South Ayrshire. This means that with limited exceptions everyone wishing to make a claim for housing costs and income benefits who are of working age will claim Universal Credit instead.

The following changes have been introduced:

Seven day waiting period removed:

The seven day waiting period will not apply to any new claims in South Ayrshire from 14/2/2018. This means that if Universal Credit is paid on time, claimants will wait five weeks for their first payment instead of six weeks.

Universal Credit Advances:

From January 2018, the amount a claimant could receive from an advance payment of Universal Credit increased from up to 50% of their estimated entitlement to up to 100%. Claimants are now able to receive an advance payment within five days of applying. The period in which the advance is recovered has also been increased from 6 months to 12 months

Universal Credit Scottish Choices:

People claiming Universal Credit and living in Scotland can now choose to:

- be paid either monthly or twice monthly; and
- have the housing costs in their award of Universal Credit paid direct to their landlord.

Housing Costs for 18-21 year olds to be reinstated:

On 29th March 2018, Esther McVey (The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions) announced that the Government will amend regulations so that all 18-21 year olds will be entitled to claim support for housing costs in UC. The date of this amendment is to be determined, and young people in this age group are being referred to the Scottish Welfare Fund for assistance in the meantime.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into force on 25th May 2018. The Centre has established a Privacy Notice for Service Users which can be viewed on our Data Protection Tab of our Website. We have introduced new Policies and Procedures and updated our current ones to reflect GDPR. The Centre is fully committed to the protection of all personal data that it holds. The Centre has designated their own Data Protection Officer, Karen Taylor.

Staff have been provided with full training and they will receive regular updates.

**You can contact us on 01292 288111 or
info@ayrhousingaidcentre.com or**

Send a PM using our Facebook page



Staff News - Prison Advice Service

This Service is part of the new Contract which commenced on 1st November 2017. We have welcomed 2 new members of staff to our Advice Team, Julie Madden and Emma Gaughan.

We have engaged with our new staff and partners to develop the service taking into account feedback from service users. WE have incorporated the Shore Standards into our procedures and look forward to developing the service further.

Committee News - AGM

At our AGM on 15th March 2018 Alex Anderson presented the Chairpersons Report, Ethel Riach presented the Treasurers Report, John Mulholland presented the CEO Report and Suzanne Slavin, Services Manager presented some core statistics and the Service User Feedback Report.

John commented - "There are many challenges ahead over the next few years for the Housing Aid Centre. The implementation of our new contract, welfare reform, changes to social and private rent sectors, homelessness and service development. Changing Data Protection Regulations will also provide challenges on how we hold personal data. There will of course be unforeseen challenges for the Management Committee which may impact on the Centre and the services we provide."

Some Service User Feedback:

The Centre values feedback from service user which are reported as part of our annual reporting cycle, outlined below are some comments from the 2016/17:

- "It was caring and made me feel at ease"
- "Warm, friendly, reassuring and very helpful"
- "I thought it was valuable. I was in a dark place and a bit lost and I was supported with care and respect, understanding with no judgement..... With help I got through it and I am more in control and my home is safe again"

Mark Willis gave a very informative presentation on the work of Child Poverty Action Group. His presentation outlined the impact of Universal Credit nationally and locally.

This was followed by a robust question and answer session. Thereafter Alex thanked the Speaker and all who attended.

Committee News - New Committee Members

The Centre welcomes 5 new Committee members who have volunteered . Alex Anderson said " it is great to welcome new members who I am sure will provide positive input and help develop the services we provide and the Centre for the future."