

# Disability Law Service

Fighting injustice for disabled people

## SPRING 2024 QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to Disability Law Service's – also known as DLS – quarterly newsletter.

Disability Law Service is a user-led Disabled Persons' Organisation which provides a free and vital service covering the areas of housing, community care, employment and welfare benefits to some 4,000 Disabled people each year. With almost half of people in poverty in the UK being a Disabled person or living in a household with a Disabled person, our free service improves access to justice and the protection of legal rights for Disabled people over the course of many years.

This issue contains updates from DLS, successful outcomes we've achieved for our clients and key developments in the sector.

### Updates from DLS

- Our team will be walking 10km on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024,. The London Legal Walk is the largest fundraising event, bringing together over 12,000 walkers in support of frontline free legal advice agencies. [You can sponsor us by clicking here](#)



### How to Find Us

[www.dls.org.uk](http://www.dls.org.uk) / [Facebook](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Instagram](#) / [LinkedIn](#)

Call us on 0207 791 9800

### Get Involved

You can make a vital contribution to the work we do at DLS by [volunteering](#), [donating](#), or by [receiving training from us](#).

## Updates in Welfare Benefits

### **Uplift To Earnings Threshold for Universal Credit Claimants**

The Department for Work and Pensions has announced, the amount of money you can earn before it affects your Universal Credit (known as the Administrative Earnings Threshold or AET) will change. From April 1, 2024, the earnings limits for Universal Credit claimants have changed. Single people can now earn up to £743 a month, and couples can earn up to £1,189 a month before it affects their Universal Credit.

### **Update to migration from legacy benefits to Universal Credit**

Starting in April 2024, the government plans to move people from Legacy Benefits e.g. Tax Credits to Universal Credit. This time, they will not be based on where you live but by the type of benefit you receive. No exact dates provided for when people who get Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Tax Credits will be moved, but they aim for all to be migrated by the end of 2024/25. People who only get income-related ESA, or ESA along with Housing Benefit, won't be moved over right away. They should expect to get their notices to switch to Universal Credit around 2028/29.

### Child Benefit

Starting April 6, 2024, there are significant changes to the high-income child benefit charge.

If the high earner in a family makes £60,000 a year or less, they won't have to pay this charge anymore. Previously, anyone making £50,000 or more had to pay if they or their partner got Child Benefit.

### Household Support Schemes

The government has extended the Household Support Fund for six more months from April 1st, 2024, with an extra £500 million. This fund helps families afford essential things like home repairs and appliances. Local councils will manage the fund, tailoring it to their community's needs. Some may work with organisations like Citizens Advice when distributing funds.



## Community Care Updates

We opened a legal aid community care case for a client in February 2023. The client has the impairments of epilepsy and autism spectrum disorder. The case is in relation to the support the client receives from the local authority. The client is unable to make decisions so we have been instructed by the client's parent. The client is a young adult and receives education support from home tutors. When we opened the case, the client was receiving 20 hours a week of support during term time and 40 hours a week during the holiday period when they were not receiving home tutoring. We wrote to the local authority and requested a review of the client's support plan. Following this review, the client's support was increased to 45 hours a week during both term time and the holiday period. We deemed that this still did not meet our client's needs. So, we appealed the local authority's decision. Following the appeal, the local authority has agreed to increase our client's support to 60 hours a week during term time and 70 hours a week during the holiday period. This is an increase of 40 hours a week during term time and 30 hours a week during the holiday period from when we opened the client's case. The client's family has told us that this increase will have a significant impact on the client and the whole family. We are continuing to assess if there are merits to further challenge the local authority's position.

### Community Care Success Story

Email of appreciation was received from the family member of the client who we opened a legal aid community care case.

*Family member in their email said;*

Dear Solicitor,

I am writing to express my gratitude for your consistent and comprehensive support that not only benefitted X, but all of our family. Because of your help, my husband can now work full-time to support our family, after many years of having to work part-time to support with the clients care. The uncertainty that I have endured for many years has been greatly reduced due to your mediation with the Local Authority, which has made a meaningful difference. It is easier to smile with these stress reduced. No words could truly express my appreciation.

Thank you again

**Our trainee solicitor and Justice First Fellow, Eleanor Finlay, was invited to chair a session on identifying discrimination, at the Public Law Projects anti-discrimination conference. The conference was co-produced by community activists using the law to fight discrimination and uphold their rights. Eleanor said that it was inspiring day, and she was able to connect with so many amazing people doing brilliant work in the area of social justice.**



## A Success Story from the Welfare Benefits / M5 Team

