



# East Renfrewshire Citizens

## Advice Bureau Weekly Update

09/06/2023

### Social Policy Feedback

At East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau our advisers record Social Policy Feedback on a vast range of different issues including Debt Benefits, Housing, Consumer and Utilities. This is only a small list of the categories our advisers see on a day-to-day basis as new concern can be brought to light every day. Our feedback is then sent over to Citizens Advice Scotland and allows them to see the extent of injustice in our society and they then can persuade people in power to make necessary changes to challenge these, their aim is to make recommendations on how policies or legislations could be altered or introduced that will make life better for our clients. A recent comment from Citizens Advice Scotland said "Thanks to the Social Policy Feedback submitted by your Bureau we were able to, for example, shine a light on the impact of the energy affordability crisis with additional energy needs due to health vulnerabilities. We were able to demonstrate that while temporary crisis support is necessary, there is an urgent need to recognise the underlying causes of the crisis and take a longer-term approach to solutions".

### Short Breaks

A short break (sometimes called respite) is a form of support which enables you to have time away from your caring routines and responsibilities. If your caring role meets local eligibility needs, the Local Authority have a legal duty to provide you with support. This may include short breaks. A short break enables you to experience new things, maintain friendships, rest and recharge your batteries. A break can include a holiday, a regular hour to yourself, daytime or overnight respite or with or without the person you care for. Some feedback from carers:

"From the minute we left our home to travel for the break we all felt relaxed, and I feel it greatly improved my mental health".

"A carer who is 50 years old cares for her mum who has dementia. Her health was deteriorating so she got a gym membership. This had a positive impact on her health and wellbeing.

The process for accessing short breaks, provided by the Council, is through an Adult Carers Support Plan or Young Carers Statement. For more information please get in touch with East Renfrewshire Carers Centre on 0141 638 4888.

### Good News Story

Client contacted the bureau regarding energy debt she had accrued with her previous supplier British Gas for £1300. The client is a single parent and lives with her five-year-old child at home. With one source of income, the client has been struggling with the rising cost of living and was unable to consider making debt repayments towards her energy supplier given that she was already paying more towards her current gas and electricity than in previous years. Between rising energy prices and a colder winter, the client's energy payments had become overwhelming and she was unsure if there was any support available for her. An energy adviser spoke with client and compiled all the information necessary to complete a Home Heating Support Fund. The client's application was successful and the energy grant offered to clear the entirety of the client's debts. The client was relieved to no longer have to worry about this debt and thanked the bureau for their support.

### Good News Story

Since March ERCAB have been offering a new outreach in Thornliebank to allow clients the opportunity to maximise their incomes and receive additional support towards the rising cost of living.

One client was encouraged by a friend to attend outreach just to check he was receiving all that he was entitled to. At his first appointment the client was sure there was no support further support accessible to him. The client is state pension age and had been working for several years up until he had a stroke early last year which immediately ended his employment due to health and safety concerns. The client's physical health deteriorated very quickly following his stroke and his wife began providing full time care for him. The client was not familiar with attendance allowance but with the help of an adviser, was able to apply for the form and later attended outreach to get help filling this out. The client recently got in touch to say that he had been awarded the lower rate of Attendance Allowance which he was delighted about. This gives the client an additional annual income of £3541.20. The client had been affected greatly by the loss of his job and said that this extra income would allow he and his wife some breathing space and give him the means to continue living as independently as possible. He thanked CAB for all the help and support offered throughout his application.

Clients can also get in contact with the bureau via:

**Email - [ere-bureau@eastrenfrewshirecab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:ere-bureau@eastrenfrewshirecab.casonline.org.uk)**

You can also keep up to date with recent news from ERCAB via our social media platforms. Please feel free to distribute the contact details for our advisers provided on our Facebook page.

Facebook – **East Renfrewshire CAB** & Twitter **@EastAdvice**