

# SOURCES OF SUPPORT + **SOLIDARITY** IN COVID-19 EMERGENCY

*Published by Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty*

The coronavirus pandemic means peoples' solidarity is more vital than ever. We cannot rely on politicians to protect us – they are the ones who cut the health service and care system, causing suffering through austerity.

In solidarity we publish this info, and welcome corrections and updates. **People not profit!**



## **SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND**

The Scottish government state: “£45 million will be added to the existing Scottish Welfare Fund which makes **Community Grants and Crisis Grants available to those in immediate need.** This more than doubles the current £35.5 million fund, which is administered by local authorities. They will be given more flexibility in how it is used to ensure they can fully support people in financial crisis, including workers in the ‘gig economy’.”

- **The guideline that Crisis Grants are normally limited to three per claimant per year has been scrapped.**
- You apply through local councils. The Scottish Welfare Fund can also do foodbank referrals. In Edinburgh call 0131 529 5299 or via <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/scottishwelfarefund>
- If knocked back contact ECAP for support and pressure your local councillors - see <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/council-democracy> - via FIND YOUR COUNCILLOR tab

## **FOOD DELIVERIES FROM COUNCILS**

The Scottish Government states some people designated extremely vulnerable can receive free food deliveries via councils.

Edinburgh: 0131 200 2388 [shielding@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:shielding@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## **WOMENS AID DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE**

0800 027 1234 Open 24/7 <https://sdafmh.org.uk/>

## UNIVERSAL CREDIT + BENEFITS

**The brutal Universal Credit system can't cope with hundreds of thousands of unemployed folk making new claims. The VERIFY ID system is a particular problem.**

- But you do NOT need to use Verify – DWP has alternatives to confirm claimant ID. When making a new claim instead of using Verify you can select the option “I cannot do this online“. You can then add a note to your UC Journal asking to get a telephone call-back to undertake your first new claim appointment. <https://mrfrankzola.wordpress.com/2020/04/07/facts-verify-and-universal-credit/> Great info on claiming benefits at this site. (search Frank Zola Wordpress )
- Universal Credit + Working Tax Credits increased by £20 per week till 6 April 2021. ***We must demand this continues!***
- DWP state: All requirements to sign on, attend appointments, undertake work preparation, undertake work search and be available for work are suspended till at least 30 June.
- Local Housing Allowance increased to cover at least 30% of market rents in each area

## BENEFITS RE-ASSESSMENTS SUSPENDED

**No new reviews across all benefits till at least 24 June–**

including Employment and Support Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance, Universal Credit, Attendance Allowance and Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

DWP state: **“Where awards are due to expire, we will be extending end-dates so that claimants continue to receive financial support at their current rate during this period.”**

- New claims for benefits can still be made online + by phone.
- All face-to-face assessments suspended till at least 17 June.
- Get support from ECAP to insist any new PIP claim is decided on the paper evidence, ask your GP etc for support.

## MORE NEEDED TO FIGHT POVERTY

**Groups like Child Poverty Action Group are pressing the government to do more**

The benefit cap and two-child limit need scrapped and to address the extra costs for parents from school closures, Child Benefit should increase by £10 per week.



## DISABLED PEOPLES RIGHT TO CARE

**In times of crisis the rights of disabled people are the first to be slashed, despite being amongst those most in need.**

- The emergency Coronavirus Act, say **Disability Rights UK**, amounts to a suspension of the Care Act 2014 and of parts of the Mental Health Act. It undermines the rights of disabled people to social care by removing the duty local authorities have to provide it. It also relieves councils of the duty to fulfil the social, health and social care needs listed in individual disabled pupils' education health and care (EHC) plan. **The Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill has similar measures.**
- **Inclusion Scotland** report care packages withdrawn by councils + DPAC denounce how disabled people instructed to self-isolate have been denied priority for food deliveries because they are not on the 'Clinically Extremely Vulnerable' Government list. DPAC are mounting a legal challenge.
- **The Scottish Human Rights Commission** insist the "COVID-19 Guidance: Clinical Advice" must explicitly forbid blanket policies for "Do Not Resuscitate" decisions + likewise must forbid "basing decisions to refuse access to critical care on the basis of age or mental or physical disability which is not clinically relevant to the prospect of survival."

**Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC)** <https://dpac.uk.net/>

## FOOD FROM VOLUNTARY GROUPS

- Many groups listed at <https://directory.evoc.org.uk/>
- **Milan** (charity) Delivering hot meals and food to elderly self-isolating 0131-475-2307 or 07835-333-978
- Drop-in foodbank Mon-Fri 12-2pm **Settlement Projects**, 34a Haddington Place, top Leith Walk 07805 274004
- **Scran Academy**: distributing free healthy meals to the vulnerable and those self isolating in N. Edinburgh/ Leith. 07496 850591 [johnloughton2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:johnloughton2000@yahoo.co.uk)
- **Mutual Aid**: "limited funds to help with essential food shopping" [mutualaidedinburgh@gmail.com](mailto:mutualaidedinburgh@gmail.com) FB @MutualAidEdinburgh
- N Edinburgh Community helpline 0131 356 0220 Mon-Fri 10–4

## FIGHT FOR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

**Workers must fight to get the right PPE needed to stay safe**

<https://iww.org.uk/news/working-in-social-care-during-covid-19-pandemic/>

## **SACKED? FIGHT FOR RE-INSTATEMENT**

**Many employers are not using the government furlough scheme which pays 80% of wages.** Better than Zero say:

- “ACT NOW – All workers who’ve been fired should get in touch with ex-colleagues and together contact ex-bosses to urgently demand reinstatement and 80% of salary that the government has said you are due.” Workers can pressure their boss to make up the wages to 100%. **Agency workers can often be eligible for the furlough scheme.**

Better than Zero <https://www.betterthanzero.scot/>

## **SHUT DOWN NON-ESSENTIAL WORK**

**To save lives we need to organise to force non-essential work to shut down. "They are killing us!"**

- Reel News say: “Enough is enough. Working class people are dying across all sectors because of being forced to do non-essential work, or because of not having the proper PPE as key workers. And the Labour party and trade union leaderships are completely complicit in thousands dying. It's time we took matters into our hands”
- In some countries workers are striking to force irresponsible employers to shut down non-essential workplaces. More collective action needed! <https://reelnews.co.uk/> @ShutTheSites

## **HOUSING – NO EVICTIONS**

Living Rent tenants’ union say: **“The Scottish Government has (finally) moved to ban all evictions following on from a successful campaign from Living Rent. ....**

- The legislation banning evictions will be in place for 6 months from April 1st ...and can be extended.... It applies to all tenants in Scotland in the private and social sectors. If your landlord tells you to leave your flat, you should stay put and refer them to the legal changes enforced during the Coronavirus crisis here. If they are still trying to make you leave - this is illegal – get in touch with Living Rent”
- Living Rent is fighting for a rent waiver for all tenants
- And demands landlords properly clean all communal areas  
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