

highriggshi-jinks

...because shit jobs are only a wee bit better than dying of starvation...

Benefit fraud makes you rich!

Just ask Emma Harrison...

Staff at the “Flexible New Deal” company A4E, which specialises in cramming jobseekers into cupboards and not letting them out until they find work, has been caught on the fiddle. In one case it **stole £15,000 of public funds** by sending people to temporary work and **faking papers to make it look like the work was permanent**.

Although it's our money they're spending, we aren't allowed to know how many more cases like this there are. It's "commercially sensitive".

But we do know that Emma Harrison (*left*), the owner of A4E, lives very well off of benefits. She has a **£40M fortune** and a 100 acre **country estate**. David Blunkett, twice-disgraced politician, unable to hold down a steady job, also does well out of benefits. He was getting **£30,000 a year** from A4E. (No-one knows what for.)

More stories about A4E at these websites:

- <http://newdealcomplaints.co.uk/>
- <http://www.freewebs.com/watchinga4e/>
- <http://a4ephotogallery.blogspot.com/>



Social Fund Loans to furnish your mansion

Inspired by MPs' expenses claims? The first person who applies to the Social Fund to have their moat cleaned gets a pint from us...

Solidarity

As the global profit machine suffers a spectacular smash-up, the rich are trying to make us pay for their greed. Don't put up with it! Join the ECAP solidarity network. When it's needed, we can alert all on the phone tree to turn up at the job centre – or wherever – to show solidarity with whoever is in trouble.

Being Investigated for benefit fraud?

If you're being harassed by “fraud” squad bullies – don't stand for it...

- Don't speak to them alone...
- Don't let them into your house...
- Don't sign anything without first getting advice...
- Don't allow them to tape-record any interview
- Make an official complaint if you are being harassed
- Get in touch with Edinburgh Claimants and ECAP at our Tuesday advice session.

Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty ecap@lists.riseup.net
<http://edinburghagainstopoverty.org.uk/> phone: 557 6242

They close in, we close ranks



If you've claimed for a non-existent mortgage, or for cleaning the moat round your castle then don't worry — as an MP the worst you'll get will probably be a lucrative golden pay-off.

But claimants struggling to get by are being threatened by the government's disgusting “anti fraud” propaganda campaign. If fraud investigators turn up at your door, don't let them in and don't speak to them. They have no legal power of entry.

Never go to a fraud interview alone, always take someone with you. Contact ECAP for advice and solidarity. We have supported people in several fraud investigations and they have ended without prosecution, sometimes without even any repayments.

A4E Fightback

Opposition to A4E in Edinburgh seems to be growing. We have received a report of a walk-out in protest by 14 claimants forced to attend the compulsory scheme for the unemployed at A4E's Edinburgh office. We recently met an A4E conscript on his way into High Riggs to complain that A4E were not providing him with any courses, placements or services of any use whatsoever.

And earlier this year, 15 protestors from Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty invaded A4E's Earl Grey Street office on 13 March to oppose their involvement in the repressive Welform Reform Bill.

Why we fight

A hotel worker supported by us recently won over £300 extra in final wages after the Company had underpaid on holiday and other pay due. For workplace solidarity check out the grass-roots union IWW — with an active Edinburgh Branch.

• edinburgh@iww.org.uk

Housing

Housing Benefit not meeting your rent? Claim Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) from the Council. If knocked back, contest the decision, put in a letter arguing why you need to be able to stay in your home. ECAP and claimant Sally recently succeeded in getting enough **DHP to cover the full rent** on her flat.

Spill the Beans!

Tell us your experiences signing on, at work, at A4E, with the benefits system. No names, anonymity guaranteed. We hold open drop-in advice and solidarity sessions every Tues 1-4pm at ACE.

ecap@lists.riseup.net

ECAP c/o ACE, 17 West
Montgomery Place EH7 5HA

What's the point of complaining?

This story came from someone we helped last month

I moved to Edinburgh and phoned the Bathgate claim centre before I was due to sign on, asked where I was supposed to go. They told me that they had to transfer my claim from the other office and I had to go to High Riggs for an interview.

When I arrived at High Riggs, they told me they there was a problem with my claim and tried to tell me I had to go home and phone the old office. I asked why they couldn't do it and they "let" me make the phonecall myself from downstairs.

Not surprisingly, the person that answered the phone at the old office didn't know what the problem was, or why it was me phoning them and not High Riggs. When I went back upstairs, they tried to make me sign a paper saying that I had signed off, when the only dates I'd missed had been because they messed up my claim transfer. It didn't matter that I

was explaining this to the manager politely, they wouldn't listen and soon walked away.

I had no active claim, no-one to talk to and had had no payments for a month. So I got in touch with ECAP.

They helped me write a letter of complaint to the District Manager. The next morning I got a phone call from the head office saying that they were investigating my complaint. The next time I went back to High Riggs I was seen straightaway by a Team Leader, they didn't ask any awkward questions and I haven't had any trouble from them since. Now when I sign on I'm in & out in 5 minutes flat.

I'd say to anyone having trouble with the Job Centre - get in touch with ECAP. It's definitely worth making a complaint, you don't have to put up with bullying or stupid procedures.

An open letter to DWP workers

Some of us sign on at this Job Centre, and we address you as fellow workers — unwaged workers who are surplus to the requirements of a greed-fuelled economic system. A year or two back the government proposed new legislation to reform welfare benefits in the light of their prophesied new age of full employment just beyond the horizon, the golden dawn of jobs for all, including the incapacitated, single parents, the active elderly... In the light of this false dawn many jobcentres were closed.

Now we are deep in the darkest economic crisis since the Great Crash of 1930. There are 10,000 jobseekers in Edinburgh alone, four to every vacancy, eking out an existence on a fortnightly pittance. There are no jobs for *them* let alone the incapacitated. And job-wise 'elderly' now means 'over 50.' Yet the new welfare legislation, designed for an era of prosperity, is still being mooted.

This is madness. We know your job is poorly rewarded, understaffed and thankless. You've enough to do already without having to implement 'jobs for all' legislation in a time of mass unemployment. Even the mainstream media have picked up on this paradox. Will Hutton of The Work Foundation recently branded JobCentre Plus as 'not fit for purpose.'

We would like to hear your side of the story, about work on the other side of the desk, your conditions, and so on. Complete confidence is guaranteed.