

Coronavirus and Welfare Benefits: Support available for Almond HA tenants

This is a concerning time for everyone. Many people are worried about how their income will be affected or already know that they are facing a loss of income. Almond HA has a dedicated **Welfare Rights Adviser**, Drew. He can help tenants to find out what their entitlements are and support tenants to access them. This service is provided by **The Action Group**, a charity accredited to the Scottish National Standards for Advice Services.

The delivery of the Welfare Right Service has been changed. To help keep everyone safe, the service is not being delivered face-to-face for the time being. However, Drew can continue to support Almond HA tenants using:

- Phone calls
- WhatsApp video calls
- Text messages and emails

Drew can:

- Give advice based on a tenant's specific situation
- Let tenants know what they are entitled to
- Talk tenants through what they need to know and how to do it
- Help tenants resolve any issues they are having with benefits, including challenging any incorrect decisions
- Help tenants to contact benefit agencies
- Help tenants to fill out benefit forms and applications if they are unable to do so themselves

There is only one adviser, so (with your permission) Drew may work with your housing officer and / or other services to make sure you have the assistance you need.

If you could benefit from this service, please contact your housing officer. If you are already working with Drew, please contact him as you usually would. You can call Almond HA's main office on **01506 439291** and leave a message to be passed and Drew will call you back. Please note that Drew works Monday to Thursday.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I am employed but I need to self-isolate. Will I still get paid?

A: You may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay [SSP] from day one of a sickness period. You may also be entitled to additional sick pay from your employer, depending on your contract. Self-isolating counts as a period of sickness, or not available for work.

Q: Do I still have to meet the job search requirements and work commitments for my current benefit claim?

A: If you are in receipt of a Welfare Benefit that has job-search requirements or work commitments, then a declaration of self-isolation will automatically mean that you are considered as not available for work and you should not be sanctioned for the two week isolation period. You should not receive requests to attend Job-Coach or any other Jobcentre+ meetings.

Q: How can I replace my wages if I am made redundant or my employer can no longer pay me?

A: You may be entitled to welfare benefits – see below.

Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance: You may be entitled if you are of working age and are looking for work [but not a student and do not have a medical condition limiting capability for work] and you have paid enough National Insurance Contributions over the last two years. You can claim online at: www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance/how-to-claim or by telephone on 0800 055 6688. You may be given a form to complete about the work you will be looking for and how you intend to go about getting it. The information you give forms the basis of your claimant commitment (or jobseeker's agreement).

You may also be entitled to Universal Credit. If so, a separate claim is needed.

Universal Credit: If you need financial help, including help with housing costs, you may be entitled to Universal Credit. You must satisfy some basic and financial conditions. A claim must be made online at www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit. If you need help to claim online, call 0800 328 5644.