**Conference Q & A**

* **Q: What does Holistic cases address? How does Holistic practice work?**
* **A:** When I say holistic (discussing Help to Claim Service) I refer to, that not only do Citizens Advice help with the claim, (staying until the first correct UC payment), but they will also work with the client to set up bank accounts, email addresses, help with ID, source other grants etc to help financially, DHP’s, deal with debt, money management, correctly inaccuracies in the new award; basically, exploring what the client requires. They can also make referrals for mental health support. Many Citizens Advice also manage the Household Support Fund for their area on behalf of the Local Authority.
* **Q: Any plans for DWP to make it easier for support staff to help their client?**
* **A:** I know from experience that it can be frustrating and restrictive on occasions for the DWP to deal with and accept Explicit Consent, but this has been raised with the DWP by advice organisations and I understand that the DWP is working to improve the explicit consent model. This is ongoing and the DWP are gathering data as to how it’s currently working in practice.
* **Q: Observation – Phone claims are poorly managed**
* **A:** I agree that it has often been very difficult to support my clients with offline claims, mainly to get the DWP to accept the need is real. With the Managed Migration if a client needs an Offline claim, it has been easier via the Migration Helpline rather than the UC Helpline. Without doubt further improvements would be welcomed.
* **Q: When will HB end when client transitioning to UC from ESA?**
* **A:** If the client is still in Specified Accommodation, then HB won’t end, it will continue. If the client has moved on to General Needs housing, then the HB claim ends with other benefits on Migration Day (day before entitled to UC). UC Housing Costs will then be paid with the first UC payment as any new claim is. Remember that there is a two-week run-on for legacy benefits (HB, ESA, JSA, IS)
* **Q: Observation – Informed Trauma – More accessible avenues for clients with Complex Needs**
* **A:** Agreed fully. I recognise that DWP has come a long way since 2012, however they are nowhere near what the clients, and us, need. It would be great if the DWP’s Trauma Informed approach was rolled out across UK and led to progress in this area, however when the basic need for privacy is only met in 30% of Jobcentres, they have a very long way to go!
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