it has added greatly to my overall knowledge …

information to give accurate advice

made a difficult subject accessible & understandable …

simplifying complex benefit issues

… really excellent trainer, lively

kept discussions lively and made sure understanding was thorough …

it was very engaging and for benefits that’s quite something

… an enjoyable day – relaxed and informal yet informative …

makes all info fun even if it’s dense, the exercises are fab …

… excellent trainer – clear – great sense of humour …

trainer possesses excellent inter-personal skills …

I thought this was one of the most professional
rightsnet welfare benefits training
april 2008 – january 2009

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PLEASE SEE PAGES 22 & 23 FOR COSTS AND BOOKING DETAILS  ●  www.rightsnet.org.uk/training
about Lasa and rightsnet training

Lasa has provided expert advice and information services since 1984 (see www.lasa.org.uk). A recognised centre of excellence and innovation, our welfare benefits support services are considered to be some of the best in the UK.

Billions of pounds in benefits go unclaimed each year and the connection between poverty and ill health/educational underachievement is well documented. All our courses are designed to enable advisers to spot benefit entitlement and maximise clients’ income.

Autumn 2008 sees the introduction of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). In order to maximise clients’ incomes it is important to ensure that they are receiving the correct benefit: we will continue to train on “claiming benefits as incapable for work” as it will enable advisers to identify who should be claiming and provide clients with protection from the new system.

Advisers need a broad set of skills to deliver effective advice to their clients. For advisers whose clients face multiple debts and low income please see our introduction to debt advice course, devised in response to trainees who told us they find this area confusing and don’t always feel confident when advising clients on debt. The course will increase your confidence and demystify basic debt advice.

Check out the website – www.rightsnet.org.uk/training – for news, or to subscribe to our email updates list.

Our welfare benefits training is CPD accredited (law society reference BMKL/LASA), and our trainers have extensive experience in providing expert social security advice and support to individuals and organisations.

who we train

Rightsnet welfare benefits training courses are designed to meet the needs of staff working in a wide range of organisations, including housing associations, local government and the independent advice sector. Most of our courses have a maximum of twelve participants. This ensures that everyone receives individual attention and allows trainees to share ideas and establish links with others working in the field.

Our introductory level courses are aimed at staff (paid or voluntary) working in either a supportive or advisory role with people claiming benefits; whilst our intermediate and advanced courses are aimed at specialist advisers. Some courses do require prior knowledge of the benefit system. Please see the course outlines for further details or ring us on 020 7377 9981.

venue and access

Training courses take place at Lasa’s fully equipped training room. For details on the location and transport see the map on the back cover. Lasa training facilities include: access and toilets for disabled people, an induction loop and parking for disabled people. Parking must be arranged at least 2 days before the course. We can also provide course materials and this programme in alternative formats. If you require parking, or have any other access requirements please let us know when you book.

standard course times

9.30am refreshment and registration
1.00 – 2.00pm lunch break (lunch not provided)
4.30pm end

regional training

Lasa rightsnet will shortly be announcing its regional training programme.

Please check the website for more details or contact the training team on 020 7377 9981, email training@lasa.org.uk

free telephone helpline providing support on welfare benefit queries after the course

We don’t abandon you after your initial training. In addition to information and access to the rightsnet website discussion forums all trainees gain access to our welfare benefits advice line.

in-house training

All of our programmed courses can be delivered in-house. If you have a group of up to 15 people requiring the same training course we can provide in-house courses tailored to your organisation’s needs. We can deliver the course at your premises or alternatively you can come to us and use our training room.

Prices for in-house courses start at just £1200 a day. Please ring us on 020 7377 9981 if you would like to discuss purchasing an in-house course.
equal opportunities statement
Lasa recognises that certain groups and individuals are disadvantaged and discriminated against because of the way that society is structured. Lasa is committed to equality of opportunity, taking positive steps to ensure that we do not perpetuate this discrimination.

how to book
Prices are on page 22.
For our booking form, please see page 23.

not sure what course is for you?

does your job involve...?

providing basic advice and/or spotting entitlement

helping people to complete forms and/or checking claims and maximising entitlement

appealing decisions and/or taking cases to tribunals/commissioners

welfare benefits overview plus our other introductory courses

other single subject introductory courses plus our intermediate courses

tax credits – the problem areas plus our intermediate courses plus our advanced courses

If your job involves all three levels of advice:
we suggest that you start with the introductory courses and progress to the advanced courses.
welfare benefits overview

This is THE essential course for all new and returning staff working in an advisory or supportive capacity with benefit claimants.

who this course is for:
Anyone whose work requires them to have an understanding of how the benefit system works, how to spot entitlement and/or practical skills for dealing with the DWP or local authority benefit offices. No prior knowledge of the benefit system is needed.

what this course is about:
Attending this course will increase your ability to maximise your client’s income by spotting entitlement to benefits and by demystifying the working of the benefits system.

We know that the benefits system is confusing – for advisers and clients. This essential one day course will enable you to know the basic conditions for benefits, which benefits can be paid together, help you to maximise your client’s income; how to check the relevant handbooks to find out more information and understand how benefits are administered. The aim is to increase your awareness of opportunities to maximise your client’s income and demystify the workings of the benefit system.

new to advice?
Check these courses – practical solutions to common benefit problems, income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, housing benefit, the social fund, introduction to debt advice and disability living allowance/attendance allowance.

dates
• Level: Introductory
• CPD Hours: 5

practical solutions to common benefit problems

who this course is for:
If you are a more experienced adviser we recommend you attend the challenging benefit decisions course (see page 16).

what this course is about:
This course looks at some of the most common problems that advisers face: we look at the information, skills and knowledge needed to find practical ways of overcoming problems.

If your job involves helping people to make claims, chasing the DWP, the local authority or the Revenue when things go wrong (eg claims not being paid and missing payments) then this is the course for you.

At the end of the course you will be able to identify under-claiming of benefits, understand what evidence is needed to support a claim and know how to formally challenge a wrong decision and take forward a complaint and request for compensation.

providing basic advice?
Check these courses – introduction to debt advice, income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, housing benefit, the social fund and disability living allowance/attendance allowance.

dates
• Level: Introductory
• CPD Hours: 5
who this course is for:
Workers who advise or support people claiming income support and/or income-based jobseeker’s allowance.

If you work primarily with either 16/17 years-olds or people over 60, we recommend that you attend our benefits and young people course (see page 11) or our pension credits course in addition to this course (see page 7).

what this course is about:
Are you confused about why different people are paid different amounts of benefit? Are you unsure about when people can claim income support and when they need to claim income-based jobseeker’s allowance? And while we’re talking about JSA what are those labour market conditions all about? What about child tax credit – when and how does that fit in?

On this course you will learn who is eligible and how to make a claim. We’ll make sense of applicable amounts and equip you with a framework to calculate entitlement and identify when people are being underpaid. You will also learn about the labour market conditions and what steps claimants need to take to avoid being sanctioned and lose money. By the end of the course you will feel confident when advising clients on whether they are entitled to income support/income-based jobseeker’s allowance, how they can claim and how much they should receive.

maximising people’s income?
Check these courses – pension credits, housing benefit, the social fund, tax credits, claiming benefits as incapable of work, challenging benefit decisions, backdating benefit awards and disability living allowance/attendance allowance.

who this course is for:
Staff advising older people on eligibility for benefits, particularly pension credit.

If you have very little knowledge of the benefit system we recommend that you attend our welfare benefits overview course first (see page 6 for details).

what this course is about:
Do you work with or advise older people? Are you confident about advising them on their eligibility to claim pension credit? Do you understand how it interacts with other benefits people might be receiving such as carer’s allowance and housing benefit?

This course will give you the knowledge to answer all these questions positively. This course will enable you to successfully identify who is eligible to claim pension credit, advise on how to claim and correctly carry out pension credit calculations – both the guarantee and the savings credit.

An estimated 2.9 billion pounds of benefit are not claimed by people over 60. This course will enable you to maximise your clients’ incomes and reduce the huge amount in benefits under-claimed by older people each year.

advising older people?
Check these courses – housing benefit, the social fund, disability living allowance/attendance allowance and community care and benefits.

pension credits
tax credits

who this course is for:
Staff working in an advisory or supportive capacity with families and/or people in low paid work.

what this course is about:
Working tax credit and child tax credit were introduced in April 2003 to provide support for most working people on a low income and families with responsibility for children and it forms a major part of the Government’s strategy to “make work pay”.

This course will increase your confidence when advising on tax credits. The course covers who is eligible for tax credits, when and how to claim, what changes in circumstances need to be reported (and when) during the claim and how to calculate tax credits. We will also look at how to maximise entitlement, minimise overpayments and how tax credits interact with other benefits.

working with families and/or people who work?
Check these courses – housing benefit, income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, the social fund, domestic violence and benefits, maternity rights and benefits, benefits and looked after children, in and out of work and disability living allowance/attendance allowance.

dates

Monday 12th May
Friday 11th July
Thursday 18th September
Tuesday 18th November
Wednesday 21st January

Level: Introductory
CPD Hours: 5

housing benefit

who this course is for:
Staff needing to advise clients/tenants on whether they can claim housing benefit and how much they are likely to receive.

*If you have very little knowledge of the benefit system we recommend that you attend our welfare benefits overview course first (see page 6 for details).*

what this course is about:
Do you want to feel confident about advising clients on housing benefit entitlement and the amount they should receive? Then this course is for you, whether your role is income maximisation, rent arrears minimisation or a bit of both.

We ensure that, by the end of the day, you will know how to identify who is eligible for housing benefit and how to make an effective claim. This includes accurately checking the start date of a claim and how to claim backdated housing benefit. In addition you will learn how to carry out an accurate assessment of a client’s entitlement, using a step-by-step framework for calculating housing benefit. This will allow you to identify when clients are being underpaid or are not claiming the housing benefit they are entitled to.

maximising people’s income?
Check these courses – pension credits, income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, the social fund, benefits and offenders, claiming benefits as incapable of work, challenging benefit decisions and disability living allowance/attendance allowance.

dates

Friday 2nd May
Tuesday 8th July
Thursday 11th September
Friday 12th December
Wednesday 28th January

Level: Introductory
CPD Hours: 5
who this course is for:
Staff working in an advisory, supportive or resettlement role with people claiming benefits.

If you have very little knowledge of the benefit system we recommend that you attend our welfare benefits overview course first (see page 6 for details).

what this course is about:
The Social Fund should be a vital source of help for vulnerable people on low incomes, but getting a successful decision can often appear to be based on luck and chance. A number of myths have grown up around the Social Fund which can put people off applying and some groups of clients may be less aware of the Social Fund and could miss out on large amounts of money.

Social Fund decisions must be made on certain criteria, so it’s important to show how your client meets the conditions. Attending this course will increase your chances of gaining positive decisions by learning what these criteria are, how to apply the rules to your clients and what information they need to give.

You will learn about the full range of payments available from the Social Fund, with a particular emphasis on understanding and improving applications for crisis loans and community care grants. You’ll learn more about challenging social fund decisions.

You will feel confident about advising clients on entitlement to Social Fund payments and helping them to make effective applications, plus exercise their rights to challenge Social Fund decisions.

providing basic advice?
Check these courses – welfare benefits overview, introduction to debt advice, income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, housing benefit and disability living allowance/attendance allowance.

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who this course is for:
Staff working in an advisory and/or supportive capacity with clients who are ill and/or disabled.

Staff attending will be expected to have a working knowledge of means tested benefits, including how to calculate applicable amounts. If not we recommend that you attend the income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance course first (see page 7).

what this course is about:
Autumn 2008 sees the introduction of employment and support allowance (ESA) and radical changes to benefits for people claiming incapacity benefit or income support as incapable of work.

A successful claim for incapacity benefit or being treated as incapable of work for income support can protect benefit levels for people moving in and out of work and can increase a tax credit award. By getting clients into the current system you will be maximising their income and helping to protect them from the new system.

This course will enable you to identify what benefits people incapable of work can currently claim, who is eligible and how to identify underclaiming (for example single parents often miss out on being classed as being incapable of work), how to pass the relevant tests and how to advise people being “tested”.

advising ill/sick or disabled people?
Check these courses – income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, community care and benefits, disability living allowance/attendance allowance, challenging benefit decisions and preparing a case for an appeal.
disability living allowance and attendance allowance

who this course is for:
Staff who work in an advisory or supportive role with people with disabilities/health problems that lead to care and/or mobility needs and who may be entitled to disability living allowance/attendance allowance. If you work with people with mental health problems – see below.

If you have very little knowledge of the benefit system we recommend that you attend our welfare benefits overview course first (see page 6 for details).

what this course is about:
Disability living allowance and attendance allowance are important ways of maximising income but are often not claimed due to misconceptions by advisers and clients (for example many people think that they cannot claim these benefits if they are working).

A successful claim can increase a person’s income by between £17.75 to £150 per week and can be the “key” to claiming other benefits and/or increasing awards: but potential claims are often not identified or claims result in low awards or refusals.

This course will enable you to identify who is eligible for DLA/AA, how to complete the long and confusing application forms (and hopefully increase your success rate), how to ask clients the right questions to get information and what evidence is needed (and from whom).

advising ill/sick or disabled people?
Check these courses – income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, housing benefit, claiming benefits as incapable of work, community care and benefits, employment and support allowance, preparing a case for an appeal and challenging benefit decisions.

dates

- Level: Introductory
- CPD Hours: 5

Friday 11th April
Friday 13th June
Monday 1st September
Wednesday 12th November
Friday 30th January

dla/aa for people with mental health needs

who this course is for:
Staff who work in an advisory or supportive role with people who have mental health needs, whose clients may be entitled to disability living allowance/attendance allowance. Please note that there is some cross-over material in both of the DLA courses.

If you have very little knowledge of the benefit system we recommend that you attend our welfare benefits overview course first (see page 6 for details).

what this course is about:
Claiming DLA or AA is always problematic, but when it comes to people with mental health needs, there’s an added set of complications. Clients may fail to acknowledge there are any issues for them or perhaps do not have any insight into their needs.

This introductory level course explores how people with mental health needs (which may fluctuate), can satisfy the disability tests for DLA/AA. We think about ways to prepare clients for the often stressful task of completing the claim form. We look at techniques to encourage full disclosure of information, without making clients feel worse about their condition.

We also think about where to get supporting evidence from (particularly if your client is not in contact with mental health services), and which evidence may be the most useful.

We explore the knock on effects that a successful disability living allowance/attendance allowance claim has on other benefits.

advising ill or disabled people?
Check these courses – income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, housing benefit, claiming benefits as incapable of work and community care and benefits.

dates

- Level: Introductory
- CPD Hours: 5

Tuesday 3rd June
Tuesday 25th November
disability living allowance for children

who this course is for:
Staff working with children and families in an advisory or supportive role.

what this course is about:
A successful claim for disability living allowance improves a family's financial situation – regardless of whether they are already claiming benefits or working. A successful disability living allowance claim has a positive "knock on effect" on means-tested benefits and increases the amount of benefit paid.

The rules around claiming DLA for children are different than for adults and advisers need to be aware of the different types of additional care a child needs to be awarded DLA. This course will cover these rules: the basic milestones in childhood development and obtaining supporting evidence and information needed to support the claim.

working with children?
Check these courses – the social fund, benefits and looked after children, income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, maternity rights and benefits, tax credits and housing benefit.

dates

Wednesday 8th October

Level: Introductory
CPD Hours: 5

benefits and young people

who this course is for:
Staff who work with young people (16/17 year olds) in an advisory or supportive role. Advisers who want to increase their benefit knowledge for this client group.

If you have very little knowledge of the benefit system we recommend that you attend our welfare benefits overview course first (see page 6 for details). As part of the course you will be asked to complete exercises that are based on your knowledge of the benefit system.

what this course is about:
The rules covering benefits for young people are often completely different from those for over 18s. Advisers confident about advising other client groups are often unsure of the rules for this group. Support workers specialising in working with young people are often not confident about advising on benefits. So young people, desperately in need of advice, often fall through the gaps in the system and in an adviser's knowledge.

This course is a step towards correcting that. You will learn the eligibility conditions young people face when claiming income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance and severe hardship payments, and how to advise them to make a valid claim, including the roles that the different organisations play in making a claim. We look at the importance of accessing other money, including applications to the Social Fund. You will also learn about HB restrictions due to the new Local Housing Allowances for young people and how discretionary housing payments can sometimes help and how to apply for them.

working with young people?
Check these courses – housing benefit, the social fund, benefits and looked after children, domestic violence and benefits and introduction to debt advice.

dates

Wednesday 4th June
Tuesday 15th July
Wednesday 10th September
Thursday 20th November
Tuesday 29th January

Level: Introductory
CPD Hours: 5

PLEASE SEE PAGES 22 & 23 FOR COSTS AND BOOKING DETAILS  www.rightsnet.org.uk/training
benefits and looked after children – the implications of moving in and out of care

who this course is for:
This course is essential for family placement, social workers, Sure Start, inclusion staff and welfare rights advisers. This is an introductory course suitable for those who want to know more about how benefits advice can enhance your role in improving the lives of children in care. It's also suitable for more experienced advisers who need to know more about the Children Act.

what this course is about:
This course will give an overview of how benefits and tax credits are affected when children and young people move in and out of care. We will also explore the tax relief and benefit options for foster carers and how benefits are affected if a carer applies for Special Guardianship.

The course includes:
- how to maximise benefit entitlement for families whose children are at risk of moving into care, including disabled children
- the effect on family benefits when a child moves into care
- the benefits and tax credits available to foster carers, including family/friend foster carers and caring for a disabled child
- how payments made to families and foster carers under the Children Act 1989 are treated as income for tax credits and benefits
- the benefit and tax credit implications for foster carers applying for Residence, special Guardianship or adoption order
- potential benefit entitlement for 16 and 17 year olds leaving care.

working with families?
Check these courses – the social fund, tax credits, maternity rights and benefits, disability living allowance for children and domestic violence and benefits.

domestic violence and benefits

who this course is for:
Benefit advisers, social services staff, housing officers, helpline workers, counsellors/therapists, medical professionals and anyone who works in a supportive or advisory role with members of the public affected by domestic violence. The course assumes a basic knowledge of the benefits system.

what this course is about:
It's estimated that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. Even if your work doesn't directly address domestic violence issues, the chances are that you already work with people who've experienced domestic violence, or will do in the future.

This course looks at some of the financial considerations of a domestic violence situation, and what benefit options may be available. Providing the correct benefit advice can be crucial in enabling people affected by domestic violence to make informed decisions about leaving violent relationships and what steps to take.

The course will cover financial help available in an emergency, and what help is available to pay rent, council tax and a mortgage – and what happens if as a result of temporary absence, payments need to be paid on more than one home.

We will look at what benefits are available when a person (and their children) has fled domestic violence and the impact on any existing claim. If it is a child or young person who has had to leave home, we will look at the potential problems and what support is available. The course also looks at the longer-term decisions that need to be taken.

working with families?
Check these courses – tax credits, the social fund, income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, housing benefit, young people and benefits, benefits and looked after children and maternity rights and benefits.
community care and benefits

who this course is for:
Benefit advisers, housing support workers, social services staff and anyone who works in a supportive or advisory role with people who need help to live independently in the community.

what this course is about:
There are many different ways in which care and support can be provided in the community. Some of these are free but some may be charged for.

This course helps you to identify what care is available, who can provide it and what can be charged for. It explains how to request community care assessments and, if necessary, how to challenge them.

Charging can vary enormously from one area to another. The course examines the guidance covering charging policies and some of the reasons for local variation. It looks at the different benefits available to help maximise a client’s income and how these may be taken into account when assessing charges. It also considers ways to effectively challenge charges.

working with ill/disabled people in the community?
Check these courses – disability living allowance/attendance allowance courses, housing benefit, the social fund, pension credits, claiming benefits as incapable of work, employment and support allowance, disability living allowance for children and income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance.

benefits and offenders

who this course is for:
Advisers, housing support workers, drug and alcohol support workers, social services staff, probation services staff, youth offending team staff and anyone who works in a supportive or advisory role with offenders and their families.

what this course is about:
Going into prison has a major impact on prisoners and their families’ situations: imprisonment often affects a family’s financial situation and can impact on what welfare benefits people are claiming/can claim.

The interaction of the benefits system and sentencing has a wide variety of effects upon the money available to offenders and to their families.

This course will enable you to:
- identify what benefits are available to offenders and their households
- understand the different types of sentences
- understand the impact of different types of sentences on benefit entitlement
- maximise income for prisoners.

working with prisoners and their families?
Check these courses – income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, housing benefit, tax credits and the social fund.
maternity rights and benefits

who this course is for:
Midwives, health visitors, Sure Start Children’s Centre staff, staff working in a supportive or advisory role with pregnant women or new families. The course does not assume any prior knowledge of benefits or employment rights.

what this course is about:
This course covers the basics of employment rights for pregnant women and new parents and provides an introduction to the benefits available before and after the birth of a child (eg Sure Start Maternity Grants). The course looks at employment rights during pregnancy (including rights to time off for ante-natal care), financial help in pregnancy, maternity leave and pay and paternity leave and pay.

The course also covers options for non-working parents (including the role of the CSA) and if someone is returning to work we look at what benefits are available and their employment rights regarding flexible working, parental leave and time off for dependants.

working with families?
Check these courses – tax credits, the social fund, income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, housing benefit, young people and benefits, domestic violence and benefits, disability living allowance for children and benefits and looked after children.

introduction to debt advice

who this course is for:
Staff working in an advisory or supportive capacity with clients who need advice on dealing with debt.

what this course is about:
Do the people you work with need help to deal with their debts? Are you worried about whether the advice you are giving is correct? Do your clients often have multiple debts and low incomes? This course will give you the knowledge you need to help people out of the mess debt puts them in. The course will provide you with a money advice model to help get to grips with debt, including the knowledge to correctly identify priority and non-priority debts. You will learn what steps creditors can take when people don’t pay their debts and how clients can respond. You will also have the opportunity to draw up a financial statement and write a money advice letter to a creditor using real case studies.

providing basic advice?
Check these courses – welfare benefits overview, income support and income-based jobseeker’s allowance, housing benefit, tax credits and the social fund.
who this course is for:
Staff working in a supportive/advisory role with clients in a community care or residential setting whose personal care is currently funded by local authorities (or self-funded by the client) and where funding for personal care may or should be transferred to National Health Service funding.

what this course is about:
This course looks at recent developments in the provision and funding of community care services. We will look at how changes in funding affect state benefits and how to calculate any over or underpayments that may arise as a result of transfers in funding.

For some clients these changes may mean that personal care should be fully funded by the NHS; attending the course will enable you to identify who should receive full NHS funding. However, some clients may be financially disadvantaged by changes in funding and we will examine what to do in such cases and whether legal advice may be needed.

working with ill/disabled people in the community?
Check these courses – disability living allowance/attendance allowance, community care & benefits, the social fund, claiming benefits as incapable of work and employment and support allowance.

who this course is for:
Experienced advisers working with clients who want to return to work or are being encouraged into work.

People attending this course will be expected to have a working knowledge of the benefit system and the ability to carry out calculations for all means tested benefits including tax credits. You will be asked to complete exercises that will be based on this expectation.

what this course is about:
The last few years have seen unemployment fall and a growing emphasis on the “benefits” of working. This course looks at all aspects of working and benefits – how working impacts on “out of work” benefits; how to use linking rules to protect benefit levels for people who move in and out of work; what schemes and help are available when starting work; what benefits people can claim while working and how to do a “better off” calculation.

We will provide you with a calculation sheet for doing “better off” calculations and consider the non-benefit issues that affect people’s decision to return to or start working.

working with families and/or people who work?
Check these courses – housing benefit, the social fund, tax credits, benefits and looked after children, claiming benefits as incapable of work, employment and support allowance and introduction to debt advice.
tax credits – the problem areas

who this course is for:
Experienced advisers already familiar with the eligibility criteria and the tax credit calculation.

We recommend that advisers who are not confident in either of the above attend the introductory tax credits course first.

what this course is about:
Tax credits are often problematic for claimants and despite changes that have been introduced they remain a problem (and often a mystery) for many advisers.

While this course will not give you all the answers to your problems it will allow you to identify ways of providing more pro-active advice, understand how and why problems arise and ways to maximise client’s income and help to minimise overpayments.

We look at doing the more complicated pro rata calculations, the choices and options that people have when leaving or starting work and how overpayments occur and how to ask for a write off.

taking on difficult cases?
Check these courses – challenging benefit decisions, preparing a case for an appeal, housing benefit overpayments, backdating benefit awards and representation at appeal tribunals.

dates


challenging benefit decisions

who this course is for:
Staff working with people who claim benefits and who help them deal with problems and need to challenge benefit decisions.

A working knowledge of benefit rules is required.

what this course is about:
So you identified what your client can claim and helped complete the necessary forms, but it’s not gone according to plan? Your client has returned to you with a letter from the DWP/local authority that says something you disagree with. Your client could have been turned down on grounds you think are incorrect or the dates or amount of benefit seems wrong. We all know that the benefit system makes mistakes but how do you go about challenging them?

If you are sometimes unsure of what steps to take – for instance whether to ask for a revision or a supersession – then this course will help. You will learn how to deal effectively with poor decision-making by the DWP and local authorities by first knowing how to check whether a decision is correct and then selecting the most appropriate procedure to challenge the decision. We also cover what information will ensure the best possible outcome for your client.

By the end of the day you will be confident that you know the correct procedures for challenging decisions, how to get poor decisions changed and how to maximise clients’ incomes.

taking cases to appeal?
Check these courses – preparing a case for an appeal, housing benefit overpayments, backdating benefit awards and representation at appeal tribunals.

dates


who this course is for:
This is an intermediate level practical course for advisers who are ready to prepare cases for appeal and have a good working knowledge of the benefit system.

This course does not include representation skills (see course on page 21).

what this course is about:
Do you feel daunted by the thought of preparing a case for appeal, sorting through all the information and then putting together a written submission?

This course will increase your confidence and give you the necessary skills to identify the relevant legal questions to be answered and the facts to prove the case.

This practical course uses a real case to develop the techniques for pulling together the facts and the law into a coherent written submission for the appeal.

You will look at how to obtain and evaluate evidence and who to obtain it from. By the end of the course you will be able to plan and prepare a written submission for an appeal tribunal.

taking cases to appeal?
Check these courses – challenging benefit decisions, housing benefit overpayments, backdating benefit awards and representation at appeal tribunals.

backdating benefit awards

who this course is for:
This is a practical and participative course that aims to ensure that advisers know the rules on backdating for all benefits and can confidently argue for backdating of a range of benefits in a variety of situations.

what this course is about:
Making a claim for benefit at the right time can be problematic. Often ill health, caring responsibilities, bereavement, wrong advice or just plain lack of knowledge of the benefits system can cause delays in claiming. Getting benefit backdated is essential for maximising a client’s income but the rules are complex. Are you up to date with the backdating rules?

This course looks at the existing rules for backdating benefits and tax credits and the changes being introduced in October 2008. Participants will have the opportunity to look at the legislation and caselaw relating to backdating and apply these to a number of case studies throughout the day.

taking cases to appeal?
Check these courses – challenging benefit decisions, preparing a case for an appeal and representation at appeal tribunals.
employment and support allowance

who this course is for:
Staff working in an advisory and/or supportive capacity with clients who are incapable of work, ill and/or disabled.

People attending this course will need to have a working knowledge of the benefit system, particularly incapacity benefit and how means-tested benefits are calculated.

what this course is about:
In autumn 2008 employment and support allowance will be introduced. It is an integrated contributory and means tested allowance and will replace incapacity benefit and income support paid on the grounds of incapacity and sickness.

The contents and criteria of the new benefit are fundamentally different to the current eligibility system.

This course will cover the structure of Employment and Support Allowance, the eligibility criteria, the assessment phase, sanctions, safeguards and work focused interviews, what happens to existing claimants and transitional protection, the personal capability assessment and appeals.

working with ill/disabled people?
Check these courses – claiming benefits as incapable of work, DLA/AA, tax credits, income support/income-based jobseeker’s allowance and housing benefit.

dates

- **Level:** Intermediate
- **CPD Hours:** 5
who this course is for:
This course is aimed at advisers who challenge housing benefit overpayment decisions.

what this course is about:
All of the current legislation and the most important case law in this subject area will be covered. The course will also look at how to identify the key facts and evidence in each case.

Topics covered will include:
- what is an HB overpayment?
- are overpayments recoverable – and from whom?
- arguments against recovery
- establishing the facts and the onus of proof
- checking a valid decision has been made.

The course will be both participatory and practical.

taking cases to appeal?
Check these courses – challenging benefit decisions, preparing a case for an appeal and representation at appeal tribunals.

who this course is for:
This course is for advisers who are ready to prepare and represent cases at appeals or for people who already represent but would like to increase their confidence, skills and success rate.

A working knowledge of the benefits system will be assumed as exercises are based on understanding conditions for benefits and the administrative system.

It is essential that participants are able to attend the full two days.

what this course is about:
Representing at appeal tribunals can make even experienced advisers feel nervous. This course will increase your confidence by providing you with a structure for preparing cases allowing you to practice the skills necessary for presenting a case at tribunal.

A practical course, it is highly participative and gives you the opportunity to develop your analytical abilities and practice your presentation and advocacy skills. You will spend the two days learning the skills needed to prepare and present a case from beginning to end. You will look at how the law is structured, how to use reference materials, weigh up evidence and the balance of probabilities, through to the appeal system procedures including adjournments. You will also have the opportunity to take part in a mock tribunal.

The course is very demanding but hugely enjoyable. At the end of the two days you will feel confident when advising on the appeal system and procedures, you will know how to use the law and the necessary reference books, and how to prepare and present a submission including obtaining and using evidence.

taking cases to appeal?
Check these courses – challenging benefit decisions and preparing a case for an appeal.
benefits for people subject to immigration control

who this course is for:
Advisers working with people who are “subject to immigration control” (including asylum seekers).
People attending this course will be expected to have a working knowledge of the benefits system.

what this course is about:
Immigration status and benefits can be (and often is) hugely complicated. This course addresses and answers many of the queries we hear from advisers on this subject. Who is “a person subject to immigration control” and what counts as “public funds”? What are the exceptions to the rules? And what happens when families have mixed immigration status?
By the end of the course you will understand who is subject to immigration control for benefits and feel confident advising people who have family members subject to restrictions, overstayers and others. For advising residents from the EU please see our The right to reside and habitual residence tests course (below).

dates
Monday 14th April
Thursday 25th September
Monday 19th January

the right to reside and habitual residence tests

who this course is for:
Advisers working with clients from the European Union.
People attending this course will be expected to have a working knowledge of the benefits system.

what this course is about:
Your client’s EU status has allowed them to enter, work or study and live in the UK. Problems often arise when they fall sick, have children or only earn very low wages and need to claim benefits to survive.
This course covers:
● the right to reside and habitual residence test; how these tests operate for different benefits and who is exempt from them
● what restrictions apply to accession state nationals
● how changes in circumstances impact on residence rights and benefits
● application of relevant EC regulations
● domestic legislation.
We will look at current case law and the possible arguments that can be used to help your client establish a right to reside and habitual residence.
This course will ensure that you are able to correctly advise clients from the EU on their rights to benefits and identify and challenge incorrect decisions.

dates
Monday 16th June
Tuesday 5th August
Tuesday 14th October
Monday 17th November
Thursday 18th December
Tuesday 20th January
still not sure what course is for you?

If you are new to benefits or returning to benefits after a break we recommend the welfare benefits overview course (page 6): this course is suitable for all advisers whether you specialise or provide general advice and will give you a good basic understanding of the benefit system. We have grouped our other courses to help you decide which are right for you.

General advice/all client groups
- Practical solutions to common benefit problems
- Income support & income based jobseeker's allowance
- Pension credits
- Housing benefit
- Introduction to debt advice
- The social fund
- Tax credits
- Disability living allowance/attendance allowance
- Equality; the law – delivering services to diverse communities

Working with clients with disabilities/health problems
- Income support & income based jobseeker’s allowance
- Pension credits
- Housing benefit and housing benefit overpayments
- The social fund
- Tax credits
- Disability living allowance/attendance allowance courses
- Community care and benefits
- Tax credits – both courses
- Challenging benefit decisions
- Preparing a case for an appeal
- Representation at appeals tribunals
- Employment and support allowance

Working with older people
- Pension credits
- Housing benefit and housing benefit overpayments
- The social fund
- Disability living allowance/attendance allowance courses
- Community care and benefits
- Challenging benefit decisions
- Preparing a case for an appeal
- Representation at appeals tribunals

Working with people in low paid employment
- Housing benefit and housing benefit overpayments
- The social fund
- Disability living allowance/attendance allowance courses
- Tax credits – both courses
- Maternity rights and benefits
- Challenging benefit decisions
- Preparing a case for an appeal
- Representation at appeals tribunals
- Domestic violence and benefits
- In and out of work
- Benefits and looked after children

Working with families/young people
- Income support & income based jobseeker’s allowance
- Pension credits
- Housing benefit and housing benefit overpayments
- The social fund
- Tax credits – both courses
- Maternity rights and benefits
- Domestic violence and benefits
- Benefits and offenders
- Benefits and looked after children
- Benefits and young people
- Introduction to debt advice
- Challenging benefit decisions
- Preparing a case for an appeal
- Representation at appeals tribunals
- Disability living allowance for children

Working with people from abroad
- Benefits for people subject to immigration control
- The right to reside and habitual residence tests
how to book

availability:
Some courses fill up quickly so if possible please give an alternative date in case your first choice is not available. You can check availability by calling the training team on 020 7377 9981: if a course is full the date will not be shown on the website.

how to book:
Please use the booking form on page 23: photocopy the form and complete one form per person attending each course. The form can be returned by post or fax (020 7247 4725) – or you can send the booking form via the website www.rightsnet.org.uk/training
Please note – we do not take telephone bookings and we reserve the right to refuse bookings.
Before booking please read the transfers and cancellations policy.

how to pay:
The course costs depends on the type and size of your organisation. On the booking form tick the box that matches your organisation and enter the corresponding amount.
Please do not send payments with your booking. We will invoice your organisation as soon as we confirm availability and cost: the invoice will include BACS details. We would appreciate payment as soon as possible.
If there is a problem with the cost or the course we will contact you. Course confirmation and a map to the venue are sent 7–10 days before the course takes place: please ensure that we have the correct email and postal address for contacting participants.

transfers and cancellations
- please read this carefully before booking a course
If a participant cannot attend a course a colleague from the same organisation can take their place. Otherwise transfers are not possible once a course is booked.
Cancellations must be made in writing: if we receive a cancellation within 20 working days of the date of the course the full fee remains payable.
For cancellations received more than 20 working days before the date of the course, we will give you a credit note for another course or a full refund. There is an administrative charge of £30.

course costs per person attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Voluntary organisations with 1–10 full time members of staff (in the whole organisation)</th>
<th>Voluntary organisations with 11–50 full time members of staff (in the whole organisation)</th>
<th>Voluntary organisations with 51+ full time members of staff (in the whole organisation)</th>
<th>Other organisations e.g. statutory/local authorities, lawyers etc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One day</td>
<td>£110</td>
<td>£150</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>£200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two days (RAT course)</td>
<td>£190</td>
<td>£280</td>
<td>£370</td>
<td>£370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please do not send payment with your booking. We will invoice you.
rightsnets training booking form

Please photocopy this booking form for each participant, and for each course. Please complete in block capitals. Alternatively you can send your booking via our website at www.rightsnet.org.uk/training

Name of participant: _______________________________________________________________________________________

Job title: ________________________________________________________________________________________________

Organisation: ____________________________________________________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________

Tel: ___________________ Fax: ___________________ Contact tel ________________________________________________________________________________________________

Invoice name, address and email address: _____________________________________________________________________

--------------------------------

course title

date (1st choice): ______________________________________________________________________________________

date (2nd choice): ______________________________________________________________________________________

Which London borough does your organisation serve? ________________________________________________________________________________________________

Do you have any access requirements? Yes* ☐ No ☐

*We will contact you to discuss.

Your organisation Please tick one

Voluntary: 1–10 staff ☐ 11–50 staff ☐ 51+ staff ☐

Others (e.g. statutory/local authorities, lawyers etc.): ☐

Do you intend to claim Law Society accreditation for attendance? (only applicable to lawyers) Yes ☐ No ☐

(Law Society ref: BMKL/LASA)

transfers and cancellations – please read this carefully before booking a course

If a participant cannot attend a course a colleague from the same organisation can take their place. Otherwise transfers are not possible once a course is booked.

Cancellations must be made in writing if we receive a cancellation within 20 working days of the date of the course the full fee remains payable.

For cancellations received more than 20 working days before the date of the course, we will give you a credit note for another course or a full refund. There is an administrative charge of £30.

Please invoice my organisation for the amount of: ________________________________________________________________________________________________

Purchase order no: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Post or fax this form to:
Rightsnet Training
Lasas, Universal House
88–94 Wentworth Street
London E1 7SA
Fax: 020 7247 4725

If you do not want to receive future mailings from us, please tick. ☐

For office use only

Invoice no: ____________________________________________________________________________________________

Invoice date: __________________________________________________________________________________________

Database ref: __________________________________________________________________________________________

Date entered: __________________________________________________________________________________________
In addition to the courses listed in the programme we can also provide in-house training on:

**dla/aa for people with drug and alcohol problems**
This can be a difficult area – advisers often feel uncomfortable about the idea of clients having more money to spend on drugs and alcohol. This introductory level course looks at the rules for claiming DLA – and about “risk reduction” from having more money not less!

**taking cases to the commissioners/identifying errors of law**
This advanced level course is for advisers who represent at appeals and are unsure about how to take a case to the commissioners or for people who already take cases but would like to increase their confidence. This course involves identifying errors of law.

**developing your interviewing skills**
Advising people is based on the information provided by clients: this information may (for a variety of reasons) be unclear and this course looks at how to ask questions, listen and be an effective interviewer (this does not look at the interviewing skills needed for recruitment)

**training for trainers**
This 3 day course looks at the skills needed to be an effective trainer. The course covers learning styles, how to plan a course, making your subject interesting, dealing with difficult people/situations, what aids to use and how to put it into practice!

**managing difficult people and situations**
This 3 day course aims to help you understand, address and work with difficult people and situations in a productive and objective way using a variety of techniques and approaches.

If you need training and it’s not listed: please ring (020 7377 9981) or email in your requirements (training@lasa.org.uk); we may well be able to provide it for you.
With millions of visits every year from advisers across the UK, rightsnet – lasa’s welfare rights website – provides access to the most up-to-date welfare benefit and tax credit information on the web.

Updated daily, rightsnet offers –

- **news** – more than 800 news stories are published to the site each year, with links, within 24 hours of their issue, to new legislation, case law and court decisions, official guidance, and policy documents

- **discussion** – dedicated forums where advisers across the country meet to share their experience and expertise, and access support with their cases

- **resources** – hundreds of leaflets and factsheets, free benefit calculators, claim forms, summaries of the latest commissioners’ decisions, benefit rates, advice related job vacancies … and more!

“By far the fastest, cheapest and most user-friendly way to keep right up to date … a brilliant way of sharing information, resources and solutions to problems”

“As essential to the job as the Welfare Rights Handbook – I can’t imagine being without it”

“Transforms welfare rights advice … It’s absolutely brilliant”

“Seems to get better each week”
independent consultancy for your information and communication technology (ICT)

- **Free initial advice.** We offer an initial one hour meeting, with no strings attached, at our central London premises to explore your needs and define the project.
- **Independent.** We are an independently funded organisation, so we can give you unbiased advice about just how much or how little you should spend, and what you should spend it on.
- **Understanding of your needs.** As a Voluntary Sector agency ourselves we understand the values of the sector and that organisations rarely have the ICT budgets available in the commercial world.
- **Collaborative and transparent.** We are open and honest about the process. We want to build your knowledge, not keep Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a geeky mystery, full of jargon.
- **Thorough.** We evaluate your current ICT and related policies, assessing staff ICT knowledge and your ICT support needs. We then set out the best options for you according to your needs.
- **Fee discounts for smaller organisations of up to 50%.** We recognise ‘small is beautiful too’. For a free 1-hour meeting to help you explore the ICT project for further consultancy work...

**Contact us**
London Advice Services Alliance (LASA) Information Systems Team
Email: ist@lasa.org.uk or call 020 7426 4473

AIMS, the client enquiry recording system for voluntary and statutory advice organisations of all sizes

AIMS will enable your service to accurately record and report on all the issues, work and outcomes relating to your client services. It is an essential tool in the effective management of your organisation and client casework.

**key features:**
- Effective and affordable database solution
- Straightforward and clear data entry screens that follow the work process
- Flexible modular design, providing you with a highly personalised and tailored system
- A versatile and extensive reporting module that gives easy access to all your client information for social policy, funder and management reporting requirements
- Built in functions that assist advisors and managers in their work including diaries, action lists, mail merge letters and room booking

For a free trial of AIMS, please email aims@lasa.org.uk to request an AIMS Demo CD

Starting at **less than £300** it is also very affordable.
other Lasa services

**AIMS:**

AIMS Advice & Information Management System, client and enquiry recording software.

aims@lasa.org.uk
Tel: 020 7377 2806

**Circuit Riders in the UK:**

ICT development and support for the voluntary sector

Circuit Riders are technology development and support workers, each of whom supports a caseload of organisations the same way a development worker might. In the UK we have more than 380 subscribers to the ukriders email list interested in Circuit Riding or are a Circuit Rider themselves. We are also developing training and standards for practice.

Website: www.lasa.org.uk/circuitriders

**Lasa’s Appeals Team:**

Lasa appeals team represents claimants referred by advice agencies in London (including general casework).

Tel: 020 7426 4476

**Lasa’s Information Systems Team:**

Lasa’s Information Systems Team provides Information and Communication Technology (ICT) advice to voluntary organisations including:

- ICT Hub Knowledgebase – a free, comprehensive online source of independent information on ICT – www.ictubknowledgebase.org.uk
- ICT Hub Suppliers Directory – a free directory lists suppliers of ICT goods and services to the voluntary and community sector in England – www.directory.ictub.org.uk
- Publications including computanews and guides to using ICT
- ICT Health checks and consultancies
- Training – commissioned courses to help you use ICT to improve your services.

For further information see: www.lasa.org.uk

**Lasas Policy & Voice Development Team:**

The team provides:

- up-to-date information regarding developments relating to the advice sector via the rightsnet website
- a campaigning voice to promote the role of the advice sector
- a second-tier policy resource for advisers.

Tel: 020 7426 4484

**Multikulti:**

Multikulti website aims to support citizenship, BAME and migrants through the delivery of accessible, accurately translated advice and information in community languages.

Website: www.multikulti.org.uk
Tel: 020 7426 4470

**Review:**

Lasa’s bi-monthly welfare benefits & tax credit publication.

Website: www.lasa.org.uk/review

**Rightsnet:**

See page 25.

**Specialist Support Project:**

In addition to our welfare benefits advice line the Specialist Support Project provides casework support to English organisations with a CLS General Civil Law Contract or a Quality Mark.

You can send us copies of relevant documents so we can:

- advise you on the merits of your client’s case, based on law
- draft appeal submissions to tribunals and the Social Security Commissioners.

Funding for this project ended in March 2008: lasa hopes to receive further funding to continue the work of the SSP. Please check lasa websites for details and updates.

**Welfare Benefits Advice Line:**

For advice workers only (London based or people who have attended training courses).

020 7247 1735
Monday & Tuesday 10.30–12.30 and Thursday 2.00–4.00
where to find us

Our address is:

Rightsnet Training
3rd Floor
Universal House
88–94 Wentworth Street
London
E1 7SA
Tel: 020 7377 2748