

Supporting more people affected by welfare reform



Turn2us
to access benefits & grants

by **Megan Wheatley**

As major reform of the welfare benefits system continues across the UK, hundreds of thousands of people are getting to grips with changes to their entitlements or income.

Despite the scale of these changes, recent research by the charity Turn2us, which helps people access benefits and grants, found that over two-fifths (43%) of current claimants are not aware of how and when they will be affected.

Through its free online tools and resources, Turn2us is helping people in financial need – and those who support them – see how they may be affected by the benefit changes and check what financial assistance may be available to them.

The Turn2us website – www.turn2us.org.uk features clear, up to date information on all of the benefit changes, and a timetable of when they take place. This includes an in-depth section on Universal Credit, which will be starting to roll out from October, with an overview of the new benefit, how it will be awarded, and how income will affect entitlements.

In addition, the website has tips on budgeting and managing money, which will be useful for anyone who will see a change or reduction in their benefits. Turn2us research uncovered that nearly two-fifths (39%) of current claimants who will be affected by Universal Credit are worried about managing their finances as they adjust to receiving this new benefit monthly rather than weekly.

The Turn2us website also features a free and easy to use Benefits Calculator and Grants Search. As the changes take effect, people can use the Benefits Calculator to check they are claiming all they are entitled to and identify whether they might be eligible for benefits which could exempt them from some of the changes.

Anyone who sees a reduction in their benefits should also check if they are eligible for other financial help through the Turn2us Grants Search. The database contains over 3,000 charitable funds that may be able to give financial support, each with its own criteria about the costs it can help with and who can apply.



There are advanced functions on both the Benefits Calculator and Grants Search for anyone in an intermediary role who works face to face with people in financial need. These can be accessed by registering for an intermediary account on the Turn2us website.

Intermediaries can also learn more about how to use Turn2us tools with their clients by attending a free training workshop. The autumn programme will kick off in October and half day workshops will run in Leeds, Exeter, Ashford, Derby, Crawley, Wadebridge, Newcastle, Birmingham and London amongst others. For more information or to book a place, please email: training@turn2us.org.uk.

Another easy way to learn more about maximising income and be regularly updated about changes in welfare benefits and grants is to sign up to the Turn2us monthly e-bulletin. Intermediaries can register here on the intermediaries section of the Turn2us website.

Last year, Turn2us tools and resources helped over 43,000 people in financial need secure over £148 million in benefits and grants. With almost 90% of Turn2us users likely to recommend the service to others, the charity is showing more and more people the support that is available through these difficult times.