citizens advice Somerset

Newsletter - Summer 2025

RESEARCH & CAMPAIGNS

All 6 Somerset MPs vote against the Bill

Following on from our welfare reform warning in the Spring newsletter, we are sharing a note of thanks to our local MPs for their support in voting against welfare reform proposals, forcing a last minute U-turn.

But the campaign work is not over and we will continue to lobby against any proposals that our evidence shows will push people deeper into poverty.

Move to UC - a continuing cause for concern

20% of legacy benefit claimants fail to migrate to UC

The DWP plans to complete the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) by April 2026, with the last migration notice letters going out in September 2025.

From July 2022 to March 2025 a total of 1,848,131 legacy benefit claimants were invited to claim UC. Worryingly, 381,440 (20%) have not successfully moved to UC and had their benefits terminated.

We are concerned that the latest migration cohort have higher levels of practical and emotional support needs due to ill-health or disability and the managed migration process isn't meeting these needs.

Keep and Clean Campaign - an update

More social housing landlords in Somerset have signed up to our pilot to 'Keep and Clean' carpets between tenancy change overs instead of ripping them out, and we support their efforts.

This practice most often affects people who are least able to afford flooring, leaving them living on concrete or exposed boards.

Social landlords in our pilot have an improved carpet retention rate, but for others there is still a long way to go - we'll continue to work with them on the issue and press for change.

The case for Jobcentre reform
improving disability support

The Government is currently focusing on ways they can support people on disability benefits back to work.

In their Spring Statement on the impacts of welfare benefit reform, they quoted research claiming that 'around 200,000 people on health and disability benefits believe they could work now in the right job with the right support'.

Citizens Advice are asking what should that support look like?

Insights from our own Somerset clients and advisers show that many people are simply not ready for work due to ill-health. If, and when they are ready, they tell us they need to be supported better and for this to happen we believe Jobcentres will need to be reformed.

We're calling for...

The introduction of case workers in Jobcentres providing ongoing pastoral and practical support who can make referrals for more specialist help.

This would be separate from careers advisers who would specialise in employment related support.

Scrapping the claimant commitment and replace it with a support plan providing reasonable goals tailored to the individual.

Citizens Advice has delved into overhauling the work coach role. Find out more in 'The case for caseworkers: Reimagining the Jobcentre service'.

Our concerns

1. Claimant commitments are often not suited to people's needs or abilities.
2. Work coaches have a high case load which prevents meaningful or tailored support.
3. People are waiting too long for NHS treatment that will help them return to good health, and back to work.

Citizens Advice Somerset

0808 278 7842

Monday to Friday 9am-4pm

For other advice options:
citizensadvicesomerset.org.uk