**CAPI Workshop – 08/11/17**

**Useful information and contact details for financial assistance of families impacted by parental imprisonment**

**DWP**

Certainly, the DWP and Local Authority would need to be informed of the change in circumstances and would recalculate the family’s entitlement dependent on the circumstances. If one of the couple received a sentence, it should be possible for the DWP to change the payee when the circumstances are reported and transfer the claim. Many DWP benefits are paid in arrears so there may be money due once a sentence has started. This would be paid and calculated as normal up to the day of imprisonment, once the DWP has been informed.

Both the DWP and Local Authority will need to be informed of the changes of circumstances to enable them to re-calculate entitlement. Nothing happens automatically.

Appointments can be made at the Job Centre Plus office on 0845 604 3719 to an advisor who will offer support to arrange change of circumstances benefit payments – this will now be the new Universal Credit Benefit and will include the Housing Element for rent payments. This can take up to 6 weeks to come into force so worth contacting Welfare Support / Food Bank for additional support during this time.

For further information see: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus>.

**CURO**

CURO’s policy would be that if a sole tenant has been given a custodial sentence for any period for up to one year, any non-tenant partner still living in the property would be able to remain and would be able to become the caretaker of the tenancy.

For any sentence of over one year, CURO would ask the non-tenant in the property to leave the property, if they refused to do so an application would be made to the court to remove them from the property, it would then be up to a judge to either grant eviction and end the tenancy, or for the non-tenant to remain and become the caretaker of the tenancy until the tenant is released.

If both partners are named tenants, then the partner who remains in the property can of course stay and apply to convert their tenancy to a sole tenancy as long as all parties agree.

Contact the Tenancy Management Team on 01225 366000

**Bank Accounts**

If the bank account is in the sole name of the imprisoned parent it will continue to run unless any action is taken to make changes. Therefore, all direct debits and standing orders will continue until there is no longer any money to cover them. Ideally pre-empt and add partner to account prior to imprisonment if possible. Partner could still use cash card if they have this and the pin number. If anything goes wrong and the card is blocked or retained, the partner will not be able to recover it.

If convicted parent has access to a solicitor, power of attorney can be sought to grant access to the account. Alternatively, partner will need to open an account in their own name if they don’t have one already and ensure everything is transferred to this account.

**Utilities**

***For this British Gas, EDF and Bristol Water were contacted. Other providers may have different working practices.***

**British Gas** Contact the moving home team on 0333 202 9802 and explain the situation. They will create a new account in the name of the remaining parent. Any outstanding debts or payments will be attributed to the previous account holder and the new account will start from scratch.

**EDF** Contact them on the general enquiries number 0800 096 9000 and explain the situation. They will be able to do a name change on the account. If there are any problems with meeting payments or if there are arrears they are able to provide support through their priority services for families with children aged under 5. This may include support around budgeting or referrals to other agencies such as CAB.

**Bristol Water** Contact them on 0345 600 3600 and they will add partners name on to the account. In situations such as this they claim to operate sensibly and will look at each situation on a case by case basis.

**Welfare Support**

Welfare support will support a family on an individual basis, they will look at benefits and income at the current time. They can provide Food Vouchers and support with initial Prison visit until travel assistance is in place.

**Contact Details for Welfare Support**:

**Email**: welfare\_support@bathnes.gov.uk

**Tel**: Welfare Support Team on 01225 477 277.

*This service is normally available Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 4.30pm (and 4.00pm on Fridays). During busy periods / staff training an answerphone system will be in operation. Your call will be returned by the end of the next working day.*

**APUV (Assisted Prison Visit Unit)**

Assistance with travel costs can be done up to 28 days in advance or after the visit. The family need to be claiming benefits to be eligible for this support. An application can be made online at <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-prison-visits> or you can email phone or post to request an application form:

**Email:** assisted.prison.visit@noms.gsi.gov.uk

**Tel:** 0300 0632100

**Address:** PO BOX 2152

 Birmingham

 B15 ISD

**Useful Websites for further information**

* Turn2us - <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/Benefit-guides/Partner-in-prison/Benefits-Partner-in-prison>
* Child poverty action group – welfare rights information: <http://www.cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights>