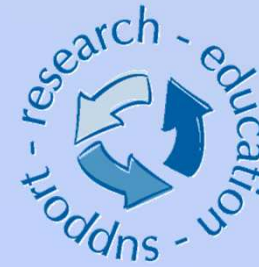


16th Annual Conference of the
National HIV Nurses Association (NHIVNA)



National HIV Nurses Association

Matt Wills

Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, London

26-27 June 2014- City Hall, Cardiff

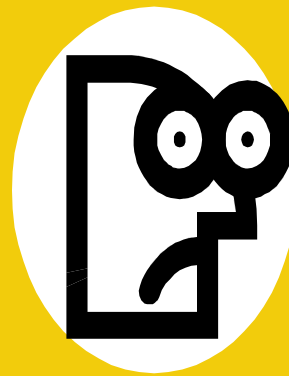
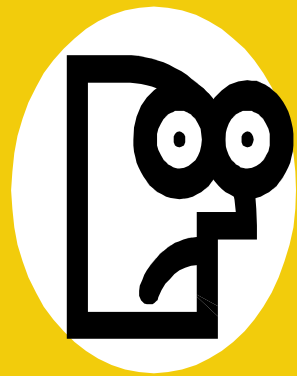
For Whose Benefit? Welfare Benefit and Housing Changes

Matt Wills
HIV Social Care Coordinator
Homerton University Hospital.

Cutting Costs



- Welfare Reform Act 2012 has introduced significant changes to the welfare system.
- Universal Credit introduced in April 2013, attempting to be rolled out throughout the country.
- DLA replaced by PIP, stricter criteria.
- Overhaul of Housing and Council Tax Benefit
- Penalties for not meeting guidelines, including sanctions lasting up to 3 months.
- Appeals can take a long time to be heard which increases financial difficulties/frustration



It's QUESTION TIME!!

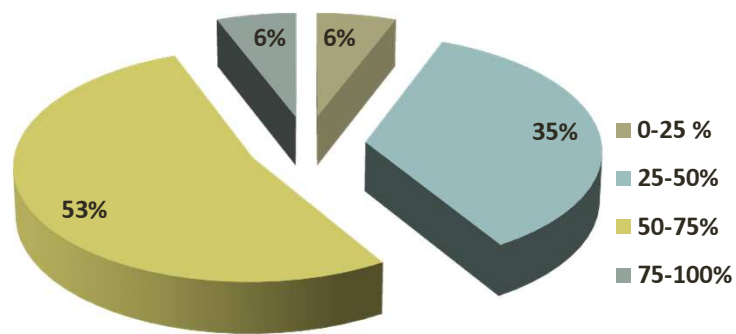
Question



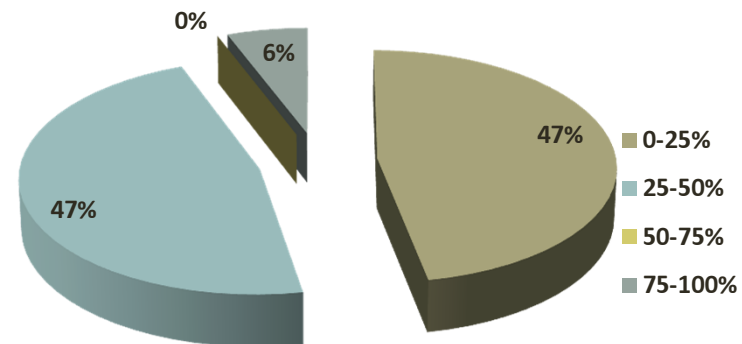
- As a percentage how frequently are “Social Care Needs” discussed in your work?
 - 1) 0-25%
 - 2) 25-50 %
 - 3) 50-75 %
 - 4) 75-100%

Results from the Homerton Jury

Patients with social care needs



Time spent in clinic on social care needs



Benefit Cap





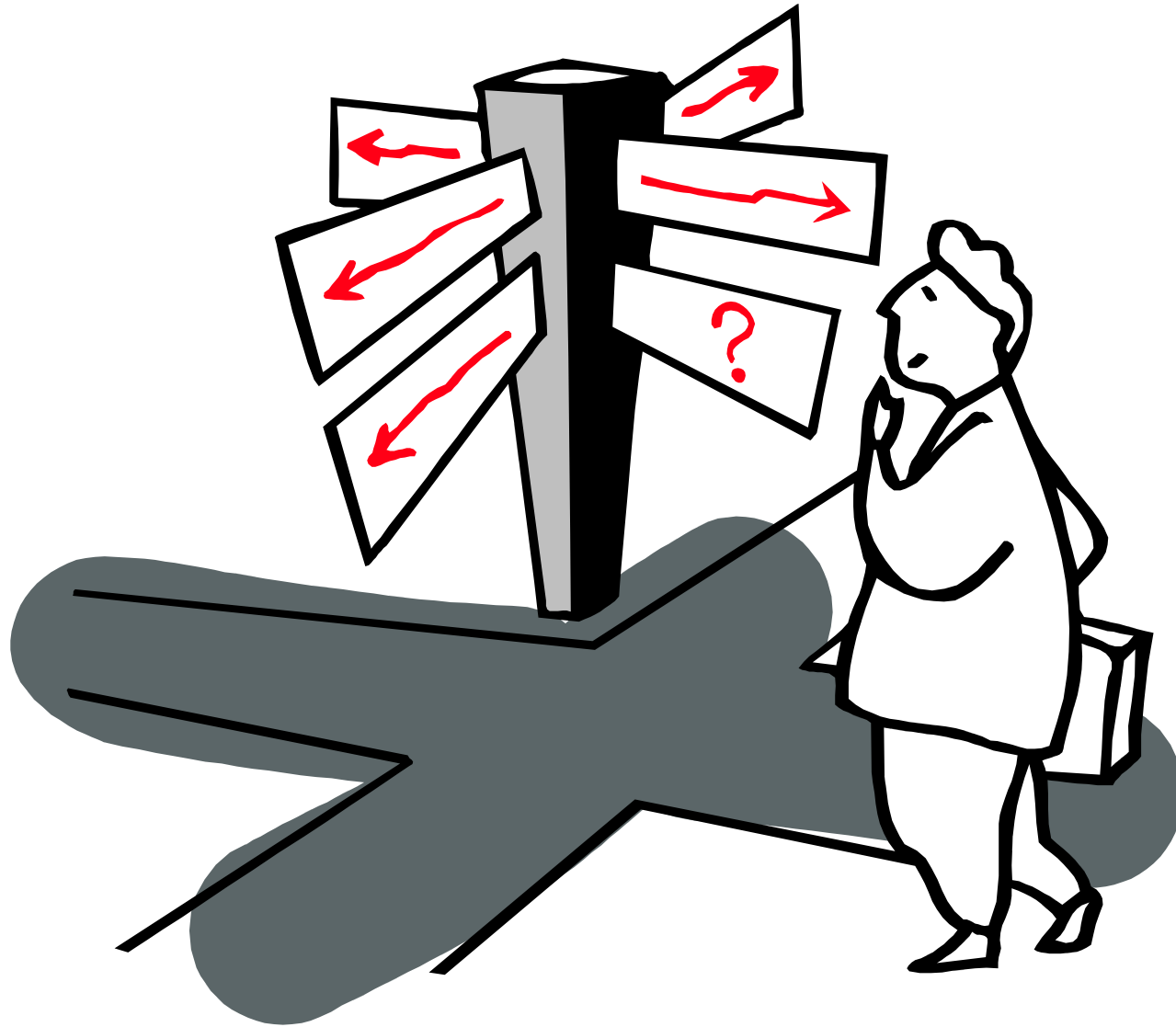
Who is affected??

- Everyone in receipt of income related benefits of working age. (16-64)
- Those receiving Bereavement Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance (unless you get the support component), Guardian's Allowance, Housing Benefit, Incapacity Benefit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Maternity Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance, Widowed Parent's Allowance (or Widowed Mother's Allowance or Widows Pension you started getting before 9 April 2001)
- Working Tax Credit, DLA/PIP, ESA (Support component) exempt.



Impact for PLWHIV

- The Impact of the Welfare Reform on People Living with HIV in England (CPA 2014) highlighted that:-
 - 66% PLWHIV were affected by changes
 - 90% reported negative impact on their health
 - Atos assessments were successfully challenged in over one third of cases.
 - PLWHIV were less likely to secure advice from non HIV support networks due to disclosure concerns



jobcentreplus

Jobseeker's Allowance

Part of the Department
for Work and Pensions

Declaration of work and pay

Sanctions for not “actively seeking work” including suspension of payments 4-13 weeks.

Decision can be appealed, but is a stressful process.

Can impact on other benefits (HB, CTR)

Pushes people further into poverty, increases reliance on Food Banks etc.

Employment and Support Allowance

- Replaced Incapacity Benefit 2010
- Work Capability Assessments completed by Atos.
- High refusal rate on new applications, with appeals successful in 1/3 of cases
- Mandatory reconsideration if ESA has been refused, during this time no ESA is paid. DWP do not have to give a timescale in which a decision will be made.
- After this is concluded, appeal can be lodged, with payments recommencing at that point.
- ESA 50 forms sent out periodically, failure to complete and return in time can result in suspension.

Statement of Fitness for Work For social security or Statutory Sick Pay

Patient's name

Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms

Atos 

I assessed your case on:

1

/

/

and, because of the
following condition(s):

2

Inability to complete tasks
Communication difficulties
Issues relating to social skills

I advise you that:

3

you are not fit for work.

4

you may be fit for work taking account
of the following advice:

If available, and with your employer's agreement, you may benefit from:

a phased return to work

amended duties

altered hours

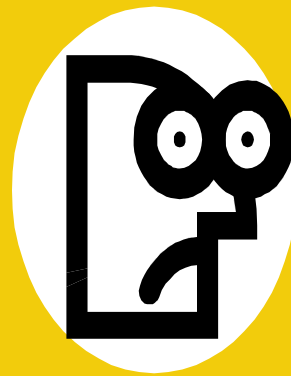
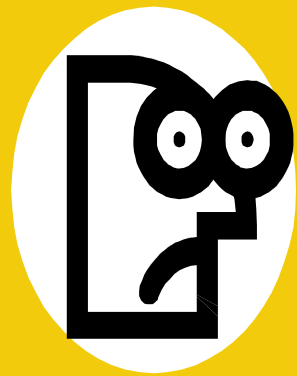
5

workplace adaptations

Comments, including functional effects of your condition(s):

6





It's QUESTION TIME!!

Question



- Have you seen an increase in request for supporting letters/statements?
 - 1)Not at all
 - 2)Slight increase
 - 3)Definite increase
 - 4)Blooming letters AARRRGGGHHHH



Evidence in clinic

- At Homerton, we have seen an increase in people in financial hardship.
- Increase in referrals to Food Chain, THT Hardship Fund, internal fund and generic food banks.
- Increase in people presenting with adherence issues as a result of sanctions/ financial hardship
- Increase in requests for supporting/appeal letters
- In this time of increasing austerity the clinical team have a more realistic understanding of the financial challenges faced by their patients.

Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

- Replaced DLA for new claimants from June 2013
- Transfer for existing claimants from 2015 unless there is a change in their circumstances or have a review pending
- Daily Living and Mobility Component – Standard and Enhanced rates
- Have to be symptomatic for over 6 months prior to initiating claim and provide documented medical evidence.

Bedroom tax

- Reduction in Housing Benefit payments for people not working who are under occupying their accommodation.
- 14% reduction if 1 spare room
- 25% reduction if 2+ spare rooms
- The claimant will be expected to make up the shortfall, or leave the property.
- Renting out rooms is an option.
- Some groups are exempt, including those in armed forces, foster carers and those with children at university.

Council Tax Relief

- Everyone of working age expected to contribute to Council Tax.
- Those on low income are given discounts dependant on local authority guidelines, up to 95%. - Hackney 85%
- Those not paying will be taken to court, which can lead to court costs being added to the account.
- People who are “severely mentally impaired” may be exempt from paying any council tax, but this requires medical evidence

The Future



Future Challenges

- Further cut backs within social care funding could result in further restrictions in services.
- Increase in cohort, potentially increase waiting times, greater need for services.
- Changing legislation especially within Welfare Benefits will cause further hardship, for vulnerable people. This could result in increasing negative health outcomes, as people have to make difficult financial choices
- New rules for EU Nationals
- DLA reviews will increase anxiety for PLWHIV

Supporting Letters Guidelines

- NHIVNA, NAT and myself have developed guidelines for Clinicians asked to write supporting letters.
- Further work is being done to provide guidelines/ advice for Patients/Service Users.
- Guidelines can be found on the NHIVNA website and Twitter and Facebook
- <http://www.nhivna.org/>
- Article in HIV Nursing



Thanks

- NHIVNA for inviting me to speak
- Tracy Shearon from Positive East.
- JMC Team for putting up with me
- Dr Joe Petersen Camp
- Peer Navigators
- Third Sector Partners