



North East Scotland Advice Forum is a local network for people working in advice services to share information and experiences. The Forum meets quarterly throughout the year.

## October 2024 Newsletter

If you would like an article included in the next bulletin, please contact [admin@nesaf.co.uk](mailto:admin@nesaf.co.uk)

North East Scotland Advice Forum

Home Info News Events Message Board Sign up

Millions to receive  
**£300**  
Cost of Living Payment  
between 31 October  
and 19 November

Job Start Payment.  
Get £250 to turn into anything  
you need for a new job.  
Now open for applications

Sign up for latest news and information at [www.nesaf.co.uk/contact/](http://www.nesaf.co.uk/contact/)

**View previous Benefit Bulletins:**

- [September 2024 Benefit Bulletin](#)
- [August 2024 Benefit Bulletin](#)
- [July 2024 Benefit Bulletin](#)
- [June 2024 Benefit Bulletin](#)
- [May 2024 Benefit Bulletin](#)
- [April 2024 Benefit Bulletin](#)
- [March 2024 Benefit Bulletin](#)
- [February 2024 Benefit Bulletin](#)
- [January 2024 Benefit Bulletin](#)

## Benefit calculator

Our benefits calculator will help you find out what benefits you can claim.

The calculator is free to use, and the details you provide are anonymous.

Before you start, make sure you have information about your savings, income, pensions and existing benefits (for you and your partner).

If you run out of time, you can save your calculation and come back to it later, and pick up right where you left off.

⇒ *Should take 10 minutes to complete*

⇒ *Please complete all fields with an asterisk(\*)*

**[START >>>](#)**



## Date for your diary

### Quarterly Advice Forum Meeting

**2nd October 10:00 to 12:00**

We shall have the following speakers:

- Claire Lister, Partnership & Events Manager, Pension Age Disability Payment, Social Security Scotland
- Kevin Duffy - Money Guiders programme, Money and Pension Service
- Diane Alexander - Community Partnership Officer, Home Energy Scotland
- Susan Bains - Project Co-ordinator NRPf [nrpartnership.org](http://nrpartnership.org)
- Amy Duncan/Jennifer Macrae - [Cash-First: Towards Ending the Need for Food Banks in Scotland](#)

### Microsoft Teams meeting details

**[Join the meeting now](#)**

Meeting ID: 327 175 907 754

Passcode: vD4Mzv



## Updated Guidance on the Winter Fuel Payment

ADM Chapter L5 Winter Fuel Payment

- Entitlement to a Winter Fuel Payment L5005 – L5008
- Persons not entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment L5021 – L5026
- Amount of Winter Fuel Payment L5035
- Appendix 1

[assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66f41596a31f45a9c765ebe1/adm-chapter-l5-winter-fuel-payments.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66f41596a31f45a9c765ebe1/adm-chapter-l5-winter-fuel-payments.pdf)

### Guidance: Universal Credit if you have a disability or health condition

Last updated 20 September 2024

The support that is available for Universal Credit claimants who have a disability or health condition.

This guide provides information on the support and financial help that's available for people who have a disability or health condition and who are claiming Universal Credit.

It covers Work Capability Assessments and how these relate to the Universal Credit claimant commitment.

There's also information on how Universal Credit supports you if you're able to work, prepare for work, or may be able to in the future.

Read more about [Universal Credit](#).

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-if-you-have-a-disability-or-health-condition-quick-guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-if-you-have-a-disability-or-health-condition-quick-guide)

### Guidance: Universal Credit and students

Guidance on claiming Universal Credit if you're a student

Last updated 12 September 2024

Last update: Expanded the list of non-advanced education.

[www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-and-students](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-and-students)

### With Maximus taking over from CHADA for WCA's, the contact details have changed

#### Updated guidance on new Health Assessment Advisory Service

From 7 September 2024 the health assessment provider, in relation to Universal Credit, in Scotland is Maximus. If you need to discuss your appointment time, [contact Maximus](#).

#### Guidance: Work Capability Assessment handbook: for healthcare professionals

The DWP has updated its guidance for assessment providers to reflect the new Health Assessment Advisory Service contracts having gone live.

Under the new contracts, the providers are each delivering work capability assessments as well as other health assessments across specific geographic areas with effect from 9 September 2024

[Work Capability Assessment \(WCA\) handbook](#)



## From 21 October in Aberdeen

### Pension Age Disability Payment

Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP) is a disability benefit for people in Scotland who are of pension age and require assistance with daily activities or supervision due to a disability or long-term health condition.

From 21 October, Pension Age Disability Payment – the replacement for Attendance Allowance – will be piloted in Argyll & Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney and Shetland.

The benefit will become available in 13 more local authority areas on 24 March next year before becoming available across Scotland by 22 April.

Full roll out across Scotland will begin in 2025.

The transfer from Attendance Allowance to Pension Age Disability Payment will begin in early 2025.

Regs: [The Disability Assistance for Older People \(Scotland\) Regulations 2024](#)

## Pension age disability payment to act as a qualifying benefit for certain premiums and entitlements in Scotland

### New statutory instrument

The Disability Assistance for Older People (Scotland) Regulations 2024 (S.S.I. 2024/166) introduce arrangements for the payment of disability assistance in the form of pension age disability payment. Pension age disability payment replaces attendance allowance in Scotland.

This instrument makes consequential amendments to social security legislation in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, as the case may be, governing entitlement to certain benefits.

[The Social Security \(Scotland\) Act 2018 \(Disability Assistance\) \(Consequential Amendments\) Order 2024](#)



## Helping disabled people into work

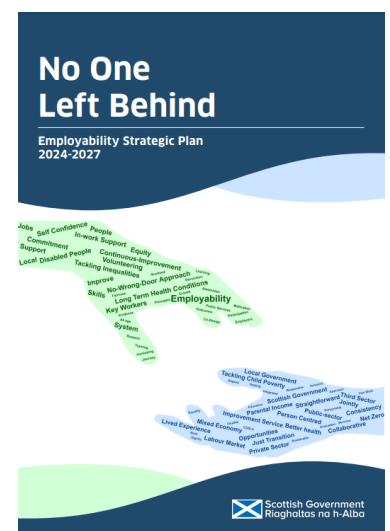
People seeking work who are disabled or have long-term health conditions are to be offered help from a dedicated employability adviser.

The initiative will be in place by next summer and involve advisers working with employers to develop roles suited to an individual's needs.

The Scottish Government will partner with local authorities and others including health and voluntary organisations to implement the measures. They build on the existing No-one Left Behind approach which has supported 61,930 people since April 2019, 19% of whom reported having a disability.

### Background

This support is being brought forward as part of the Scottish Government's [No One Left Behind Strategic Plan](#) which launched recently..





## Social Security Scotland updates:

### Best Start Foods

#### New regulations to increase eligibility were introduced from 26 February 2024

The changes include:

- Removal of income thresholds will benefit approximately 20,000 individuals who will now be able to apply for Best Start Foods
- Working Tax Credits will become a qualifying benefit
- Broadening eligibility for young people who are pregnant and their partners
- Extending automatic eligibility so that children who are older than 1 can continue to be eligible without the need for a qualifying benefit if their parent is under 18 or an 18 or 19 years old dependent.

### Payment of Best Start Foods

The payment card is updated every 4 weeks

Clients can check their balance at any time through one of the options below:

- online, with an online allpay account
- at a cash machine with the 4-digit PIN received when activating the card
- by calling allpay on 0808 196 1687

### Carer Support Payment

Carer Support Payment eligibility will largely mirror Carer's Allowance – for safe and secure transfer, to avoid a 'two tier' system

There will be some key changes:

- Full-time education – Carer Support Payment will be available to carers 20 or over in full-time education at all levels, and age 16 to 19 in advanced education.
- Reduced past presence test – of 26 of the past 52 weeks, will allow some carers to receive support sooner, will be disapplied in some situations, such as terminal illness.
- Temporary stops in entitlement – fewer suspensions and will be able to stop entitlement and reinstate in some situations without application

### Carer Support Payment—case transfer

- 26 February 2024 – Case Transfer commences
- Spring 2025 – We aim to complete Case Transfer
- Small numbers of awards will transfer at first, with volumes gradually ramping up throughout 2024
- We are aiming safely and securely transfer around 130,000 Carer's Allowance awards in Scotland to Carer Support Payment
- No-one will be required to apply for their benefit as part of the transfer
- Awards selected for transfer will not be geographically limited to the pilot areas
- For Carer's Allowance case transfer, there are no natural triggers
- Clients will continue to receive the right payment, with no break in entitlement
- Clear communication with clients at key points of the process
- Clients should continue to report any changes to the Department for Work and Pensions until they get a letter from Social Security Scotland confirming the transfer of their benefits is complete

### Pension Age Disability Payment

- Replacing Attendance Allowance in Scotland
- Anyone currently in receipt of Attendance Allowance from the Department for Work and Pensions does not need to do anything
- Their data will be automatically transferred from DWP to Social Security Scotland
- Pilot for new applications begins Autumn 2024
- National roll for new applications begins early 2025



## Debt Advice Handbook Scotland - 1st edition

Funded by the Scottish government, MATRICS (Money Advice Training, Resource, Information and Consultancy Service) is a partnership between Money Advice Scotland (MAS) and Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS)

**The law covered in this book was correct on and includes regulations laid up to 1 June 2024.**

The subjects covered within debt advice are vast and could fill many volumes. In this Handbook, much detail has been deliberately excluded to keep it accessible and to make clear the structure of debt advice work.

[Debt Advice Handbook Scotland - 1st edition](#)



## Secretary of State for Work and Pensions v NC (Employment and Support Allowance): [2024] UKUT 251 (AAC)

Read the full decision in [UA-2023-001781-ESA](#).

### Judicial Summary

This appeal is about how pension contributions by way of ‘salary sacrifice’ should be treated for the purposes of the conditions of eligibility for Employment and Support Allowance under the Employment and Support Allowance Regulations 2008 (the “ESA Regulations”).

If the ‘salary sacrifice’ amounts formed part of the claimant’s earnings for the purposes of regulation 96 of the ESA Regulations the claimant’s earnings exceeded the limit for ‘permitted work’, disentitling from ESA for the relevant periods, but if they were excluded from his earnings under regulation 95(2) (a) as a ‘payment in kind’ his earnings would be below the permitted limit and he would be entitled to ESA.

Judge Church decides, following R(CS) 9/08, that such an arrangement involved the employee agreeing contractually to forego an amount of cash pay to which he would, but for that agreement, be entitled in return for the employer’s agreement to make a payment in kind, namely an employer’s contribution to the employee’s occupational pension. The amount ‘sacrificed’ does not form part of the employee’s earnings. The decision of the First-tier Tribunal involved no material error of law and was upheld. followed.

## From Pillar to Post: Barriers to dealing with deductions from Universal Credit

**Published: 19th September 2024**

New research from the Public Law Project, has revealed the harmful impact of the DWP applying deductions to people’s benefits, which affects over half of households on Universal Credit. The majority of these deductions relate to debt owed to the Government, which is often driven by system design or mistakes made by the DWP.

Many of these debts are the result of the DWP’s own error: in 2021, 75% of Universal Credit overpayment debts recorded on DWP’s debt manager system were due to Official Error, meaning the DWP had initially miscalculated people’s Universal Credit.

The research found that people can’t easily challenge or seek relief from these harsh deductions due to the DWP’s confusing and fragmented system. In fact, they might not even be told about these deductions before having them applied.

[publiclawproject.org.uk/resources/from-pillar-to-post-barriers-to-dealing-with-deductions-from-universal-credit/](https://publiclawproject.org.uk/resources/from-pillar-to-post-barriers-to-dealing-with-deductions-from-universal-credit/)



## British Gas Energy Trust opens again for applications

Housing Access & Support [www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/british-gas-energy-trust-makes-debt-grants-of-up-to-ps1700-available](http://www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/british-gas-energy-trust-makes-debt-grants-of-up-to-ps1700-available)

The Individual and Families Fund is open to credit and pre-payment meter customers. You do not need to be a British Gas customer to apply for this fund - you can be a British Gas Customer, or a customer from another supplier with arrears of up to £1,700. However, we want to ensure that grants go to people who cannot access energy debt help from their own provider.

**The following suppliers** - OVO, Boost, Eon, Eon Next, EDF, Scottish Power, Octopus, Shell Energy, SSE and Utilita have their own funds to support their customers, so if you are a customer of one of these companies please apply to them directly.

For British Gas customers, your balance will be verified with British Gas as part of the application process and if it exceeds the arrears threshold of £1,700, your application will be declined.



[povertyalliance.org/CPW](http://povertyalliance.org/CPW)

[#ChallengePoverty](https://twitter.com/ChallengePoverty)  
[#CPW24](https://twitter.com/CPW24)



Please see attached briefing on various events in the city as part of the above, there are various events that may be of interest to attend, both in person and online.

The key messages from the briefing –

- A weeklong campaign coordinated by the Poverty Alliance which promotes compassion and Justice
- It's about having a unified voice around the injustice in poverty
- It's a time to campaign to challenge the stigma and discrimination which can often be associated with poverty, one of the main barriers for people getting the support they need
- It's also an opportunity to share the anti-poverty work happening in Aberdeen across Scotland
- Involvement can be as small or as large as organisations want to go
- The campaign has been growing year on year

Briefing - [nesaf.co.uk/challenge-poverty-week-7th-11th-october-2024/](http://nesaf.co.uk/challenge-poverty-week-7th-11th-october-2024/)

[www.povertyalliance.org/cpw/](http://www.povertyalliance.org/cpw/)



## **Cpag: Why scrapping the household benefit cap is vital for families, children and survivors of abuse**

September 2024

### **Summary**

- 123,0000 households are affected by the household benefit cap. The vast majority – 71 percent- are lone parents with children.
- The benefit cap limits the total amount a part-time, low-earning or out-of-work household can receive in benefits, trapping families in deep poverty.
- It is having a disproportionate impact on survivors of domestic abuse and on children.
- The benefit cap makes it almost impossible to afford private rents. Recent research found that there were only enough affordable homes across the country to house one in six capped families.
- Increasingly even social rents (typically 30 per cent of market rents) are becoming unaffordable. In 78 local authority areas in England, average council and/or housing association rents are unaffordable for capped families.
- The benefit cap is therefore contributing to homelessness, as families are trapped in refuges and other forms of temporary accommodation and are unable to move on to secure and affordable homes.
- The cap is not effective and it is harming those who are already vulnerable. We are calling for the cap to be scrapped.



[cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/Joint\\_benefit\\_cap\\_briefing\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/Joint_benefit_cap_briefing_FINAL.pdf)

## **CPAG: Latest report on the DWP's managed migration programme**

This is the latest in our series of reports on the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) managed migration programme, where people are moving from older benefits to universal credit (UC).

The report covers and makes recommendations on:

- progress to date, and what the numbers don't show about 'successful claims'
- the (lack of) information available to claimants to help them make their claim
- the tax credits cliff edge (tax credits are due to close in April 2025).

It also introduces the experiences of four people going through managed migration, and the challenges they are facing.

The DWP should slow down the roll-out of managed migration to ensure that people moving to UC are being paid in full and on time, and that claimants are able to get the information and advice they need to cope with the change. But the DWP will also need to make contingency plans to ensure that payments can be made to tax credit recipients after April 2025. It could do this by amending the regulations, developing a process to make emergency payments or automatically transferring any remaining claimants to UC.

[cpag.org.uk/news/managed-migration-6](https://cpag.org.uk/news/managed-migration-6)

For further topical news items visit our website at:

- <https://nesaf.co.uk/blog/>

Sign up to receive notifications when new items are uploaded:

- <https://nesaf.co.uk/contact/>



# Heating cost help

## Winter Fuel Payment

Up until now, all pensioners have been eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment scheme. From this year (2024), pensioners will need to receive pension credit or other specific benefits to qualify.

Winter Fuel Payment was scheduled to become a devolved issue in September 2024. Scotland plan to replace Winter Fuel Payment with a Pension Age Winter Heating Payment (PAWHP) scheme.

## **Pension Age Winter Heating Payment (PAWHP)**

As a result of the UK Government's decision to introduce means testing to Winter Fuel Payment, we have no choice but to restrict eligibility for Pension Age Winter Heating Payment to older people on relevant eligible benefits. Due to the timing of the UK Government announcement, Pension Age Winter Heating Payment will be deferred until winter 2025-2026. For winter 2024-2025, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has committed to make payments this winter to eligible pensioners in Scotland on terms equivalent to Winter Fuel payments in England and Wales.

Read more at Scot Gov [news release](#).

## Child Winter Heating Payment (CWHP)

Child Winter Heating Payment is a winter payment to help families of disabled children and young people receiving the highest rate care component or enhanced daily living component with fuel costs. payment is made per individual rather than per household, meaning each eligible child in the household will receive a payment. Eligible children and young people living in Scotland do not need to apply. They'll get their payment automatically. It's paid once a year. The payment for winter 2024-2025 is £251.50 and is usually paid in November or December each year

## Winter Heating Payment (WHP)

Winter Heating Payment has replaced the UK Government's Cold Weather Payment in Scotland, and is an annual payment to people in receipt of certain means tested benefits. WHP is a single payment (currently £58.75) between December and February. [How to request Winter Heating Payment](#).

## **See also:**

### Pension Credit

Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. You might get extra help if you're a carer, severely disabled, or responsible for a child or young person. Pension Credit is separate from your State Pension. You can get Pension Credit even if you have other income, savings or own your own home. [How to claim](#)

Find out if you're eligible for Pension Credit and how much you could get. You'll need details of earnings, benefits and pensions, savings and investments. You'll need the same details for your partner if you have one. [Pension Credit calculator](#)

### Attendance Allowance (AA)

Attendance Allowance is money for people over pension age who have care needs. You may have care needs if you need help with activities of daily living, such as getting dressed, going to the toilet or having someone to look after you so you do not hurt yourself. It could include help outside the home. It does not matter if no one actually gives this help, as long as you can show you need it.

You can have any type of disability or illness, including sight or hearing impairments, or mental health issues such as dementia or depression. Attendance Allowance does not cover mobility needs.

### How to claim.

### Pension Age Disability Payment (From 21 October 2024 this will replace AA in Aberdeen)

Pension Age Disability Payment which will replace Attendance Allowance (AA) in Scotland. It is for people of pension age who have a disability or long-term health condition that means they need help looking after themselves or supervision to stay safe. There is no mobility component and it is not means-tested.

From 21 October 2024 one of the areas it will be piloted in is Aberdeen City. The benefit will become available in 13 more local authority areas on 24 March next year before becoming available across Scotland by 22 April 2025.

Currently over 150,000 people in Scotland get Attendance Allowance, their awards will be automatically moved from the DWP to Social Security Scotland in phases, with the first expected to be transferred in early 2025.



# NRNE September 24 Update



## Stop Press! EUSS Clinic dates

The next appointment sessions will be on the **26th October and 23rd November from 10am to 2pm**. Appointments can be made by emailing [EUSSreferralsaberdeen@outlook.com](mailto:EUSSreferralsaberdeen@outlook.com)

\*NB The venue for these clinics will be confirmed upon emailing for an appointment.

Laura, Iona and Vikki run these clinics and can assist with:

- Late applications, for those whom missed the application deadline in 2021
- Referral on for higher level immigration advice via Settled UK for complex and vulnerable cases
- Joining family member applications
- Following up on outstanding applications with Home Office, support to provide additional evidence to application
- Upgrading from Pre-Settled to Settled Status
- Support to access digital profile

## NRPF Updates:

Public Health Scotland have published a guide to rights to healthcare for people with NRPF:

The publication is available here: [Right to healthcare for people with no recourse to public funds - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

## NRPF and Domestic Abuse

The Rights of Women website has put a new guide (June 2024) on their website - *Indefinite leave for victims of domestic abuse*: [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/immigration-asylum-law-information/final-immigration-guide-indefinite-leave-for-victims-of-da/](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/get-advice/immigration-asylum-law-information/final-immigration-guide-indefinite-leave-for-victims-of-da/)

## NRPF and Asylum

Right to Remain have updated their [Toolkit](#) to explain the new situation for people who may be Appeal Rights Exhausted (ARE) in the asylum process. It includes:

- What does "appeal rights exhausted" mean?
- Are you actually appeal rights exhausted?
- Asylum support
- Detention
- Risk of removal
- Legal options at this stage

Just Right Scotland have published a report on age assessments within the asylum system on 16th September: [www.justrightscotland.org.uk/2024/09/unlocking-support-a-call-for-action-to-support-age-disputed-young-people-in-scotland/](http://www.justrightscotland.org.uk/2024/09/unlocking-support-a-call-for-action-to-support-age-disputed-young-people-in-scotland/)

## NEC Scheme

The Concessionary Travel and Integrated Ticketing Team can confirm that those with 'no recourse to public funds' (including people seeking asylum) can apply for the National Concessionary Travel Schemes if they live in Scotland for more than six months of the year, and are either aged between 5 and 21, are 60 or over, or they meet the [disability requirements](#).

If eligible for any of the above schemes, people can apply through the local council. They can tell you about the other ways to apply which are available in your area. You can find [local council contact details](#) on our website.

You should allow at least two weeks to receive a card. If this will take longer, your local council will tell you about this when you apply.

## General Migration Update

The Nuffield Foundation put out a Diversity Fund opportunity recently, in response to the recent far right riots. [www.nuffieldfoundation.org/news/new-racial-diversity-uk-programme-now-open](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/news/new-racial-diversity-uk-programme-now-open)

## E-visas and reporting of problems

This very useful guide from The 3 Million Organisation (originally helping EU nationals after Brexit but with a wider focus on e-visas in this guide) on *Digital-only immigration status for everyone after 2024* can be found here: [the3million.org.uk/digital-only-immigration-status-everyone-after-2024](http://the3million.org.uk/digital-only-immigration-status-everyone-after-2024)

At the3million, they have concerns about this system working at all times, for everyone. They submitted [a report to the Independent Monitoring Authority](#) in which they highlighted problems already faced by people with digital-only status. The report, in Chapter 5, warns of likely increased problems from the end of 2024. If you, or anyone you know, is affected by any of these changes, please report it to them via their [Report-It! tool](#). <https://the3million.org.uk/report-it>

For further details on any of the above please contact Susan Bains, Project Co-ordinator NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds) Email: [sbains@grec.co.uk](mailto:sbains@grec.co.uk)

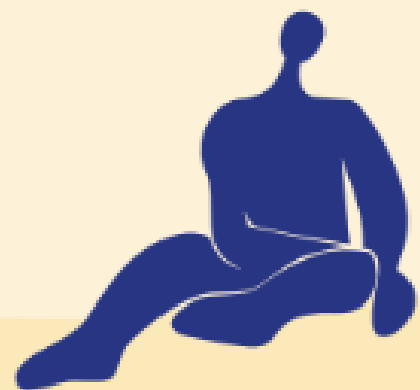
Come and join us at



# Mental Health Festival

Monday 7 October – Saturday 12 October 2024

Aberdeen Central Library & Aberdeen Art Gallery / Admission FREE





# EMPOWER ABERDEEN

**7th October 2024, 10 am – 4pm**

A community fair, providing direct access to support available across Aberdeen.

Join in on a day of sharing services, experiences and networking with other like-minded organisations in Aberdeen to improve the lives and homes of those living in our city/area

Sign up your organisation to host a stall by following the link, or scanning our QR code

 <https://tinyurl.com/rjetw8hk>



[Sign up your organisation](https://tinyurl.com/rjetw8hk)

# Get ready for winter with Home Energy Scotland



Join us at our roadshow to help local householders prepare for winter.

Talk to us and other organisations to network, build relationships, and explore the challenges of cold homes and rising energy bills.

With energy prices due to increase in October and again in January, now is the time to act. And we can help with our free and impartial advice.

Find out how we can support your clients, and work with you in partnership.

**Monday 7 October | Aberdeen Music Hall (Empower Aberdeen event) | 10am - 4pm**

**Tuesday 8 October | Dundee – TBC | 11am - 3pm**

**Wednesday 9 October | The Inkwell, Elgin | 11am - 3pm**

**Thursday 10 October | Perth Civic Hall | 11am - 3pm**

**Friday 11 October | Kincardine and Mearns CAB, Stonehaven | 11am - 3pm**

**Friday 11 October | Strathmore Rugby Club, Forfar | 11am - 3pm**

To register to attend or find out more, email  
[partnerships@ne.homeenergyscotland.org](mailto:partnerships@ne.homeenergyscotland.org)  
or scan the QR code



HOMEENERGYSCOTLAND.ORG  
**0808 808 2282**  
FUNDED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

