

# Information, Advice & Guidance at The ClementJames Centre: 2023/24 Remit



Releasing potential in the community



*"ClementJames is very professional and consistent and I am so impressed with all the support that we have had. Everything comes together like a puzzle. Even though all the activities we have done at ClementJames are very different, I see that they have the same purpose – it is about focusing on ourselves, to have a voice, to be empowered, to be relaxed."*

**Maryam, ClementJames client**



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# The Information, Advice & Guidance service at ClementJames

The Information, Advice and Guidance service at The ClementJames Centre is a generalist advice service offering support with a range of day-to-day issues as outlined in this document. This service is available to residents of Kensington & Chelsea, including anyone living in temporary accommodation under RBKC.

## What is the aim of the service?

Our service aims to help people to overcome the barriers, challenges and issues affecting their lives. This removes stress and uncertainty so that they can feel in control and pursue their goals.

We offer Information, Advice and Guidance in the form of one-to-one support from a trained advisor as well as group sessions. We always work to support clients to help themselves and it will be expected that, if a client is able, they will work outside of Information, Advice and Guidance appointments to resolve the issue themselves. It is likely advisors will set tasks for clients to complete after each session.

## How do I make an appointment/referral?

In order to access our Information, Advice & Guidance support, you can make a self-enquiry on our website via the following link: <https://clementjames.org/getting-support-at-the-clementjames-centre/>. Likewise, in order to refer a client you are working with to our Information, Advice & Guidance service, you can do so on our website via the following link: <https://clementjames.org/referring-for-support-at-the-clementjames-centre/>. If you are unable to access our website you can also call the ClementJames reception on 0207 221 8810 or email us at [advice@clementjames.org](mailto:advice@clementjames.org).

A member of the team will then aim to get back in touch within **two working days** to discuss your issue and book you in for a 'welcome meeting' with one of our triaging staff, before you are assigned an advisor to help with your issue.

We cannot offer support for all issues and the following pages of this document outline what we can and can't support with. If we cannot support someone we will always look to refer clients to somewhere that can.

Please note that during particularly busy times, we may take longer to contact you and appointments may be given two to three weeks in advance.

# Welfare Benefits Queries

(Including but not limited to Universal Credit, Carer's Allowance, Housing Benefit, PIP, Attendance Allowance, State Pension and moving from Legacy to Universal Credit benefits.)

## What we **can** help with:

- Completing a Benefits Calculator to ensure that clients are getting all benefits they are entitled to. Some of this may be undertaken by the Employment Skills Team
- Supporting clients to make applications for an eligible benefit
- Supporting clients to make calls (during the appointment slot) to the job centre or DWP to chase up delayed payments/mistakes to payments/change in circumstances/overpayments etc.
- Writing a Mandatory Reconsideration letter to appeal against a benefits decision
- Support with applying for a new benefit e.g. ESA/UC/PIP (We offer a maximum of two appointments respectively to apply for Universal Credit and Carers allowance)
- Completing an application for a Disabled Blue Badge or Freedom Pass
- Council Tax - applying for discounts, instalments etc.

## What we **can't** help with:

- Supporting the appeals process against benefits decisions, including attending tribunals and hearings as a representative. However, we can refer to organisations that can support with this
- Home visits to help complete PIP forms or assessments
- Complex benefits casework that requires specialist knowledge



# Grant Applications

At The ClementJames Centre, we are fortunate to be connected with a number of grant giving organisations that can support individual clients with funding for essential items when they are facing financial hardship or experiencing a crisis.

## What we **can** help with:

- We can support clients to research the grants available for their particular need e.g. by using Turn2us
- We can support clients with writing grant applications if they are in financial difficulty or experiencing a crisis
- If needed, a follow up appointment may be booked to collate any further evidence. The information that we need will be sent to the client prior to their appointment meeting. This will include a breakdown of their income and expenditure as well as a quote for/the price of the item they require
- Successful awards will usually be paid to ClementJames and then paid directly to the provider or company (e.g. for new furniture/white goods/a course etc.)

## What we **can't** help with:

- Unfortunately, we cannot support clients to apply for grants for non-essential items
- We cannot apply for grants for adaptations or medical aids as we don't have the medical expertise to complete these applications

## Please note:

- We can apply for a maximum of three grants for any one client
- We can't always guarantee that there will be a suitable grant available to suit the clients circumstances and needs

# Food Bank Referrals and Accessing Food

## What we **can** help with:

- Referring people to their local food bank. Most of our local food banks offer a maximum of 6 vouchers in a 12 month period
- Provide alternative options for emergency food e.g. The Nourish Hub

## What we **can't** help with:

- Lending money to pay for food
- Referring people to food banks if they have exhausted the amount of vouchers they are eligible for (different food banks have their own rules on this)
- Doing someone's shopping for them

# Community Housing Advice

The aim of our community housing advice is to provide local people with the knowledge they need to be able to address their housing issue themselves. We are only able to offer **one housing advice appointment per issue** but will provide you with a guide for how to resolve your housing issue yourself once the appointment is over.

## What we **can** help with:

- Housing Assistance Form/Homelessness Applications
- Accessing HomeSwapper
- Understanding the RBKC 'Home Connections' bidding system
- Reporting a repair or Anti-Social Behaviour concern
- Making a Housing Transfer Application
- Understanding a possession or eviction notice
- Disrepair
- Overcrowding
- Making a referral to Shelter for Advocacy/Housing Right Support

## What we **can't** help with:

- Due to our capacity, we are unable to take on any form of Housing Advocacy or provide legal support of any form. We are restricted to support **only** with the specific issues listed above

## Please note:

- We work in partnership with Shelter and will offer referrals where we believe that a client has taken steps to resolve their housing issue themselves first but cannot progress their issue any further without specialist support



# Community Advice

We know that a number of our clients benefit from support with simple issues due to language barriers or a lack of resources such as a computer or telephone.

In response to this, we run weekly 'community advice' sessions on Monday afternoons for smaller issues that do not require more than 30 minutes with an advisor to resolve. This is a friendly space where people can get help with day-to-day issues they may be facing.

We have a number of guides designed to help our clients to be able to resolve issues themselves and a 30 minute community advice appointment may be used to explain a 'how to' guide in order for clients to be able to deal with an issue independently.

**Below is a list of issues that we would typically refer for a 'Community Advice' appointment:**

- Setting up your Universal Credit claim
- Accessing/writing a message on your Universal Credit Journal
- Writing a complaint
- Responding to a parking ticket
- Writing or understanding a letter
- Consumer issues (i.e. correcting an error on an energy bill)
- Completing a passport application (providing the client has already been granted Citizenship)
- Disabled Parking 'Blue Badge' Application

We cannot offer more than three appointments for any single issue in our community advice sessions. If you or your client is solely looking for access to a computer to resolve an issue independently, it may be more appropriate for you/them to access our IT Drop-in which is held every Thursday from 11:30 am - 1 pm.

# Working in Partnership

## **Nucleus - Debt Advice**

- We currently offer debt advice appointments to ClementJames clients at a regular weekly session via a direct referral partnership
- If you are a professional from another service, please make a referral to Nucleus yourself directly. You can view information on how to do this on their website here: <https://www.nucleus.org.uk/debt-advice>

## **Shelter - Housing Advice**

- We currently have a direct referral partnership with Shelter's North Kensington Team who offer monthly appointments to clients referred through our service
- If you are a professional from another service and looking for support with a housing rights issue, please make the referral yourself directly via the Shelter website: <https://england.shelter.org.uk/>
- If your client requires advice with a simple housing issue, please refer to the 'Community Housing Advice' section of this document to find out what we can and can't help with

# When we can't help

There may be times where we realise that we are not the best organisation to help you resolve your issue and we may need to refer you to another organisation for more specialist support.

We will determine this by having a 'case review' with the IAG Team Leader or a Manager whenever any single issue has not been resolved in 10 sessions. In most cases we are unable to support people for more than 10 sessions for a single issue, but may offer support in exceptional circumstances. For more simple issues referred to one of our community advice sessions, we will have a 'case review' for any issue that is unable to be resolved after 3 appointments.

## When do we signpost/refer on?

- Debt and support around finances i.e. referring to Crosslight or Nucleus
- Domestic Violence i.e. referring to Angelou or the National Domestic Violence Helpline
- Homelessness or housing issues to local authority, Shelter, St Mungo's, Streetlink, etc.
- When legal advice / the expertise of a solicitor is needed
- Level 1 & 2 Immigration Advice
- Family and relationships (including divorce/separation/family mediation/contacting family members on a clients behalf etc.)
- Mental health support and counselling - referring to our Wellbeing Lead for advice



If you would like to find out more please  
visit our website [www.clementjames.org](http://www.clementjames.org),  
call us on **020 7221 8810**  
or email [advice@clementjames.org](mailto:advice@clementjames.org)

The ClementJames Centre  
95 Sirdar Road, London, W11 4EQ

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