

TOTTENHAM CLAIMANTS NEWS

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BY
CLAIMANTS
FOR
CLAIMANTS

NO. 1

Welcome to issue number 1 of TCN . This issue is a bit scrappy due to not many people being all that interested in helping put it out. If you want to help with the next issue contact us at the Claimants Union.



WHO WE ARE

We are a group of people, living in Tottenham who are claiming benefit off the DHSS (unemployed, pensioners, disabled, single parents etc).

we meet twice a week to help people out with problems with the SS. This includes informing people of their rights, helping them fill out forms and, if people want, going up to the SS with them to help them argue their case/give moral support etc.

However we are not 'experts' on the social security system, nor are there any paid workers in Claimants Union's just ordinary claimants who are fed up with being hassled by counter-clerks, fraud squads, and the system in general. We realise that it is not enough to just claim our rights and that if we just sit back and accept what meagre amount we get, then that amount will get less and less.

Already this year the government have started to look at what benefits they can cut back to save them money and make our lives more difficult.

Tottenham Claimants Union have organised, or been involved with protests about fuel prices including pickets of Gas and Electricity showrooms, cheaper Transport for claimants, and various actions against the Fraud squads including leafletting, flyposting, pickets as well as supporting claimants who take more direct action against them. The Specialist Claims Control Units (SCCUM) are coming to Tottenham soon. These are a particularly nasty bunch who try and scare people into withdrawing their claims. We will be planning actions against them and anyone who wants to help is welcome to get in touch with us.

As well as the serious stuff we are trying to get more social events going- gigs, outings etc. and basically trying to kill the myth that if you havnt got a job you've got to be lazy, bored or depressed.

We meet every Tuesday and Thursday 1-3pm at the back of the Unemployed Centre, 628 High rd N.17. Everyone Welcome.



Remember:

You could
be able to
get more
money for
heating, Laundry
Diet and
much, much
more. Claim
for



As claimants most of us know that the idea of a caring Welfare State is a bad joke. The social services exist to control people-keeping them in line and preventing them from organising together to fight the causes of their oppression.

One way they do this is through forced adoptions, (when children are adopted against their parents or their own wishes). Working class families who suffer most from pressures like bad housing and noisy traffic sometimes ask the social services to care temporarily for their children, because of illness, breakdown of a relationship or bereavement has left them unable to cope. Increasingly however the SS are refusing to return the children, preferring instead to place them with generally wealthy foster parents hoping to adopt.

When the parents go to court to try and regain custody of the chil(ren) they find that judges and magistrates nearly always back up the SS no matter how illegally the SS have behaved. If they try and publicise what has happened it is treated as 'Contempt of Court'.

Most of these parents are not batterers their families are split up because they are not approved of by the SS either because of poverty, being a one parent family or some other social 'wrong'. In other words these adoptions are another attack on the independence and privacy of ordinary people.

Parents in these situations are forming 'Parents Aid' groups such as those in Islington and Harlow to help each other in their struggle to be reunited with their children, and to campaign for an end to forced adoptions.

What help is needed

In this situation parents are doing their best but need help in all sorts of ways...

- *to fight for all the necessities of life as a right for all
- *to end State harassment and to publicise what's going on
- *help (from neighbours, friends and others in the family etc) with looking after their children, relieving some of the pressure and sharing some of the responsibilities
- *moral support - it's not parents, but the whole set up that's at fault.

PARENTS AND CHILDRENS SUPPORT CAMPAIGN

There's a special need for support groups for parents and children, because it's so difficult, with all the pressures and harassment they face, for them to organise alone.

TOGETHER IN CARE

For anyone in Haringey who is, or has been, in Council Care, to support each other.

Meet Wednesday 12 midday at
Tottenham Law Centre,
15 West Green Road,
N15

Phone: Marjorie on 802-0911

Contact Parents Aid (Islington)
Tel: 832-6552 (nearest group)
37A Grosvenor Avenue, Islington

Divorcee Helen Smith, 31, and her daughter Natasha, 11, died from hypothermia in a council block at Southwark, South London.

HUNDREDS of North Londoners will go cold this Christmas because they are too poor to pay their fuel bills.

Yet another victim to the cold.

Some Labour M.P. pretends to be concerned and wonders...

Just goes to show how much M.Ps know about our lives, London is the richest city in the world... FOR THE RICH.

“How can it happen in one of the world's richest capital cities?”

FIGHT BACK NOW

A NATIONWIDE alert is to be issued by Scotland Yard on "black box" meter fiddling which is costing the electricity industry an estimated £120 million a year.

They did.

The one and only
CLAIMANTS UNION SOCIAL CLUB
presents

THE * SCROUNGERS * BENEFIT

EVERY FRIDAY

7 to 11 AT CROUCH HILL RECREATION CENTRE
off CROUCH HILL OR HILLRISE ROAD

LIVE
ENTERTAINMENT

EVERYONE'S
FAVOURITE
RECORDS

FREE

BAP

DANCING

FOR ALL
CLAIMANTS,
FRIENDS,
AND FAMILIES...

RELAXING

THE CLAIMANTS UNION SOCIAL CLUB IS RUN FOR AND BY CLAIMANTS.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PERFORM, OR OTHERWISE HELP, YOU'RE WELCOME, BUT
PLEASE CONTACT US DURING THE WEEK. MONDAY, 2-5pm 272 7569 or 607 8271

TUESDAY 10-1, WEDNESDAY 2-5, 272 7569, THURSDAY 1-4, 801 5629, FRIDAY 10-1, 837 8078
607 8271

Practical Claiming

SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFIT RATES

ADULT RATES

Couple	45.55(57.10)
Single householder	28.10(35.10)
Non-householder	22.45(28.35)
Homeless person	29.40

CHILDREN

Age 0 - 10	9.60
11 - 15	14.35
16 - 17	17.30

BOARDERS

Single person	9.25(10.30)
Couple	18.50(20.60)
Child age 0 - 10	3.10
11 - 15	4.75
16 - 17	5.55

For meals not provided:

Breakfast	7 x 1.10 = 7.70
Lunch	9 x 1.55 = 10.85
Dinner	7 x 1.55 = 10.85

WEEKLY ADDITIONS

Central heating:	
1 - 4 rooms	2.10
5+ rooms	4.20

Heating additions:	
lower rate	2.10
higher rate	5.20

Diet additions:	
lower rate	1.55
middle rate	3.60
higher rate	10.95

Laundry costs over 50 pence	
Baths	0.25

HOUSING COSTS

Apply to Town Hall for cost of rent & rates.	
DHSS pay interest on mortgage.	
Non-householder	3.30

TOTAL

Take away all income from any source (eg Child Benefit). But you are allowed to keep £4 of any part time earnings, also single parents keep half of earnings between £4 & £20.

TOTAL

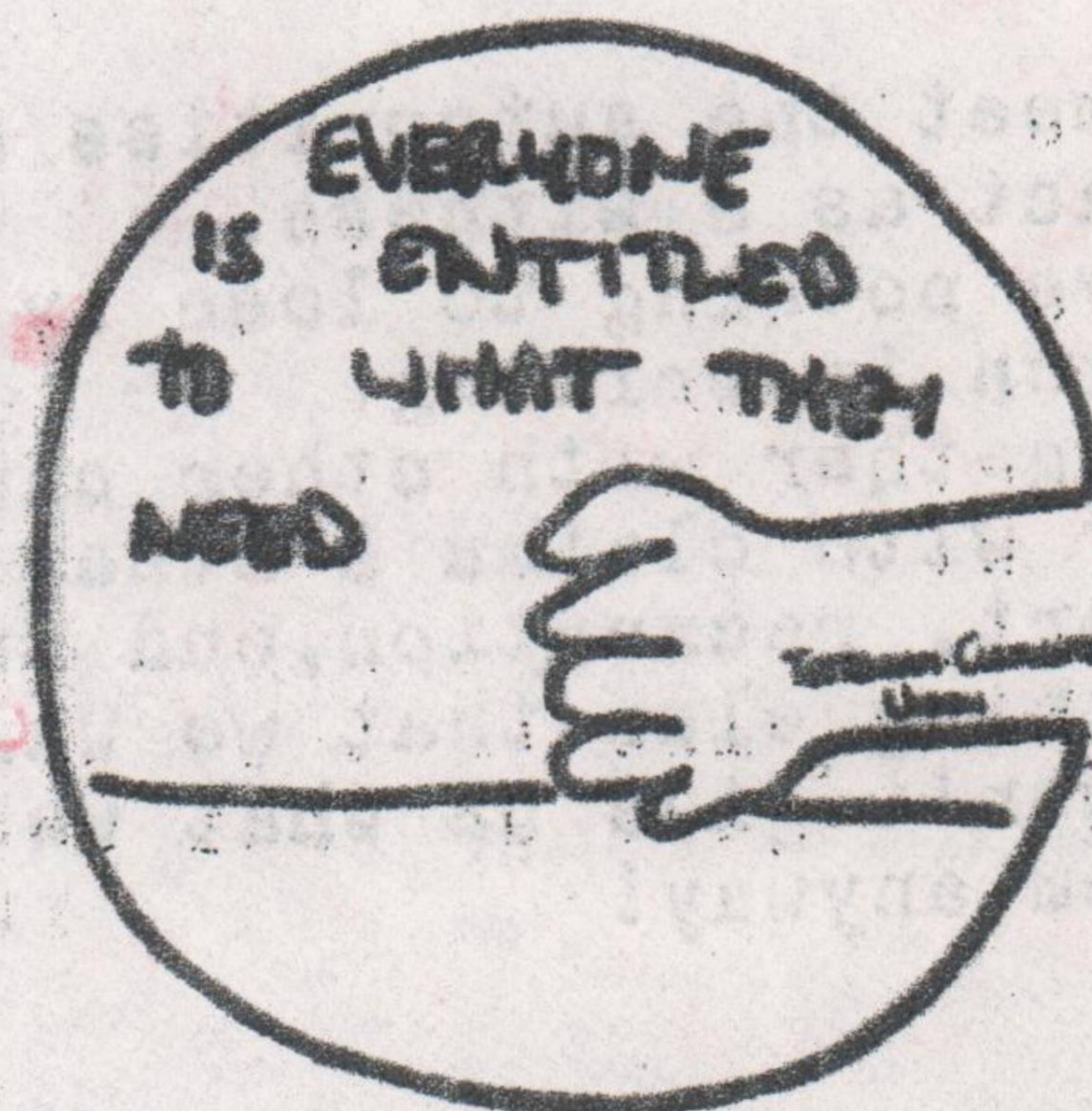
Long Term Rates are shown in brackets. All claimants, except the unemployed, get this higher rate after 12 months on Sup. Ben. If you sign on but can't get a sick note from your doctor you will eventually qualify for the rate.

Heating Additions - Claim if your home is difficult to heat because it is draughty, damp, large etc.; or if anyone in your family is convalescing or has an illness like bronchitis, rheumatism, arthritis, anemia etc.

Diet Additions - Claim if anyone in your family is recovering from an illness or operation; or has diabetes, ulcers, TB, problems with throat, kidneys, liver etc.

Laundry Addition - Claim if you do not have proper washing & drying facilities or if you do more laundry than normal (eg because of incontinence).

Baths Addition - Claim if anyone in your family needs more than 1 bath per week for medical reasons.



Single Payments for Clothing

Pregnant women can claim money for clothing when they out-grow their old clothes; and also money for all the clothes, pram, cot, etc. needed for the new baby. Other claimants can get money for clothes if their old ones are lost or damaged (eg in a fire or stolen); if there has been a rapid loss or gain in weight; if there is a need for extra or special clothing (eg because of illness or disability); if your need is caused by other than "normal wear & tear", or health & safety will be threatened if you don't have them.

Single Payments for Furniture & Household Equipment

Claim if you have children; if someone in your family is sick or mentally or physically disabled; if you or your partner is pregnant; if you have just come out of prison; if you are unemployed & have been on Supplementary Benefit for at least 6 months.

Fraud

Fraud Officers at the DHSS usually suspect fraud for one of 4 reasons:

- i) An anonymous letter sent to them, often from a hostile neighbour, accusing a claimant, for example, of working on the side.
- ii) Contradictions in claimants statements when they claim benefit, especially where several claimants live in the same house or flat.
- iii) Where a claimant has been working on the side and using his/her real name, address & National Insurance number. State records of stamps and tax eventually show that a claimant has been working and claiming.
- iv) Just to make a nuisance of themselves!

If you are accused of fraud say & sign nothing, until you have got advice.

If your benefit is stopped make a new claim straight away. At any interview make sure you have a friend with you to give you support. Don't be intimidated.

Extras

Many people find other ways to get what they need, for instance by shoplifting or fiddling gas & electric meters. These things are easy to do but people risk fines or prison if they are caught. All this should not be necessary because there are no shortages of food, gas, electricity, clothes, & everything else that makes life comfortable. Anyone who gets into trouble just because they want to eat or keep warm deserves our full support. The real criminals are those who manage the system which controls our lives, putting power & money before people, causing poverty and want. This system stinks & no one should be ashamed of taking from it what it refuses to give.

Tactics

Never meet the authorities alone, always take along a friend to back you up & act as a witness.

You have nothing to lose by claiming. If you are refused, appeal against the decision in writing.

Join together with other claimants (eg in a Claimants Union) to help each other with claims & other problems. Also to press for concessions in transport, recreation, end fuel cut-offs, get decent homes, more money, and everything else that we want. In the likely event that the authorities can't or won't give us what we want then together we have the strength to get them anyway!

TOTTENHAM CLAIMANTS UNION

UNEMPLOYED CENTRE 628 HIGH RD. N.17.

MEET TUESDAY AND THURSDAY 1-3pm

FIGHT
BACK
TOGETHER!