

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two hands. The left hand is holding a stack of several coins, including gold and silver ones. The right hand is holding a single coin. Overlaid on the image are three white gear icons of varying sizes, arranged in a cluster. The largest gear is positioned over the right hand and the coin it is holding. The other two gears are smaller and positioned above and to the left of the largest one.

# Health Justice Partnerships

**in the NHS**

An intervention  
against poverty  
and health  
inequality

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## What are Health Justice Partnerships?

Health Justice Partnerships are collaborations between health services (primary, acute and mental health) and organisations specialising in welfare rights.

In Health Justice Partnerships, people are offered welfare rights advice alongside their health care.

Welfare rights are the rights people have in relation to social welfare law, including:

- Welfare benefits
- Debt
- Housing
- Employment
- Education
- Community care
- Immigration

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## Where do they exist?

Health Justice Partnerships exist across the UK. Some are local, covering a small area or single site. Others serve wider counties and regions.

They exist in many types of health services, including:

- GP practices
- Hospitals
- Mental health services
- Hospices
- Maternity services
- ... and others

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## How do they work in practice?

Welfare rights advice can be provided by:

- Local authorities (money advice or welfare rights units)
- Charities (diverse local providers)
- Law centres and other specialist advice agencies

There are different ways that partnerships can be designed to fit in with the local healthcare setting.

In practice, welfare rights teams will often:

- Take referrals from healthcare professionals
- Offer advice appointments for patients in their place of care
- Become members of multi-disciplinary care teams



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## Why are Health Justice Partnerships important?

The cost of living crisis is creating acute hardship for people already in the most difficult circumstances. But it can be very difficult for people to obtain the support they are entitled to: evidence shows that people with welfare needs are often unaware of their legal rights and don't know how to access the advice necessary to enforce them.

People with poor health and disability are more likely to experience welfare rights issues, because they may be unable to work or have additional support needs.

Welfare rights issues are harmful to health if left unresolved:

- Avoidably, people will live in poverty, poor conditions and stressful circumstances.
- This can cause significant anxiety and can directly impact mental health and wellbeing.
- It can also lead to social isolation, lack of adequate food and warmth. This can affect both physical and mental health.

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## What can Health Justice Partnerships achieve?

Health Justice Partnerships can:

- Enable the health service to respond more effectively to people's needs, tackling poverty and the social determinants of health that impact on health and create health inequalities.
- Improve social and economic circumstances by resolving problems with income, debt, housing and other welfare rights issues.
- Support health and wellbeing, especially improving mental health by relieving pressures and anxieties caused by poverty and social welfare problems.
- Support healthcare teams with the administration that welfare problems can create, enabling them to focus more time on caring.
- Provide seamless support and a patient-focussed service.



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## Where can I find more information?

Please visit the UCL website:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/health-of-public/health-justice-partnerships>

Or contact the UCL research team:

[health-justice@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:health-justice@ucl.ac.uk)

