

# **A New Future for Social Security**

## **Consultation on Social Security in Scotland**

Summary version



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

# **A New Future for Social Security**

## **Consultation on Social Security in Scotland**

Summary version

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# CONTENTS

<p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to this consultation</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u><a href="#">Part 1: A Principled Approach</a></u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixing the principles in legislation</li> <li>• Outcomes and the user experience</li> <li>• Delivering social security in Scotland</li> <li>• Equality and low income</li> <li>• Independent advice and scrutiny</li> </ul> 	
<p><b><u><a href="#">Part 2: The Devolved Benefits</a></u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Benefits</li> <li>• Carer’s Allowance</li> <li>• Winter Fuel &amp; Cold Weather Payments</li> <li>• Funeral Payments</li> <li>• Sure Start Maternity Grant</li> <li>• Discretionary Housing Payments</li> <li>• Job Grant</li> <li>• Universal Credit flexibilities</li> </ul> 	
<p><b><u><a href="#">Part 3: Operational Policy</a></u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information, advice and representation</li> <li>• Complaints, reviews and appeals</li> <li>• Residency and cross-border issues</li> <li>• Managing overpayments and debt</li> <li>• Fraud</li> <li>• Protecting your information</li> <li>• Uprating</li> </ul> 	
	<p><b><u><a href="#">Respondent Information Form</a></u></b></p>	

## Summary version of the Consultation on Social Security in Scotland

The Scottish Government is committed to working with people across Scotland, to determine how best to use the new social security powers which will be devolved by the Scotland Act 2016. We believe that there should be opportunities for everyone to participate in the debates and decisions that matter to them, regardless of their circumstances or backgrounds.

A full consultation document, the [Consultation on Social Security in Scotland<sup>1</sup>](#), and the events and engagement sessions that we will hold after its publication represents the next step in facilitating this participation. Holding an inclusive, informed and wide-ranging discussion will be essential to develop the necessary legislation and implement these new social security powers.

We recognise that this consultation is lengthy and, at times, complex but we still want to make it as accessible as possible. **That is why we have published this shorter, summary version of the consultation document, to help you decide which sections of the longer document you want to complete.**

Throughout this document you will also find references to the full consultation and should you wish to complete it, links will take you to the relevant webpages.

We are inviting responses to this consultation by **Friday, 28 October 2016**.

We have also made accessible alternative versions, including an EasyRead version, of the summary document available. This consultation is also available in alternate formats on request, including large print, braille, BSL and other languages. We are happy to receive responses in alternative formats, e.g. spoken responses, other languages etc. British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)

Please contact us by email at [socialsecurityconsultation@gov.scot](mailto:socialsecurityconsultation@gov.scot) or telephone on 0131 244 7763 or in writing at Social Security Consultation, 5th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU to request an alternative version.

**We are also arranging an extensive programme of stakeholder events, which will take place after the consultation has been launched.** These will be organised in partnership with a range of representative groups and other organisations. We hope that these events will provide opportunities for as many people who want to take part as possible, to come along to an accessible, friendly event and have their say.

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<sup>1</sup>You can find the full document at: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-security/social-security-in-scotland>

We will circulate details of these stakeholder events in our weekly newsletter which is sent out every Friday. If you would like details of our stakeholder events, you can sign up for our newsletter either by following this link - <http://register.scotland.gov.uk/subscribe> emailing us using the email address below or by phoning 0131 244 7763.

You can view and respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-security/social-security-in-scotland>. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of **Friday, 28 October 2016**.

If you are unable to respond online, please send your response, along with the completed [Respondent Information Form](#) to:

[socialsecurityconsultation@gov.scot](mailto:socialsecurityconsultation@gov.scot)

or

Social Security Consultation

5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
5 Atlantic Quay  
150 Broomielaw  
Glasgow  
G2 8LU.

### **Handling your response**

If you respond using Citizen Space (<http://consult.scotland.gov.uk/>) you will be directed to the Respondent Information Form. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be published.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the [Respondent Information Form](#). If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

### **Next steps in the process**

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material,

responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.scotland.gov.uk>. If you use Citizen Space to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so.

### **Comments and complaints**

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to:

Chris Boyland

5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
5 Atlantic Quay  
150 Broomielaw  
Glasgow,  
G2 8LU.

or

[socialsecurityconsultation@gov.scot](mailto:socialsecurityconsultation@gov.scot)

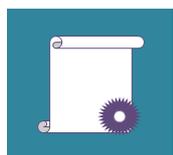
## Part 1: A Principled Approach

In Part 1, we will look at how our vision and principles can be reflected in the following ways:

- In our legislation
- In our outcomes and the user experience
- In deciding how best to deliver social security benefits and services
- In addressing equality issues

We will also consider the role that independent advice and scrutiny can play, in keeping us to our promises and ensuring that we deliver what we say we will.

**This summary version of the full consultation only provides limited text. To see all of the consultation text [please click here to access the full consultation](#)<sup>2</sup>.**



### Fixing the principles in legislation

We are considering ways in which we can support our principles, such as the right of the individual to be treated with dignity and respect, in legislation.

The two options that we have considered are:

**Option A - A Claimant Charter** – creating an implicit social contract between the Scottish Government and the people of Scotland - meaning that the Scottish Government, its officials and its social security agency should commit to treating individuals claiming benefits in a certain way, in return for our staff being treated in the same way. Rather than just being implied or unwritten, this commitment could be set out in a claimant charter. This could be developed on a similar basis to [The Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities](#)<sup>3</sup>, which sets out what patients can expect when they use NHS services, and also details what the NHS in Scotland expects in return, to help it work effectively and make sure its resources are used responsibly.

**Option B: Writing principles into legislation** – for example, the forthcoming Social Security Bill, to be informed by this consultation, could contain principles which would help guarantee dignity and respect through openness, fairness and impartiality

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<sup>2</sup> <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-security/social-security-in-scotland>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/resource/0039/00390989.pdf>

for all. Examples of this approach can be found in the [Tribunals \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)<sup>4</sup> and the [Welfare Funds \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#)<sup>5</sup>.

There are some key differences between the two approaches which we have identified. For example, it's possible that we would be able to include more detail in a charter than we would be able to set out in legislation. A charter might be more accessible and more easily available for people to read and refer to than passages of legislation. On the other hand, writing the principles out in legislation might be easier to enforce in practice. We would like your views on these two approaches.

[Please click here to go to the section on our principles in the full consultation document](#)



## **Outcomes and the user experience**

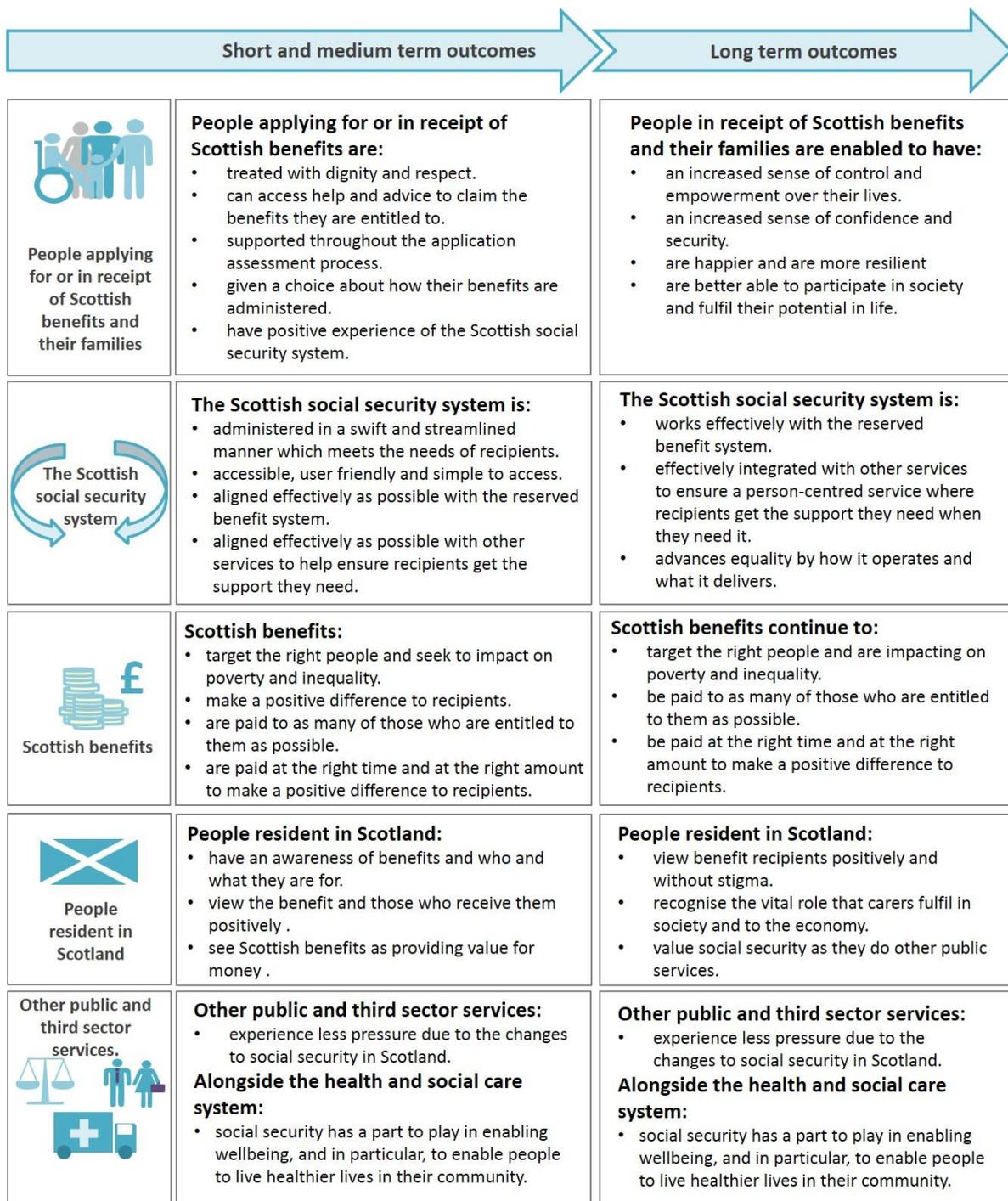
The Scottish Government has worked with individuals, groups and organisations to develop a set of high-level short/medium and long-term outcomes. In March, we published a paper called, "[The Strategic Case for Change and the Governance of Social Security in Scotland](#)",<sup>6</sup> which included a set of short/medium and long-term outcomes. These outcomes will inform the social security system in Scotland and help us to evaluate its functions into the future. In other words, this list of outcomes is a statement of what we want our system to achieve. The table below sets out these short, medium and longer term outcomes.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/10/enacted>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/5/contents>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00494859.pdf>



As well as thinking about the outcomes we want to achieve, we are also considering the way in which we want to go about providing social security services in Scotland. This includes ensuring that:

- Communications are clear and written in Plain English with respectful language and tone which does not stigmatise
- Individuals have the option to choose the method of communication that they are most comfortable with

- We involve people who receive the devolved benefits, or in other words ‘co-produce’ the design, development and testing of new systems, to ensure the technology works well for the people who need to use it. Modern IT systems could underpin a more sensitive approach to this

We would like your views on the outcomes which we have identified. In particular, we would like to know if you think there are any other outcomes, which should also be considered.

[Please click here to go to the section on outcomes in our full consultation document](#)



## **Delivering social security in Scotland**

In this section, we would like you to consider how we should **deliver** social security in Scotland. On 1 March, 2016, the then Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners Rights, Alex Neil MSP, announced to the Scottish Parliament that, “we intend, after having examined all the available options, to set up a new social security agency for Scotland<sup>7</sup>.”

In time, our new social security system, operating as a single cohesive whole, with the agency at its heart, will deliver the outcomes which we described in the table on page 7. However, the overall system, with the agency and these core capabilities embedded, could still deliver the outcomes in different ways. At one end of the spectrum, the system could be configured with the agency at the centre delivering all benefits, at the other end, the role of existing Scottish public sector organisations could be extended to take on responsibility for social security.

The Scottish Government has already carried out a series of workshops with internal and external stakeholders to consider what is needed to deliver social security in Scotland. To help us progress this work, we would like your views on a Scottish social security system, with a new agency at its heart. The following prompts may be of some help, when you are thinking about this:

**Should the social security agency in Scotland be responsible for providing benefits in cash only or offer a choice of goods and cash?**

**How can we best harness digital services for social security delivery in Scotland?**

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<sup>7</sup> Scottish Parliament; Official Report, Meeting of the Parliament 1 March, col. 42

**Should social security in Scotland make some provision for face to face contact?**

**Who should deliver social security medical assessments for disability related benefits?**

**Should we, as much as possible, aim to deliver social security through already available public sector services and organisations?**

**Should any aspect of social security be delivered by others such as the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, not for profit organisations or the private sector?**

**[Please click here to go to the section on delivery in our full consultation document](#)**



### **Independent advice and scrutiny**

At the present time, there are two independent, UK social security advisory committees, called the Social Security Advisory Committee and the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council, which scrutinise draft regulations and provide advice to Ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on social security matters.

Members of both committees are appointed by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and are drawn from representatives of business, employees, social security law, academia, and the scientific sector.

The UK Government has decided that, after devolution, both committees should provide advice to UK Ministers and the Northern Ireland Social Security Agency only. This means that the Scottish Parliament will be able to determine arrangements for the future scrutiny of social security in Scotland. We would like to know if you think there should be an independent scrutiny body in Scotland, like the existing committees, after devolution and, if you do, how you would like a Scottish social security scrutiny body to be set up.

We are also exploring whether there might be a need for an independent function to oversee standards. In the past, DWP had a Decision Making Standards Committee, which reported to the Chief Executives of Jobcentre Plus, the Pensions Service and the Disability and Carers Service. The committee advised on the accuracy of reports, on standards of decision making and recommended improvements. We would like you to tell us if you think there should be a statutory body to oversee Scottish social security decision making standards and how you think that body should operate.

[Please click here to go to the section on independent scrutiny in our full consultation document](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

## Questions

**If you have printed this document or are reading it in paper form, please use the space provided below to write down your answers for Part 1. Please use additional paper if you wish.**

In Part 1, we have set out approaches and proposals on:

- Fixing the principles in legislation
- Delivering social security
- Independent advice and scrutiny

You may want to provide feedback on all of these or just some of them. Please tell us which proposals you are providing feedback on when you answer the two key questions below:

What do you think about the proposals outlined in Part 1?

**Do you have any further views on the topics covered in Part 1?**

## Part 2: Devolved Benefits

We would like to discuss powers over specific benefits which will transfer to Scotland. We will refer to these as the 'devolved benefits'. We understand that, when thinking about a new Scottish social security system, many people will think first and foremost about how this will affect the benefits that they currently receive. That is why we want to be clear, in relation to all of the devolved benefits, what we are considering and how we will take users views into account.

**This summary version of the full consultation only provides limited text. To see all of the consultation text [please click here to access the full consultation](#)<sup>8</sup>.**

Powers are being devolved over the following benefits:-

- [Ill Health and Disability Benefits](#) which means - Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Attendance Allowance (AA), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Industrial Injuries Disablement benefit (IIDB)
- [Carer's Allowance](#)
- [Sure Start Maternity Grants](#) (which we propose should be replaced by a Best Start Grant)
- [Funeral Payments](#)
- [Winter Fuel and Cold Weather Payments](#)
- [Discretionary Housing Payments](#)
- Some powers in relation to [Universal Credit](#) (i.e. to split payments between household members)

The Scottish Government also proposes to use its new powers in order to introduce a new [Job Grant](#) for young people, who have been unemployed for more than 6 months, and who are entering the labour market.

[Return to Contents](#)

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<sup>8</sup> <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-security/social-security-in-scotland>



### **III Health and Disability Benefits**

We wish to seek your views on existing UK disability benefits and how they operate. We would like to ask you some questions that will help us plan the transfer of powers over these benefits to the Scottish Government and the type of reform that is required.

Over 500,000 people in Scotland receive these benefits – currently delivered through Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Personal Independence Payment – and this is an opportunity to gather views, insights and experiences that can help the Scottish Government to improve the process and to ensure that dignity and respect are firmly built into the new system.

We'd like to know what is right and wrong with the current system and the specific areas for change within all aspects of the process, such the criteria for making awards, the application, the assessment, the award and the overall purpose of the benefits.

In the short term, a secure and smooth transition to devolved disability benefit payments will be our priority. This is to ensure that transfer arrangements are well communicated and every recipient continues to receive their benefits. But, we are committed to improvements as soon as practicable. For example, a consistent theme that has emerged from our engagement with people over the past year has been that there should be a transparent and easy-to-access process of application, and that the approach to assessment and consideration of people's claims needs to be reformed to make sure it treats people with dignity and respect.

We are also looking at ways in which we can help lower costs for disabled people and carers. One way of doing this could be by looking to learn from the success of the Motability scheme. We would like to offer recipients the option to spend some their award on other services. For example, we have heard how disabled people face higher energy costs and we would like to offer discounted energy tariffs.

We also have aspirations for the longer term. For example, we want to ensure that disability benefits work as effectively as possible with other devolved services such as health and social care and housing, and to explore the potential for a 'whole-of-life' disability benefit that is responsive to people's needs at different stages of their lives.

**[Please click here to go to the section on disability benefits in our full consultation document](#)**



## **Carer's Allowance**

There are around 759,000 unpaid adult carers in Scotland who fulfil a vital role in our society by caring for family, friends and neighbours, including people with multiple and complex needs.

Caring can be a rewarding and positive experience for both carers and those being cared for. However, caring is also associated with poor psychological wellbeing and physical health. It can restrict opportunities to participate fully in society, including in work and education.

The Scottish Government is committed to increasing Carer's Allowance so that it is paid at the same level as Jobseeker's Allowance. That is almost an 18% increase and eligible carers will each get around £600 more a year. We will also consider the introduction of a Young Carers Allowance to provide extra support for young people with significant caring responsibilities.

We want to develop a Scottish carer's benefit which helps deliver positive experiences and outcomes for carers, and is embedded in our wider carers' strategy. That means it should help, not hinder, access to opportunities to lead a fulfilling life beyond caring. This could be through better joining up with devolved services, and in the longer term, addressing the barriers to work and study in the current Carer's Allowance. This has to be achieved within the resources available and integrated with the wider social security system.

[Please click here to go to the section on Carer's Allowance in our full consultation document](#)



## **Best Start Grant**

The Scottish Government proposes to introduce a new 'Best Start Grant', which will replace the existing Sure Start Maternity Grant, which pays qualifying families £500 on the birth of their first child only. The Best Start Grant will increase that payment to £600. It will also make a payment of £300 on the birth of second and subsequent children, and two new payments of £250 when children begin nursery and again when they start school.

The support provided through the new Best Start Grant will play an important part in reducing inequalities and will help close the gap in educational attainment. Our aim is to design a benefit that is easy to access and that provides effective support to

families at key transitions in the early years, as part of a wider package of early years support.

We wish to explore the important decisions to be made in designing the new benefit and consider the various options available.

[Please click here to go to the section on the Best Start Grant in our full consultation document](#)



## Funeral Payments

The current DWP funeral payment is a grant for people on certain low income benefits who are responsible for paying for a funeral.

The Scottish Government sees the funeral payment as one of the ways to help tackle funeral poverty, and want to reach more people with the funeral payment to reduce the need for borrowing. We also want to create a more predictable benefit, so that people can make better informed decisions when they are committing to paying for a funeral.

We are seeking views on how you think this could be achieved.

[Please click here to go to the section on the Funeral Payments in our full consultation document](#)



## Winter Fuel & Cold Weather Payments

The **Winter Fuel Payment** is a universal, annual tax-free payment made to pensioners to help towards their winter heating costs. In 2014-15 (the most recent statistics), over 1 million individuals received a Winter Fuel Payment in Scotland, with a total expenditure of over £180 million.

**Cold Weather Payments** are means-tested payments designed to help those on low incomes meet additional fuel costs during periods of cold weather. In 2015-16, there were an estimated 415,000 individuals eligible for Cold Weather Payments in Scotland with 119,000 actually receiving a payment and a total expenditure of £3.4 million.

[Please click here to go to the section on the Winter Fuel and Cold Weather Payments in our full consultation document](#)



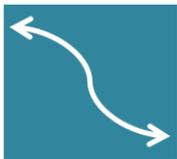
## **Discretionary Housing Payments**

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are currently made by local authorities, with guidance from DWP, and are aimed at helping people who need further financial assistance to meet their housing costs.

Individuals whose housing benefit or Universal Credit (UC) has been reduced as a result of welfare changes such as the 'bedroom tax', the benefit cap or Local Housing Allowance can be awarded a DHP.

We propose that DHPs continue to operate in the same way once the Scottish Parliament has full control over all DHP funding.

[Please click here to go to the section on Discretionary Housing Payments in our full consultation document](#)



## **Universal Credit flexibilities**

The Scotland Act 2016 provides Scottish Ministers with some flexibilities over the way UC is calculated and paid. The Scottish flexibilities are being introduced to make it easier for claimants to manage their UC payments. These are:

- Having the option of being paid UC twice a month rather than monthly
- Having the option of the rent element being paid direct to social landlords

These changes are intended to give the claimant more choice and control over their UC payments. Draft regulations for the first two flexibilities are being written and a further technical consultation is planned for these.

We also have the potential to introduce other flexibilities including the opportunity to offer tenants in the private rented sector the same choice of having their rent paid directly to their landlord and the power to vary the existing plans for single household payments of UC. These are the proposals we want to ask about in this consultation.

[Please click here to go to the section on Universal Credit Flexibilities in our full consultation document](#)



## **Job Grant**

The Scottish Government proposes to introduce a new Job Grant to help young people aged 16-24 who are returning to work after a period of 6 months unemployment, and would be payment of £100, or £250 for those who have children. We plan to supplement this cash payment with free bus travel for a three month period.

[Please click here to go to the section on the Job Grant in our full consultation document](#)

[Return to Contents](#)

## Questions

**If you have printed this document or are reading it in paper form, please use the space provided below to write down your answers for Part 2. Please use additional paper if you wish.**

**In Part 2, we have set out approaches and proposals on:**

- Ill Health and Disability Benefits
- Carer's Allowance
- Best Start Grant
- Funeral Payments
- Winter Fuel and Cold Weather Payments
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Universal Credit
- Job Grant

**You may want to provide feedback on all of these or just some of them. Please tell us which proposals you are providing feedback on when you answer the two key questions below:**

**What do you think about the proposals outlined in Part 2?**

**Do you have any further views on the topics covered in Part 2?**

## Part 3: Operational Policy

Part 3 looks at the strategic functions that the social security system will need to carry out in order to operate competently. This means functions that aren't specific to any individual benefit but could apply to all of the devolved benefits. We refer to these functions as 'operational policy' areas'.

**This section relates to anyone with an interest in social security in Scotland.**

**This summary version of the full consultation only provides limited text. To see all of the consultation text: [please click here to access the full consultation](#)<sup>9</sup>.**



### Advice and representation

#### Advice

There is a clear consensus that the right advice can have a transformative effect on service delivery by guiding people in need to the right support at the right times, assisting with processes such as applications and appeals and increasing take up. The Scottish Government wants ensure that people who need to access services are able to do so. We recognise that the transfer of responsibility for the devolved benefits, from DWP to a Scottish social security agency will place new requirements on the advice sector in Scotland that will need to be understood and managed.

The Scottish Government intends to work closely with the publicly funded advice sector to assess its current capacity and capability and identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and key risks. This will help us to:

- Understand the key drivers affecting advice services now and in the future
- Identify ways in which organisations and individuals can make the most of new opportunities, and manage any additional complexity resulting from the transfer of responsibility for social security to Scotland
- Find out if we can harness the transfer of responsibility for the devolved benefits to drive improvements to the provision of publicly funded advice in Scotland

As part of this work, we want to use this consultation to ask for peoples' views on the publicly funded advice that is currently provided. We would like you to think about the role that publicly funded advice providers should play in the development of a new

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<sup>9</sup> <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-security/social-security-in-scotland>

Scottish social security system and whether the transfer of the devolved benefits to Scotland could be used to drive improvements in the provision of publicly funded advice.

[Please click here to go to the section on advice in our full consultation document](#)



## **Complaints, reviews and appeals**

We want to provide high quality services and information to all who interact with Scotland's social security system. We recognise, however, that there will be occasions when standards that people experience fall short of this vision. It's important, therefore, that an effective complaints handling procedure is put in place.

We would like your views on the best way to handle individuals' comments, concerns and complaints. In particular, we believe that internal reviews would present an opportunity to improve decision making, by allowing the agency to scrutinise the initial decision and we would like you gives us your views on how a Scottish internal review process should work.

A key part of ensuring access to social security is by making sure that people are able to challenge decisions that they do not agree with. For this to happen, there must be an effective appeals process that is accessible to all. We are therefore committed to providing an appeals process for devolved benefits which is transparent and accessible, with guaranteed timescales for decisions. We propose that appeals against decisions made in relation to the devolved benefits should be decided by a tribunal and we would like you tell us what you think about this approach.

[Please click here to go to the section on complaints, reviews and appeals in our full consultation document](#)



## **Residency and cross-border issues**

When Scotland begins delivering devolved benefits, there is a possibility that some cross border issues may arise. We will need to manage new administrative borders between the different social security regimes within Great Britain - i.e. between the social security systems in Scotland and England and Wales, and between Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Scottish Government will need to set out who is entitled to the benefits it will deliver. This includes setting eligibility criteria about residency status for those who have come to the UK, residency status within Scotland and, where appropriate, how we define that someone receives devolved Scottish benefits rather than reserved UK benefits.

The Scottish Government expects that a residence test will be based on “habitual residence”. This means that assessment should be based on where a person is residing, and the reasons why they are residing there. The Scottish Government expects that all devolved benefits will include residency status criteria, amongst the eligibility criteria which will determine entitlement to each benefit. We would like you to tell us what you think about this approach.

[Please click here to go to the section on residency and cross-border issues in our full consultation document](#)



## **Managing overpayments and debt**

Errors which result in overpayments reduce the amount of public money available to be spent on those who need it. Therefore, there must be controls in the system, to spot errors and put them right. We recognise that overpayments made by the social security system are often made as a result of error, either by public sector officials or by individuals themselves. Overpayments which are not the result of an error by the individual making the claim will not usually be recovered.

If we do seek to recover an overpayment, this does not mean that the individual is being sanctioned and it does not mean that we think the individual has attempted to commit fraud. The Scottish Government will not necessarily seek to replicate current DWP arrangements and processes for dealing with overpayments. However, we do want to gather users’ views on the current arrangements so that we can make an assessment as to what might be appropriate for Scotland. We would like you to tell us if the way that overpayments are currently recovered could be improved.

[Please click here to go to the section on overpayments and debt in our full consultation document](#)



## Fraud

The Scottish Government intends to protect its investment in social security, on behalf of the people of Scotland, by taking a zero-tolerance approach to fraud. We are clear that people who have knowingly committed fraud should be punished. We also want to raise awareness of the individual's responsibilities in relation to social security fraud while designing processes which will be accessible and simple to use.

In order to protect against fraud, we propose that officials working for the Scottish Government or its agency, should investigate fraud in, broadly, the same way as "Authorised Officers" currently investigate fraud for DWP. We would like your views on these current arrangements and whether there are any improvements which could be made.

[Please click here to go to the section on fraud in our full consultation document](#)



## Protecting your information

The Scottish Government believes that every individual has the right to privacy and that personal information should be protected.

We propose to take a '[Privacy by Design](#)' approach to information handling, to promote privacy, security and compliance with data protection regulations - from the initial stages of setting up the agency through to service delivery. We are clear that advances in technology should be used to support claimant applications better.

In order to meet the legitimate needs of our agency - to process applications for social security support while protecting individuals' privacy - we will securely source the minimum amount of information we need from other public sector organisations instead of storing large amounts of information in a 'data warehouse'. We would like your views on whether you would support the strictly controlled sharing of information in this way, if it would make the application process easier and led to improvements in our services. We would only ever do this when we have the individuals' consent.

[Please click here to go to the section on protecting your information in our full consultation document](#)



## **Uprating**

We make it clear that we will maintain spending on disability benefits, uprating them in line with inflation. Uprating is the annual process by which the value of some of the benefits which people currently receive is increased. We would like your views on whether there should be a general, Scottish uprating policy for devolved benefits and payments which could simplify the system overall and make it easier to understand.

**[Please click here to go to the section on uprating in our full consultation document](#)**

[Return to Contents](#)

## Questions

**If you have printed this document or are reading it in paper form, please use the space provided below to write down your answers for Part 3. Please use additional paper if you wish.**

**In Part 3, we have set out approaches and proposals on:**

Advice, representation and advocacy

- Complaints, reviews and appeals
- Residency criteria and cross-border issues
- Managing overpayments
- Fraud
- Protecting your information
- Uprating

**You may want to provide feedback on all of these or just some of them. Please tell us which proposals you are providing feedback on when you answer the two key questions below:**

**What do you think about the proposals outlined in Part 3?**

**Do you have any further views on the topics covered in Part 3?**

## **Equality and low income**

The Scottish Government has a duty to consider how its policies and proposals respond to the ways in which people are different from one another, in relation to particular 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, gender including pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation. This helps us to ensure that, where possible, policy is shaped appropriately to advance equality on these grounds and meet people's varying needs as effectively as possible.

We take this duty very seriously. That is why we have developed a partial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to support the Consultation. This is available as a separate Annex to the full-length version of the Consultation on Social Security in Scotland and is 'partial' in the sense that it reflects our thinking to date. The EqIA provides detail on the Scottish Government's engagement so far to understand the equality implications of the new social security powers. It then sets out general barriers people might face, many of which have equality implications, before discussing the individual benefits, including where we are proposing changes to existing UK benefits and how these impact on equality

If you would like to help us in producing the full and final EqIA to accompany the Social Security Bill [please click here to go to the section on equalities in the full consultation document](#).

## CONSULTATION ON SOCIAL SECURITY IN SCOTLAND

### RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

**Please Note** this form **must** be returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- Individual  
 Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response.  
Please indicate your publishing preference:

- Publish response with name  
 Publish response only (anonymous)  
 Do not publish response

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

- Yes  
 No

## **THIS IS THE END OF THE SUMMARY DOCUMENT**

**Please send your response to the consultation questionnaire with the completed [Respondent Information Form](#), available separately on the Scottish Government website to:**

[Socialsecurityconsultation@gov.scot](mailto:Socialsecurityconsultation@gov.scot)

or

Social Security Consultation  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
5 Atlantic Quay  
150 Broomielaw  
Glasgow  
G2 8LU

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO RESPOND**



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**[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)**

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