

BenefitsBulletin

Aberdeen City & Shire Advice Forum is a local network for people working in advice services to share information and experiences. The Forum meets quarterly throughout the year.



Next Advice Forum meeting - Wed 21st October 2020. 10:00-12:00 via Microsoft Teams

New benefit to help with heating costs Extra support for families of disabled children

The Scottish Government will lay legislation to enable delivery of the new [Child Winter Heating Assistance](#) later today.

This is the first disability benefit to be introduced using new social security powers.

Families with children in receipt of the highest rate care of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Child will receive an extra £200 to help with their heating costs.

These payments will be made automatically to eligible families through Social Security Scotland. This benefit is on track to be delivered this winter.

Social Security Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said:

"I am delighted that we will be delivering the new Child Winter Heating Assistance in time for families to benefit from it as we move into the colder months. Families do not need to take action or apply for this benefit, Social Security Scotland will make the payments automatically to all eligible families".

The new Child Winter Heating Assistance is £200 that will be paid automatically to eligible families to help them heat their homes.



Background

A client will qualify for Child Winter Heating Assistance if they live in Scotland and are in receipt of the highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance for children on at least one day between 21 September 2020 to 27 September 2020. Social Security Scotland will automatically pay Child Winter Heating Assistance without needing an application.

Two Child Limit Zoom Seminar



Seminar next week hosted by [@UniofOxford](#), [@UniOfYork](#) and [@LSESocialPolicy](#).

Thursday 10 September, 12.30pm.

Speakers will discuss impact of two-child limit as part of our welfare reform and larger families project funded by [@NuffieldFound](#)

Register [HERE](#)

Coronavirus: Universal Credit during the crisis

This House of Commons Library briefing paper explores how Universal Credit has coped and changed during the coronavirus crisis so far, and what challenges lie ahead for this benefit.

The policy issues in this paper are fast-moving areas which are subject to change. This paper should therefore be read as correct at the date of publication (4 September 2020).

[Coronavirus: Universal Credit during the crisis](#)

Accessing benefits with terminal illness

This Commons Library Briefing Paper explores the history of the Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI), how they work in practice, the debate that surrounds them, and looks at recent developments in Scotland and the wider UK.



Terminal illness requires people and their families to adapt to new realities posed by their conditions, and to make the most of the time they have remaining. As well as the direct implications of ill-health and death, there can be significant financial costs – loss of income, additional costs of care, and other adaptations.

There is no benefit specifically designed to help people who are terminally ill cope with these financial impacts. However, "[Special Rules for Terminal Illness](#)" (SRTI) allow simpler and faster access to benefits designed to help with the additional costs of disability (Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, and Attendance Allowance) and those designed to replace the income of those whose ability to work is affected by disability or ill health (Employment and Support Allowance and additional elements of Universal Credit).

Download the full report: [Accessing benefits with terminal illness](#)

Published Tuesday, September 01, 2020

Scottish Social Security Committee launches inquiry into role of Scotland's social security system in social and economic recovery from COVID-19



Committee seeks 'innovative and workable' solutions to combat the impact of the pandemic

Launching the inquiry today, the Committee says that it would like to understand how best Scottish social security, and its part within the broader context of all UK social security, should contribute to the recovery from COVID-19, with a focus on the following key questions -

- What will the economic downturn look like for different people in Scotland and how should Scottish social security support them through it? In the context of UK social security and of other ways of providing support, what is the role of Scottish social security in an economic recession?
- Can, and should, Social Security Scotland do more than meet the expected increased demand for benefits and deliver on existing policy commitments? What should its ambitions be? Within the social security and borrowing powers available to Scottish Ministers what could be achieved and delivered?
- If the Scottish Government looks to do more, or differently, what are the relatively easier changes that could be made to Scottish benefits that would not require significant additional capacity in Social Security Scotland?
- What changes could be made that would not require significant input from the DWP?
- Should the main focus be on discretionary funds or on entitlements? In terms of recovery from COVID-19, is it more effective to provide support through discretionary funds allocated to local authorities or through demand-led benefits delivered through Social Security Scotland?

NB - the deadline for submitting evidence to the inquiry is 14 October 2020.

The inquiry into [The role of Scottish Social Security in COVID-19 recovery](#) is available from parliament.scot

Here is our programme of online groups taking place in September! If you'd like more information or to join any of the groups please call us on 01224 645 928 or email aberdeen@maggiescentres.org

What's on in Maggie's Aberdeen/Dundee/Fife via Zoom/Facebook Live

September 2020

Our Cancer Support Specialists and Benefits Advisors are available to speak everyday, and booked appointments are available with our psychologists.

Just contact us on:

Aberdeen – 01224 645928 or aberdeen@maggiescentres.org Dundee – 01382 632999 or dundee@maggiescentres.org
Fife – 01592 647997 or fife@maggiescentres.org



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Men's Group 10am-11am (email or phone for Zoom invite)	Pilates 15 th & 29 th September 2.30 - 3.30 pm (pre book for Zoom invite)	Nutrition Course Part 1: 16 th Sept, Part 2: 30 th Sept 10 am – 11am (pre book for Zoom invite)	Partner Bereavement Group 1 st & 3 rd Thursday of the month 11am – 12pm (Contact us to discuss)	Kitchen Table Support 10am – 11am (pre-book via zoom)
Mindfulness for Health Course 11am -12.30pm (pre-book for Zoom invite)	Head & Neck Networking Group 1 st September 2pm – 3pm (pre-book 01592 647997)	Where Now? Book for October 1pm – 2.30pm (contact us to discuss and book)	Maggie's Millers Running Group (Dundee) 12-1pm (pre book via maggiesmillers fb page)	Family Bereavement Group 2 nd & 4 th Friday of the month 10am – 11am (Contact us to discuss)
Managing Stress Course Part 1: 14 th Sept, Part 3: 21 st Sept 1.30pm - 2.30pm (Pre-book for Zoom invite)	Prostate Cancer Networking Group 8 th September 3.30 - 4.30 pm (pre-book for Zoom invite)	Managing Stress Course Part 2: 16 th Sept, Part 4: 23 rd Sept 1.30pm - 2.30pm (Pre-book for Zoom invite)	Wellbeing Bowel Cancer Group 2-3 pm (pre book for Zoom invite)	Fife Breast Prosthetics service (Phone 01592 647 997)
Young Women's Support Group 28 th September 1pm - 2.30pm (Pre book for Zoom invite)		Wills and Power of Attorney Service (pre book via your local centre)	Breast Cancer Networking group 10 th September (1.30-4.30pm)	Skin/melanoma Networking Group 18 th September 2pm – 3pm (pre-book for Zoom invite)
People living with Secondary cancer 28 th September 3pm - 4pm (Pre book for Zoom invite)		Debt counselling (everyday, by appointment)	Friends and Family Support Starting 3 rd September 3-4pm (pre book for Zoom invite)	Relaxation 2pm-3pm (pre-book for Zoom invite)
Shielding Support Group 3pm – 4pm (pre-book for Zoom invite)		Haematology Networking Group 30 th September 2pm – 3pm (pre-book for Zoom invite)	Yoga 5.45 -6.15pm (pre book for Zoom invite)	
Taking mindfulness outside – walking in nature 4pm – 5pm (Maggie's Dundee, pre-book)		Upper GI Networking Group 16 th September 2pm – 3pm (pre-book for Zoom invite)		
Yoga 5.45 -6.15 pm (pre book for Zoom invite)				

Maggie Kewick Jencks Cancer Caring Trust (Maggie's) is a registered charity. SC024414



Virtual Social Group

Fancy a chat?
Do you need a laugh?
Up for playing a few games?

We are running our social group virtually using Skype, so grab a cuppie and come along on Fridays between 1:30 - 3:00 PM.



We're about people, not problems.

For more info:

Call us on: 01224 641355

Email us at: social@aad-online.com

Find us on Facebook: [aadsocialgroup](https://www.facebook.com/aadsocialgroup)



funded through



Registered Charity No: SC 022271

Company No: SC 267 622

The Kickstart scheme is intended to help those on Universal Credit up to age 25



Under the scheme employers can offer youngsters aged 16-24 who are claiming Universal Credit a six-month work placement.

The government will fully fund each "Kickstart" job - paying 100% of the age-relevant National Minimum Wage, National Insurance and pension contributions for 25 hours a week.

Employers will be able to top up this wage, while the government will also pay employers £1500 to set up support and training for people on a Kickstart placement, as well as helping pay for uniforms and other set up costs.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme

The Independent Living Fund Scotland is still operating in these times and we are still organising many engagement sessions to raise awareness of the fund.



Independent Living Fund Scotland

If you would like details on delivery of a virtual session please contact Lee on Lee.House@ILF.scot. The grant is up to £7500 for the year and is open to 16-25 year olds with a disability as defined in the equality act 2010 to help spend time with other people, reduce isolation and also try something new.

The fund has been a huge success and we want to ensure throughout these difficult times we reach as many young people as we can to make an application for something that can change their lives.

For any specific questions about the fund or any individual applications please email enquiries@ILF.scot or phone 0300 200 2022. At the moment, our office opening hours are 9am – 2pm.

For details of the fund click [HERE](#). For information about the ILF click [HERE](#)

New regulations have been issued in Scotland in relation to the use of hotels and bed and breakfasts as temporary accommodation for homeless households in response to coronavirus



In force from 30 September 2020, the *Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment (Coronavirus) Order 2020* (SSI.No.268/2020) temporarily modifies the *Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014* in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to allow for temporary accommodation to be provided for homeless households by way of accommodation within hotels and bed and breakfasts, which would otherwise be in breach of the 2014 Order. The modifications will expire on 31 January 2021.

NB - similar modifications, made by the *Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020* ([SSI.No.139/2020](#)), expire on 30 September 2020.

In addition, the Order introduces a new modification that allows for such accommodation to be provided where the local authority is unable to place the household in suitable accommodation as a result of the impacts of coronavirus on accommodation supply in the area, provided that where a household includes a child or a pregnant woman the household is not placed in unsuitable accommodation for more than seven days.

[SSI.No.268/2020](#) is available from legislation.gov.uk

Most advice organisations have needed to adapt and change during the COVID-19 pandemic and are now delivering services in different ways.



Is your organisation reviewing how services might look in the future? Will you return to your original ways of working? Or will your advice delivery continue to be different in the future?

NAWRA is interested in collecting examples of how you are delivering your services so that we can share your experiences and good practices with members.

Please complete our survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NAWRA>

DWP confirms that reviews and reassessments of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit remain suspended

However, Minister also advises that claims continue to be processed, and decisions made as normal, for claimants with the most serious or terminal conditions

[Mr Tomlinson's written answer](#) is available from parliament.uk

Millions of furloughed workers have returned to work – but support for hard-hit sectors will be needed beyond October



21 August 2020

Analysing the HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme data

HMRC published its latest round of statistics on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS). For the first time, we have a time series of the number of furloughed workers, as opposed to the cumulative total, meaning we can see how use of the scheme has evolved since the start of April. Here are some key takeaways from this morning's data.

Article [HERE](#)

Guidance - Universal Credit: debt and deductions that can be taken from payments

Help to understand debts and deductions taken from Universal Credit payments and who to contact about your debts and deductions if you're struggling financially.

Contents

- [Who can claimants talk to about debts/deductions?](#)
- [What is a Conditionality Sanction or Fraud Penalty?](#)
- [What are Last Resort Deductions?](#)
- [What is a Third Party deduction?](#)
- [What is benefit debt?](#)
- [What is a Universal Credit Advance?](#)
- [Recoverable Hardship Payments](#)
- [Moving from tax credits to Universal Credit](#)
- [How much can be taken from Universal Credit payments?](#)
- [What order will debts be dealt with/paid off?](#)
- [How much Universal Credit will be paid?](#)
- [If a claimant is in financial hardship](#)
- [What happens to debts if the claimant stops getting Universal Credit?](#)
- [Advice on money and debt](#)
- [Annex A - Deductions priority order](#)

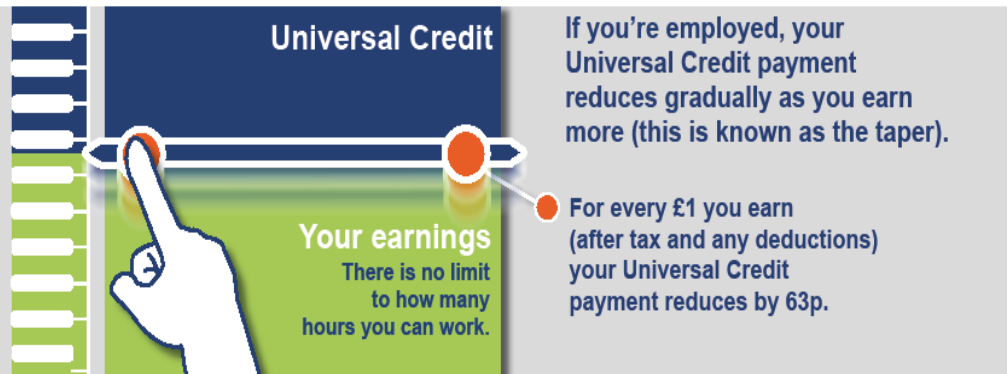
View guidance [HERE](#)

Guidance on working with representatives

Under the legacy benefits system, DWP has [guidance for working with representatives](#) for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Income Support. This guidance outlines the process in place to make sure that we can advocate for clients and assist them with their benefit issues without them being with us in person (called an alternative enquiry, previously implicit consent). It speeds up urgent enquiries when claimants can't get to our offices, or advocate on their own behalf.

Under Universal Credit, the [rules about speaking with a representative](#) have changed. Instead of implicit consent/alternative enquiries, a new system called "explicit consent" has been introduced where the claimant writes on their journal allowing someone else to act on their behalf in relation to a specified issue.

How your earnings affect what you get



example You're single, working and earn £240 during your Universal Credit assessment period.

To work out how much will be deducted from your Universal Credit payment, take your earnings (£240) and multiply by the taper rate (£0.63) = £151.20

This means you keep all of your earnings (£240), and £151.20 will be deducted from your Universal Credit payment that month.

The following month you earn £350 during your Universal Credit assessment period.

Use the same calculation $£350 \times £0.63 = £220.50$

This means you keep all of your earnings (£350), and £220.50 will be deducted from your Universal Credit payment that month.

Universal Credit tops up pay so you are better off in work.

You can even earn a certain amount before your Universal Credit is reduced if you or your partner either:

- are responsible for a child or young person or
- have a disability or health condition that affects your ability to work

This is called a work allowance.

The work allowance is an amount of your earnings that is ignored each Universal Credit assessment period before the taper is applied.

If you **don't get help** with your housing costs this is the amount of your earnings that is ignored each month (work allowance). **£512.00**

If you **get help** with your housing costs this is the amount of your earnings that is ignored each month (work allowance). **£292.00**

example You have a child and get money for housing costs in your Universal Credit payment. You are working and earn £500 during your Universal Credit assessment period.

Your Work Allowance is £292, this means you can earn £292 without any money being deducted from your Universal Credit payment.

$£500$ (earnings) - $£292$ (Work Allowance) is $£208$ (this is the amount that will be subject to the taper) $£208 \times £0.63 = £131.04$

This means you keep all of your earnings (£500), and £131.04 will be deducted from your Universal Credit payment that month.

Help for childcare providers

Transitional Support Fund opens to help protect from COVID-19

Applications are now open for funding to help childcare providers meet the extra costs of complying with public health guidance.

The Transitional Support Fund, part of £11.2 million support announced for the childcare sector, will help pay for things like increased cleaning, new or additional equipment, better outdoor spaces or adaptations to buildings.

Background

You can apply to the Transitional Support Fund at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): support to childcare sector](#).

Grants from the Transitional Support Fund will be available to all private and voluntary or not-for-profit registered day care of children providers, not just those delivering funded early learning and childcare.

Grant amounts will vary according to the size of the childcare setting and will be based on Care Inspectorate registered capacity.

Within the £11.2 million of support for the childcare sector there will be a further announcement about further funding for the [Childminding Workforce Support Fund](#) in the coming weeks.

Article dated 03/09/2020. Read it [HERE](#)



Aberdeen City Council to administer Transitional Support Funding to childcare providers



The Fund has now opened for applications and can be accessed [HERE](#).

The last date for submitting a grant application will be **Friday 9 October**.

Further information on the Transitional Support Fund, including the levels of grants, is available [HERE](#).

How can social security aid our recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic?

01.09.2020

A Scottish Parliament Committee has launched an inquiry to find out how social security can help aid the social and economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Holyrood's Social Security Committee is keen to find out how the economic downturn will impact people across Scotland and how social security in Scotland should be utilised to support people through it.

The inquiry is particularly focused upon how best the Scottish social security system can support those both in or out of employment, and those seeking to find work in what is likely to be a challenging labour market.

The committee will also examine the constraints the Scottish social security system is under within the wider UK context.

The Committee is seeking workable solutions to help outline a Scottish social security system for 2021 and beyond which can respond to the immense challenges created by this pandemic.

Bob Doris MSP, Convener of the Social Security Committee said:

“There has been much discussion on the introduction of a universal basic income but our Committee is keen to look beyond this at the other options available.

“We are seeking views from those right across society to help propose innovative and workable solutions for social security in Scotland which can best combat the devastating impact of this pandemic and aid our recovery.”

To give your views go to the [Citizen Space](#) web page [HERE](#)

Families, coronavirus and benefits in Scotland

[This briefing](#) explains changes to provisions for families in Scotland due to the coronavirus pandemic. The briefing will be updated as further information becomes available.



This briefing covers:

- Free school meals
- School clothing grants
- Education maintenance allowance
- Best Start foods
- Best Start grants
- Childcare costs and provision
- Statutory maternity pay and maternity allowance

Notice period for evictions in Scotland on grounds relating to antisocial behaviour or criminality reduced from three months to 28 days

New statutory instrument reduces notice period for notices served on or after 3 October 2020

In force from 3 October 2020, the *Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 (Eviction from Dwelling-houses) (Notice Periods) Modification Regulations 2020* (SSI.No.270/2020) make amendments to reduce the extended notice periods introduced by [Schedule 1](#) of the *Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020* for evictions on grounds relating to antisocial behaviour and criminality from three months to 28 days across all private and social tenancies. The reduced notice period applies to all notices served on or after 3 October 2020.

The [policy note](#) to the regulations sets out the Scottish Government's reasoning for exercising the power to amend notice period provisions that have been made under the 2020 Act - conferred by paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 1 of the Act

[SSI.No.270/2020](#) is available from legislation.gov.uk

We've updated our ['Financial help in the early years'](#) factsheet to include an increase in the income limit for free school meals for families in receipt of working tax credit.



Starting school	Free school lunches	All P1-3 pupils attending school are entitled to free school meals – no need to apply. For other pupils, parent or carer getting universal credit and earning no more than £610 in the monthly assessment period before you apply. You also qualify if you get CTC only with income under £16,385, or CTC/WTC with income under £7,330.
	School clothing grants are also available under similar criteria, although this can vary between local authorities	

New regulations have been issued in relation to the treatment of COVID-19 payments and grants to self-employed people in calculating entitlement to tax credits.



New statutory instrument

In force from 25 September 2020, the *Tax Credits (Coronavirus, Miscellaneous Amendments) (No. 2) Regulations 2020* (SI.No.941/2020) are designed to ensure that payments under the various coronavirus schemes and grants to support self-employed people are counted as income only once in calculating entitlement to tax credits.

The explanatory memorandum to the new regulations advises-

'This instrument corrects an anomaly in the [Tax Credits \(Coronavirus, Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations 2020](#) which came into force on 23 May 2020. As a consequence of that instrument coronavirus support payments, including the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, were brought into account as income for tax credits. [The Finance Act 2020](#), which received Royal Assent on 22 July 2020, also treats the payments as income. Therefore, as a consequence of the interaction between the tax credits legislation and that Act the payments would be counted twice. This instrument removes that anomaly by counting the payments only once.'

In addition, the new regulations -

provide for payments made under the new Department for Health and Social Care [self-isolation payment scheme](#) to be disregarded in calculating entitlement to tax credits; and amend the definition of 'furloughed' in the tax credits regulations to ensure that employees who are flexibly-furloughed remain potentially entitled to working tax credit.

[SI.No.941/2020](#) is available from legislation.gov.uk

The Scottish Government has confirmed that it has tabled amendments to the *Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018* to allow for both the suspension and non-payment of devolved benefits in prescribed circumstances.



Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People Shirley-Anne Somerville confirms that the changes to the 2018 Act - that will be included in the [Social Security Administration and Tribunal Membership \(Scotland\) Bill](#) - are not intended and will not be used in a punitive way. Our approach on overpayments has been guided by engagement with stakeholders and people with lived experience. Stakeholders have been clear about the situations where it is desirable to be able to temporarily stop payment of assistance, to ensure consistency and coherence with the current UK social security system, and to strengthen and improve client's rights in comparison to the UK system.'

In addition, Ms Somerville sets out further details of the proposals - that will be debated in Holyrood at Stage 2 of the Bill next week - that will - provide Ministers with the power to prescribe in regulations the circumstances in which an individual will, notwithstanding them meeting eligibility rules, be entitled to be paid no assistance or a specific component of assistance -

- where the claimant is resident in accommodation where their needs are met through other public funds, such as a care home, residential care, legal custody or in hospital; and
- where the claimant is entitled to two 'overlapping' benefits, that are paid for broadly the same purpose, and to meet the same type of need; enable suspension of assistance - but only where 'due regard has been given to a person's financial circumstance' - where a claimant fails to provide information that is necessary to ensure that they meet on-going conditions of entitlement;
- enable payments to be suspended in cases where assistance may be paid to a third party such as an appointee; and
- provide individuals with the option to request suspension to help them in circumstances such as where they have been forced to leave the family home due to a risk to their own safety, or if they no longer have access to the account that assistance is paid into.

NB - elsewhere in the letter, Ms Somerville also confirms that amendments to provisions in the Bill relating to the safeguarding of appointees have been proposed, addressing [recommendations in the Scottish Social Security Committee's Stage 1 report on the Bill](#).

[Ms Somerville's letter to Mr Doris \(3 September 2020\)](#) is available from parliament.scot