

Mon 20th September 2021 - Issue.50

Council to support Afghan relocation scheme



Aberdeen City Council and key partners are to assist Afghan families moving to the UK under a government relocation scheme.

The rapid escalation of events in Afghanistan has accelerated the UK Government's plans – and the Home Office has procured short-term accommodation in the city for more than 100 people.

The council is among a number of local authorities that will support families across the UK during their temporary resettlement.

The council will join public and third sector partners in meeting families' immediate needs whilst working with government to identify more settled accommodation in the UK.

<https://news.aberdeencity.gov.uk/council-to-support-afghan-relocation-scheme/>

Lord Provost's Charitable Trust launches Afghan appeal

The Lord Provost's Charitable Trust today (Wednesday 08 September) launched an appeal for funds to support Afghan families looking to make a new home in the UK.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the Aberdeen Afghanistan Appeal is asked to use the Charitable Trust. Read the full article [HERE](#)

To make a donation go to www.crowdfunder.co.uk/lord-provosts-charitable-trust

Help for people with food insecurity

Several initiatives in communities across Aberdeen are helping to alleviate food insecurity, a committee heard today.

Aberdeen City Council's operational delivery committee members agreed to support the developing proposals for use of £175,000 of funding and the actions to further address food insecurity.

Work is being carried out with partners and community groups including how to get to hard-to-reach groups, maximising income, investigating the establishment of further community pantries, and actions are also being taken to increase take up of free school meals in secondary schools.

<https://news.aberdeencity.gov.uk/help-for-people-with-food-insecurity/>

CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK



4-10th October

Find all our Challenge Poverty Week resources for 2021 including toolkits, lesson plans and graphics in our [Google Drive folder](#).

Please do let us know if you plan to join us in our call for change this October by clicking [here](#), or add your activities to our [events calendar](#).

If you have any questions, contact suzi.murning@povertyalliance.org

What is Challenge Poverty Week?

Challenge Poverty Week is designed to highlight that poverty is a problem we can solve, and to showcase solutions we can all get behind.

The week is an opportunity for you to raise your voice against poverty and unite with others in calling for a more just and equal Scotland.

Each year, hundreds of organisations in Scotland do just that, including elected representative, charities and NGOs, local authorities, faith groups, businesses, school and colleges, trade unions, professional bodies and more. Will you join us?

www.challengepoverty.net/

Post Office card accounts closure extended until November 2022



The end of the Post Office Card Account used by 382,000 people on benefits or pensions without a bank account, has been postponed for a year to November 2022 after DWP realised it was proving hard for many to open an account

[www.gov.uk/government/news/post-office-card-accounts-closure-](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/post-office-card-accounts-closure-extended-until-november-2022)

Carer's Allowance easements update

The Government recognised the vital role unpaid carers played during the coronavirus pandemic by ensuring DWP Carer's Allowance Benefit continued to be paid, despite changes to patterns of care forced upon carers by circumstances beyond their control. A relaxation of rules around breaks in care and recognition of emotional support was initiated in March 2020.

The vaccination programme has weakened the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths, which has allowed a cautious easing of restrictions. The Carer's Allowance easements ceased to apply after 31 August 2021.

Please check GOV.UK for all the latest guidance.

DWP to check your bank and social media for benefit fraud

The DWP is looking for seven types of fraud among the 23 million people who claim benefits, Universal Credit and state pensions.

During the pandemic, fraud and error in the UK benefits system reached record levels, with a reported £8.4 billion overpaid in the last financial year.

The DWP estimates that 3.9 per cent of benefits spending was overpaid during 2020/21, with £6.3 billion of the overpayments believed to be due to fraud, primarily arising from Universal Credit claims. Universal Credit director-general Neil Couling said the DWP's fraud and error probe could see thousands of claimants approached in the coming months.

Investigators can turn up at your home or workplace at any time and they also use a wide range of powers to gather evidence such as surveillance, document tracing, interviews, checking your bank accounts and monitoring your social media.

The DWP said: "In simple terms an overpayment is benefit that the claimant has received but is not entitled to.

"Overpayments of benefit can occur in a number of ways. In the main they are due to claimant, system or official error."

The DWP has outlined seven types of overpayments it looks for:

- mistake by the claimant (non-disclosure of circumstances or incomplete form)
- deliberate fraud by the claimant (failing to disclose a material fact or deliberate misrepresentation)
- interim and advance payments including short term benefit advance that could not be recovered from the benefit for which they were paid
- Universal Credit recoverable hardship payments (classed as an overpayment for recovery purposes if recovery can no longer be taken from the benefit that was in place at the time of payment)
- overpayment due to late award of other benefit/income
- overpayments due to the way in which the Direct Payment banking system operates
- official error – only applies to Universal Credit and contributory Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance claims made on or after April 29, 2013

The DWP can make efforts to get the money back under Social Security legislation and you may be taken to court where a fine of up to £5,000 can be imposed. A person's benefits can be cut for up to three years if they are convicted of benefit fraud.



Social Security Scotland
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The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22

The Programme for Government sets out the actions we will take in the coming year and beyond. It includes the legislative programme for this parliamentary year.

Among the social welfare law-related measures outlined in the new Programme for Government, the Scottish Government says that it will -

- Provide a £520 payment for every child in receipt of free school meals, ahead of roll-out of the Scottish Child Payment to under 16s.
- Provide a double payment – £460 – of the Carers Allowance Supplement, provided Parliament passes the necessary legislation.
- Roll out two significant new devolved benefits for disabled people – Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment.
- Provide free school lunches for all primary school children, including provision in the school holidays for those who need it most.
- Provide £12 million to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, including £8 million for local authorities to support rapid rehousing plans and scale up the Housing First approach nationally.
- Publish and consult on a new Rented Sector Strategy, delivering a new deal for tenants.

For more information, see [A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22](#).



Social Security Chamber Decisions Report

Individual Tribunal decisions will not be published by the Chamber but, from time to time, the Chamber President Anne Scott intends to publish updates on matters of interest and points of law arising in decisions.

Decisions Report 10 - September 2021 Scottish Child Payment

We have received 12 appeals and decided 4. At the request of Social Security Scotland 7 appeals have been sisted (put on the shelf) whilst the law is looked at again. At present if a person who is not responsible for a child has been awarded and is receiving other benefits relating to the child before the person responsible for the child makes a claim for Scottish Child Payment it is simply not possible to make an award. That is clearly not what was intended and is unfair but the tribunal can only apply the law and has no power to look at what is fair.

www.socialsecuritychamber.scot/home/about-us/decisions-report

Boost for family budgets before Christmas

Published: 16 Sep 2021

Around 148,000 children set to benefit

Low income families will benefit from a £320 uplift before Christmas as part of the Scottish Government's commitment to tackling child poverty.

Eligible families with children in school will receive payments of £160 per child in October and December. Two Bridging Payments of £100 have already been made via local councils, taking the total to £520 this year.

The cash is equivalent to the Scottish Child Payment (SCP), a £10-a-week benefit which provides regular, additional financial support for families in receipt of qualifying benefits to assist with the costs of caring for a child aged under six years old.

SCP will be extended to all eligible under-16s by the end of 2022, with quarterly Bridging Payments made in the interim. The Scottish Government also intends to double the SCP to £20 per week as quickly as possible following the expansion.

www.gov.scot/news/boost-for-family-budgets-before-christmas/



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Disability Assistance for Children and Young People (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021: scrutiny report on draft regulations

Scottish Commission on Social Security (SCoSS) scrutiny report on the Disability Assistance for Children and Young People (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021.

Summary of recommendations and observations

- **Recommendation 1:** The Scottish Government should routinely assess and highlight whether Regulations contain matters where people with lived experience and stakeholders may have an interest and a contribution to make, and ensure adequate time is available for this.
- **Recommendation 2:** Regulation 4 should be revised to remove any ambiguity around the ages between which an individual must first meet the eligibility criteria in order to be awarded CDP.
- **Recommendation 3:** The Scottish Government should amend draft Regulation 4 to withdraw proposed DACYP Regulation 4(1A)(b) on post-18 entitlement to CDP for people undergoing dialysis.
- **Recommendation 4:** In order to avoid gaps in entitlement, the DAWAP Regulations should ensure that short-term assistance is available to CDP claimants whose initial determination in respect of ADP is that they have no or a reduced entitlement.
- **Recommendation 5:** The Scottish Government should consider whether the wording of DACYP Regulation 5(6)(a) accurately reflects the policy intent regarding the circumstances in which certain public servants and their families should be exempt from the normal residence tests for CDP.
- **Recommendation 6:** Draft Regulation 11 should be revised to ensure it makes an appropriate distinction between individuals in legal detention transferred to a hospice and those temporarily transferred to a hospital who are not subject to a mental health order.
- **Recommendation 7:** The existing wording of DACYP Regulation 28(1)(b)(iii) should be retained to avoid unnecessarily penalising individuals who are late in reporting a change of circumstances bringing about an increase in entitlement.
- **Recommendation 8:** The Scottish Government should not seek to recover any overpayment resulting from the retrospective revision of a DLA award or failure to report a change of circumstances until the conclusion of any mandatory reconsideration/re-determination and appeal.
- **Recommendation 9:** The Scottish Government should clarify whether two separate determinations are required when individuals move from Scotland to England, Wales or Northern Ireland.
- **Recommendation 10:** The Scottish Government should consider the merits of amending other social security Regulations to clarify when the time limit for a re-determination starts to run, following a tribunal decision that a valid request for re-determination was made.
- **Recommendation 11:** The Scottish Government should ensure that guidance is in place to clarify the right to request a re-determination of short-term assistance. Furthermore, the Scottish Government should consider the merits of reordering the amendment to 1(1A) of the Schedule to ensure that it is clearer.

Full report - www.gov.scot/publications/scrutiny-report-draft-regulations-disability-assistance-children-young-people-scotland-amendment-regulations-2021/

Eligibility Date for Carer's Allowance Supplement in December

The eligibility date to receive the next **Carer's Allowance Supplement** in Scotland will be 11 October 2021 and eligible carers will receive their supplement of £231.40 this December.

Subject to parliamentary approval, there will also be an additional payment in December, to provide extra support to carers during the Covid-19 crisis.

www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/news-events/news/eligibility-date-for-carers-allowance-supplement-in-december



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Child Disability Payment opens nationally from 22 November 2021

Scotland's Child Disability Payment will open for new applications across the country from 22 November 2021.

The roll-out follows a successful pilot launched in July across Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and the Western Isles council areas.

This is the first of the complex disability benefits to be introduced nationwide by the Scottish Government and replaces the UK Government's Disability Living Allowance for children. The payment provides financial assistance to help meet the additional costs associated with having a disability.

Families of children and young people with a disability or terminal illness can apply to the new benefit administered by Social Security Scotland.

Those already receiving Disability Living Allowance for children do not need to make a new application as we will contact them ahead of their award being automatically transferred. This will happen in a phased approach from mid-October. We aim to have the transfer process completed for everyone in receipt of Disability Living Allowance for children by spring 2023.

We will begin by transferring the cases of those aged 16 or over in receipt of Disability Living Allowance for children and those with a terminal illness. All other clients aged up to 15-years-old will have their award transferred from spring 2022.

Awards will continue to be made at the same rates and on the same payment cycle as their previous Disability Living Allowance for children.

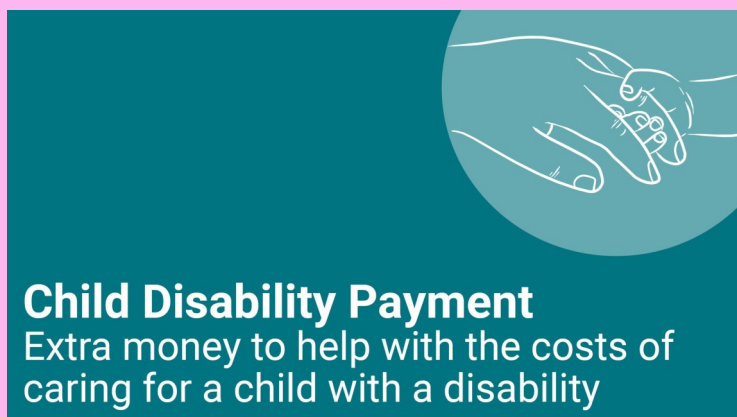
To enable people to apply in the way that suits them best, it will be the first disability benefit in the UK that can be applied for online, as well as being available by post, phone, or face to face (COVID-19 restrictions permitting).

More than 85% of applications were received online in the first six weeks of Child Disability Payment being launched in the pilot areas.

Background

- People can find out more and apply through mygov.scot or by calling 0800 182 2222.
- Child Disability Payment provides money to help with the extra care and mobility costs children and young people with a disability may have, up to the age of 18
- Child Disability Payment replaces the UK Government's Disability Living Allowance for children in Scotland.
- People who currently get disability benefits from Department for Work and Pensions will have their awards transferred to the new Scottish system in stages after the new benefits are introduced. This work is expected to be completed well in advance of the previously announced timeline of 2025.
- Young people and children in Scotland who are currently getting Disability Living Allowance for children from the DWP will no longer need to apply for PIP when they turn 16. **They will stay on Disability Living Allowance to age 18** if they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

www.gov.scot/news/child-disability-payment-opens-nationally-from-november/





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Child Disability Payment National Roll out events

Following the successful pilot of Child Disability Payment in Dundee, Perth & Kinross and the Western Isles. Social Security Scotland will be launching Child Disability Payment nationally this Autumn. Child Disability Payment will replace Disability Living Allowance for Children, which is currently delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions.

It has been designed to provide extra money to help with the costs of caring for a child with a disability or ill-health condition.

Social Security Scotland wants to make sure both you and the people you support have all the relevant information you need about Child Disability Payment before it opens for applications nationally.

Social Security Scotland's National Engagement Team invite you to attend one of our online Child Disability Payment events that will provide you with information on the end to end journey for clients applying for Child Disability Payment as well as sessions on specific aspects of Child Disability Payment such as Special Rules for Terminal Illness and Supporting Information for Public and Third sector employees.

We have scheduled the following series of events, please click on the appropriate link to reserve a ticket for the event at a date and time that suits you.

Child Disability Payment general information webinar

- [Thursday 23rd September 2021 12:30pm - 2:30pm](#)
- [Thursday 30th September 2021 - 10:00am - 12noon](#)
- [Tuesday 19th October 2021 10:00am - 12noon](#)
- [Tuesday 26th October 2021 - 10:00am - 12noon](#)
- [Tuesday 2nd November 2021 2:00pm- 4:00pm](#)
- [Wednesday 10th November 2021 - 2:00pm - 4:00pm](#)

Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) webinar

This event is aimed at stakeholders and partners such as clinicians, hospice support, palliative care supporting families with children who are living with a life limiting condition who may be supporting families to apply for Child Disability Payment or completing the new Benefits Assessment Under Special Rules in Scotland (BASRiS) form

- [Thursday 28th October 2021 - 11:00am - 12:00noon](#)

Supporting Information – Public Sector webinar

This event is for stakeholders within the Public Sector, NHS and Local Authorities, who may be requested to provide information to support a client's claim for Child Disability Payment. It will provide detail and information on the processes involved when Supporting Information is requested by Social Security Scotland as part of a client's evidence gather for their disability benefit application.

- [Thursday 11th November 2021 - 1:30pm - 2:45pm](#)
- [Wednesday 17th November 2021 - 10:45am - 12:00noon](#)

Supporting Information – Third Sector webinar

This event is for stakeholders within the Third Sector, who may be requested to provide information to support a client's claim for Child Disability Payment. It will provide detail and information on the processes involved when Supporting Information is requested by Social Security Scotland as part of a client's evidence gather for their disability benefit application.

- [Thursday 11th November 2021 - 3:00pm - 4:15pm](#)
- [Wednesday 17th November 2021 1:30pm - 2:45pm](#)

If you have any questions or require further information about any of these events please email National Engagement and Partnership Team

NationalEngagementandPartnershipTeam@SocialSecurity.Gov.Scot



<http://citizensrightsproject.org>



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Locked out of a livelihood: The case for reforming 'no recourse to public funds'

Many people in the UK immigration system are subject to the 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) condition, which means that they are unable to access mainstream welfare benefits. This includes most benefits, tax credits and housing assistance provided by the government. As a result, several cohorts within the UK population are at a serious risk of becoming destitute.

This includes people on short-term visas, those without legal permission to be in the UK, as well as those who have been in the UK for extended periods but are on long routes to settlement.

The NRPF condition has become a subject of considerable controversy in recent years. The widespread job losses since the onset of the pandemic – combined with strict social distancing rules and travel restrictions – meant that many people subject to NRPF lost their income and yet were shut out of key government support measures. The limited nature of this social safety net meant that others were left with little option but to continue working to protect their livelihoods, in spite of the risks to their health. As a result, calls to suspend or abolish the policy have intensified in the wake of the pandemic. The government now plans to extend the NRPF condition to further cohorts of people in the immigration system.

At the time of writing, the nationality and borders bill has been introduced in parliament and has completed its second reading. The bill will implement many of the measures outlined in the government's 'new plan for immigration'. This plan intends to apply the NRPF condition to refugees who do not come to the UK directly, as part of efforts to deter individuals from arriving through unauthorised routes (Home Office 2021a).

This briefing will provide an overview of the NRPF policy and how it impacts the everyday lives of people who are subject to immigration control. It will also explore the potential impacts of the proposed extension of the NRPF condition in the nationality and borders bill. Based on this analysis, the briefing paper will put forward a set of reforms to the current system to address some of the most adverse impacts of the current system. Our findings and recommendations are informed by secondary research, data analysis, and a policy workshop held in April 2021, which invited experts across the migrants' rights sector and local government to discuss the impacts of NRPF and the options for reforming the policy.

Read and download the full publication - www.ippr.org/research/publications/locked-out-of-a-livelihood



The Progressive Policy Think Tank



Articles

Evicting tenants from social housing cost at least £28 million

Posted 07 Sep 2021

Today we're publishing [research](#) showing that it cost the public purse at least £28 million pounds to evict tenants from social homes in a single year.

We commissioned academics from the University of Liverpool to establish the true cost of evictions by councils and housing associations. The study goes beyond the direct costs like legal fees, to get a more accurate cost of the 1,866 evictions by councils and housing associations in 2019-2020.

£28million is a conservative estimate but a significant proportion of this comes from the cost of providing homelessness services for those households who went on to present as homeless. The cost of providing support for homeless households varies widely but the research has highlighted that the average total cost of evicting a single person with low support needs into homelessness, with a not unusual 9 month stay in temporary accommodation, is nearly £24,000.

Read the article [HERE](#)



CAS - MP Briefing on UC adequacy and the £20-a-week Cut (6 September 2021)

The UK Government is proposing to cut Universal Credit by £20 a week from October 6th, reinstating it to pre-pandemic levels. CAS research shows that even with the increase, people on UC have struggled. Any cut will hurt people on UC and harm the government's own Plan for Jobs and levelling up agenda.

CAS recommends cancelling the cut and permanently increasing UC's basic allowance.

[Download Publication](#)

Benefits for resettled Afghans



[Download](#)

The Social Security (Residence Requirements) (Afghanistan) (Scotland) Regulations 2021

This instrument will serve as a "catch-all" instrument to cover all individuals entering the UK under the terms of one of the aforementioned resettlement schemes and resident in Scotland. It therefore avoids individual instruments for each respective benefit.

The benefits covered by this instrument are:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Carers Allowance
- Child Disability Payment
- Best Start Grants
- Best Start Foods
- Young Carer Grant



legislation.gov.uk

These regulations will exempt persons who have come to the Scotland from Afghanistan under the Home Office resettlement schemes from either the habitual residence test and past presence test or both (as appropriate depending on the form of assistance) This will mean they will be able to access Scottish devolved assistance from day one, subject to them meeting other eligibility requirements.

[POLICY NOTE](#)



SECURITY FOR EVERYONE: THE PUBLIC CASE FOR NON-MEANS-TESTED BENEFITS

This report examines the future of non-means-tested benefits for working-age adults and children. We present findings from an online citizens' jury, a representative survey of British adults, microsimulation modelling of policy reforms and a consultation with experts.

Our evidence indicates that consensus can be built to strengthen non-means-tested benefits as a supplement to an adequate means-tested system. In particular, we show that following the Covid-19 pandemic there is new interest in improving payments when people stop working.

The citizen's jury recommended a new system of earnings-related unemployment insurance modelled on the Covid-19 furlough scheme. We also propose increases in non-means-tested benefits for people who are sick, disabled or caring; and a review of benefits paid to cover the extra costs faced by disabled people.

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)

Scottish Government's Goals Keeping Families Together

CHILDREN IN CARE - Reducing the number of children in care.

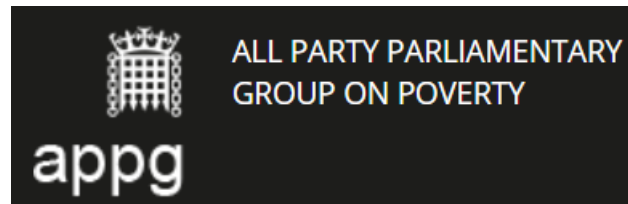
Fewer children and young people should end up in care, thanks to a £500 million fund to help support families to stay together.

Announced as part of the latest Programme for Government, the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund will help families to overcome challenges before they reach crisis point.

The fund aims to significantly reduce the number of children and young people in care by 2030 and will provide support on a range of issues, including:

- child and adolescent mental health
- child poverty
- alcohol and drugs misuse
- educational attainment

Read the full article - **www.abccorg.net/item/3754-scottish-government-s-goals-keeping-families-together**



APPG launches call for evidence for short inquiry into in-work poverty

Despite increases to the National Living Wage, levels of poverty within working households continue to rise. The number of children in relative poverty in households where all the parent(s) work full time – be they single or couple-parents – has doubled from 200,000 in 2012/13 to 400,000 in 2017/18 (CPAG, 2020).

The government promotes work as the best route out of poverty; however, this is not always guaranteed as 75% of children growing up in relative poverty live in a household where at least one person works (DWP, 2021).

The APPG is calling for submissions for its upcoming inquiry on in-work poverty. The APPG is asking organisations – both those representing people in low-paid work and employers – for short written submissions in bullet-point form of the key points the APPG should consider to inform its representations to the government.

The APPG welcomes evidence from people with direct experience of in-work poverty and from individual employers. The APPG is looking to explore actions that both employers and government can take.

To be included in the final report, please submit written evidence to info@appgpoverty.org.uk by the deadline of **Friday 1st October 2021**.

Thank you,

Kevin Hollinrake MP and Baroness Ruth Lister
(Co-Chairs of the APPG on Poverty)



Citizens Advice Scotland Briefings and Reports

- [CAS Response to the Scottish Commission on Social Security Adult Disability Payment Draft Regulations Call for Views](#)
- [CAS Response to SCoSS Call for Evidence: Disability benefits: draft Suspension of Assistance \(Social Security\) \(Scotland\) Regulations](#)
- [CAS Response to the Minimum Income Guarantee Call for Views](#)
- [Additional Low Pay Commission Evidence from CAS](#)
- [CAS Response to the Carers Allowance Supplement Bill Consultation](#)
- [CAS Adult Disability Payment Briefing](#)



Universal Credit: Time is running out for the government to do the right thing

This article was first published in The Herald on 8 September 2021.

www.cas.org.uk/news/universal-credit-time-running-out-government-do-right-thing

"I am constantly penny pinching." Citizens Advice Scotland Research into Living on Universal Credit during the Pandemic

This report, the second in a three-part series on UC during the pandemic, covers our clients' experiences living on UC during the pandemic.

Our research found that rising costs during the pandemic have pushed an already-too-low social security system to breaking point:

- 67% of people surveyed said the UC payment they received was inadequate for their needs, with more than half of these people (55%) describing UC as 'very inadequate'.
- Over seven out of ten (71%) said the amount of UC they received was lower than they are used to living on.
- More than a third (38%) said their outgoings had increased in the period before they had to claim for UC and now, with a majority (56%) reporting that their spending had gone up on necessities like heating and electricity (50%), food (40%), and housing costs aside from rent (27%).
- Almost two in three (64%) had to cut down on at least one basic necessity during their UC claim, with one in five (20%) cutting down on food.
- Over one in four (27%) had to borrow money in order to pay for essentials.

With this in mind, the UK Government's decision to cut UC by £20 a week in September is a step in the wrong direction. Our research found that:

- Most said they would be unable to cope if their UC income dropped, with 61% unable to cope if it dropped by £10 per week, 74% unable to cope if it dropped by £20 per week, and 78% unable to cope if it dropped by £30 per week.
- If these cuts went ahead, 26% said they would be unable to pay for essentials and 14% said they would be unable to buy food.

The UK Government must urgently review and uprate the level of support UC offers to ensure no-one is left without essentials. Increasing UC is the right thing to do, both to protect individuals from hardship and to support our post-pandemic economic recovery.

[Download Publication](#)



Dignity, fairness and respect

Morna Simpkins, director of MS Society Scotland, and Tanith Muller, chair of Neurological Alliance of Scotland have penned an open letter highlighting how cruel the 20m rule is.



These are the principles that were to underpin the Scottish Government's new human rights based approach to social security, through the introduction of Adult Disability Payment (ADP), their proposed replacement for Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Yet from its inception by retaining the 20 metre rule in ADP the government risks enshrining unfairness in our new system. A supposed rights based approach based on dignity and respect, undermined by the continuation of an unjustifiable and unfair tick box rule.

In practice the 20 metre rule means that people with disabilities who can walk one step over 20 metres do not qualify for the higher rate of mobility support. It has cost them financial support, mobility vehicles and had a detrimental impact on their mental and physical wellbeing.

No government has ever been able to produce any evidence that people who can walk over 20 metres have lower levels of need for mobility support. In their proposals for ADP the Scottish Government make no attempt to argue that the 20-metre rule is an effective way to measure mobility.

That should not be a surprise. Just think how short a distance of 20 metres really is. Would walking 20 metres get you out of your gate, never mind to a local bus station or shop?

As one person who lost their mobility vehicle because of the rule told us "I still can't figure out where I'm supposed to go. My nearest bus stop is 200 metres away."

Those with neurological conditions have been hit hard and left without support because of this rule. Fatigue, both mental and physical is a common and devastating symptom of many neurological conditions, yet the impact of walking 20 metres on individuals is not taken into account by the rule. Others will manage the 20 metres without an issue one day and be unable to get out of their bed the next, such is the nature of having a fluctuating condition. Yet this is not accounted for by the unjust rule.

Since 2013, one in three people with MS have had their support downgraded, including one in ten who have lost support altogether.

It does not have to be this way. We have an opportunity to have a world-leading social security system. Indeed there are many parts of ADP that move us towards this ambition.

However this new benefit will not deliver the support people with disabilities in Scotland need until it moves away from antiquated and inappropriate eligibility criteria like the 20 metre rule and the damaging 50% rule.

This week the Citizen Participation and Public Petition Committee of the Scottish Parliament will consider a petition from the MS Society Scotland, signed by over 3000 people, it calls for our parliament to press the government to change direction.

We ask that the committee agrees to take evidence on this issue and ultimately, sends it to the parliamentary chamber. To bring this crucial issue to people with disabilities, an underrepresented group who are losing out because of this rule, to the fore.

This article was written by Morna Simpkins, director of MS Society Scotland, and Tanith Muller, chair of Neurological Alliance of Scotland

<https://tfn.scot/opinion/dignity-fairness-and-respect>

See also **<https://tfn.scot/news/charities-call-for-change-of-direction-in-scottish-social-security>**



Scottish Diligence Statistics: 2020-21

Accountant in Bankruptcy (AiB) has released official statistics reporting diligences executed and Charge for Payment served in Scotland for the financial year 2020-21.

Total diligences executed, for all warrant procedures and diligence processes, decreased by 56.6% from 291,535 in 2019-20 to 126,665 in 2020-21. The 2020-21 figure is the lowest figure reported in the last 10 years.

The majority (90.4%) of total diligences executed in 2020-21 were served under the Summary Warrant procedure in respect of council tax debts. Diligences executed in respect of council tax debts decreased by 52.4% when compared with the previous financial year.

For the Non-Summary Warrant procedure, diligences executed decreased by 76.2% to 10,730 in 2020-21.

The largest number of diligences executed by Sheriffdom were granted in Tayside, Central and Fife followed by South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway. The number of diligences carried out decreased across all six Sheriffdoms: Glasgow and Strathkelvin (72.6%); Grampian, Highlands and Islands (60.7%); Lothian and Borders (57.5%); North Strathclyde (55.1%); Tayside, Central and Fife (55.1%); South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway (39.5%).

The number of Charge for Payments decreased from 275,080 in 2019-20 to 165,035 in 2020-21, a decrease of 40.0%. The majority (83.5%) were served in respect of council tax debts.

The figures released today are classed as Official Statistics and were produced in accordance with the professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Background

A full statement of Scottish diligence statistics for the financial year of 2020-21 is available here: <https://www.aib.gov.uk/about-aib/statistics-data/diligence-statistics>

How much must you earn to replace the £20 UC cut?



Debt
Camel

The government wants people to work more to replace the £20 Universal Credit (UC) cut coming up in October.

Many people would love to earn more but can't get the hours. Others can't work for health reasons or caring responsibilities.

But let's look at the situation for people who may be able to earn more.

Usually, extra income reduces their UC because a taper of 63p in the £ is applied. Then there is National Insurance and Tax.

I asked Gareth Morgan, a benefits expert, how much someone would need to earn to replace the £20 and be no worse off.

There isn't a simple answer, so Gareth has written this guest post with some examples.

Read Gareth's post [HERE](#)

Bankruptcy – should you get a new job? Or work overtime?

A couple of readers have asked recently about whether it's sensible to turn down a job or overtime when you are bankrupt. Two things matter in this sort of situation.

First, have you been **discharged** from bankruptcy? Almost everyone is discharged from bankruptcy after a year.

And secondly, do you have an Income Payments Agreement (IPA) set? In an IPA, you have to make monthly payments for three years. An IPA can only be set before you are discharged from bankruptcy. Most people who go bankrupt don't have an IPA set!

Read the full article [HERE](#)



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