

Scottish Government Updates

Housing and Social Security

Annual Housing Statistics

- Rent Arrears up by 3.8% this year.
- Eviction actions against LA tenants resulted in 1460 evictions in 2017/18.
- 96% of these evictions were due to rent arrears.

Reasons behind this?

The Annual Report on Welfare Reform Follow Up Paper Housing and Social Security found:

- Any reduction or restriction in benefit for people on low incomes may impact on their ability to pay rent.
- The freeze in Local Housing Allowance rates has made the private sector unaffordable for a large number of households in receipt of Housing benefit or UC.
- UKG welfare cuts in general, and UC in particular, does increase rent arrears
- Tenants will be affected by changes and cuts made across the welfare system.

Other Evidentiary Sources

- National Housing Federation/SFHA surveys of 118 housing associations in England, Wales, and Scotland in 2018
- Evidence from Highland, East Lothian, Inverclyde and East Dunbartonshire councils revealed that debts were 2.5 times higher for those on UC
- Recent research from England suggests that by virtue of UC claimants already being in arrears, they are more likely to be subject to eviction proceeding.

SG Approach

- Committed to ensuring that eviction for rent arrears in the social sector is the last resort.
- We expect to spend over £125m in 2018-19 on welfare mitigation and measures to help protect those on low incomes.
- 18-21 year olds on UC
- LHA rates

Next Steps

- LHA - We still continue to consider whether, in the long term, there will be any steps we can take.
- Rent Arrears and UC - evidence gathering
- DHPs - Allocations
- Further research

Universal Credit Scottish choices

- Available to new claimants since 4 October 2017, extended to all claimants on 31 January 2018 – full service only
- Provide people with more choice in how they manage their UC account
- Further management information to be published 31 October 2018, official statistics in the future
- How they work – issues to be resolved
- Awareness – user research findings
- Evaluation approach

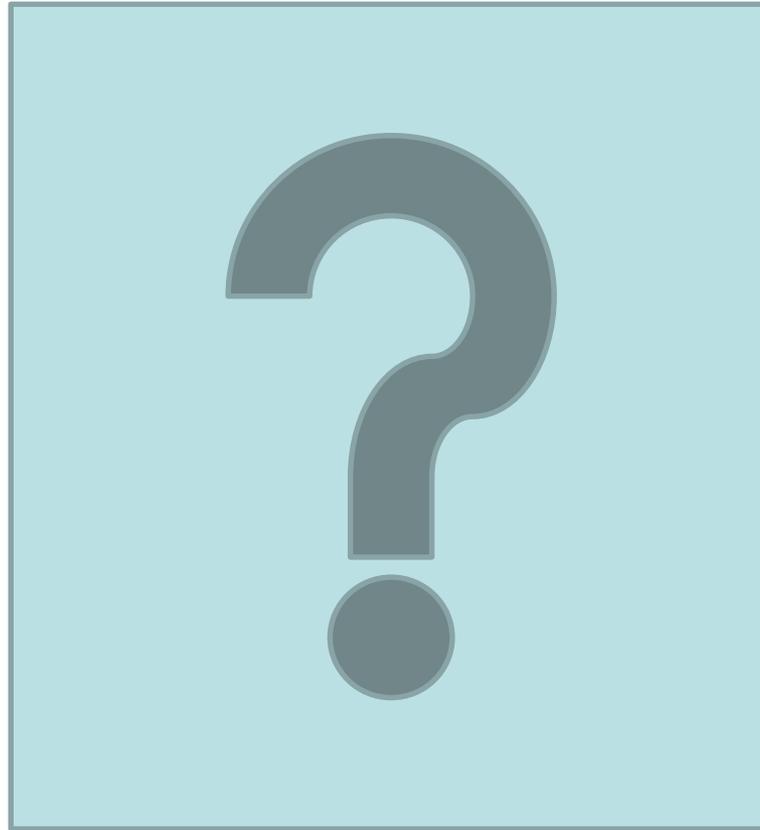
Split payments of Universal Credit in Scotland

- Committed to deliver split payments between a couple – working with stakeholders and people with experience of UC to seek views on how it could work in practice
- Consultation on social security – 88% of people supported split payments of UC between a couple
- Our overarching aim is to provide an independent income to all people in receipt of UC, and to promote equality, dignity and respect in the social security system

Split payments of Universal Credit in Scotland

- Stakeholder engagement and user research
- So far, we have found that there is strong support for split payments, but views vary on how it might work in practice, for example, whether payments should be split 50/50 or based on individual circumstances
- We are in regular discussions with the DWP on the feasibility, operational and cost implications of delivering split payments in Scotland
- Announcement in due course on how and when split payments can be delivered – consultation to follow

Questions



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