

COVID 19 response

£350 million support package established by Scottish Government to help vulnerable communities


Includes £50 million Hardship Fund and an additional £45 million for Scottish Welfare Fund. Further £5 million funding allocation for Discretionary Housing Payments

LHA rates to be further increased to the 30% percentile


UC standard allowance rates increased

Local Authorities encouraged to raise any concerns on DHP demand resulting from COVID - 19

Publicising DHPs



Raise awareness of continued availability of DHPs – new client group due to COVID 19 who may have no prior welfare benefit knowledge



Use various platforms to promote; social media, websites, roadshows - from Scottish Government, external stakeholders, advisory services

DHP Pressures



Increase in UC claimants, increased demand for DHPs, CTR, SWF

Increase in DHP, CTR and SWF applications


Staff resources being deployed from other business areas to prioritise and deliver SWF payments

Results in delays for HB/CTR and DHP award


£50m Hardship Fund has been established to support Local Authorities to deliver payments to any claimants who present with a hardship need. This can be accessed by low-income families and people in receipt of benefits. Also £5 million further DHP funding

Bedroom Tax

Mitigation & Abolition




The Scottish Government remains committed to abolishing the bedroom tax using devolved powers on social security – continue to mitigate through DHPs.




Mitigation will continue until abolition in place and full migration of existing UC caseload, estimated to be September 2024.

Local Housing Allowance




The UK Government announced in January 2020 that the Local Housing Allowance will be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from April 2020, ending the four year freeze.



On 18th March , the UK Government further increased all LHA rates to the 30th percentile to help combat the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation

Social Security Agency Benefits



- Carers Allowance Supplement
- Best Start Foods
- Funeral Support Payments
- Young Carer Grant

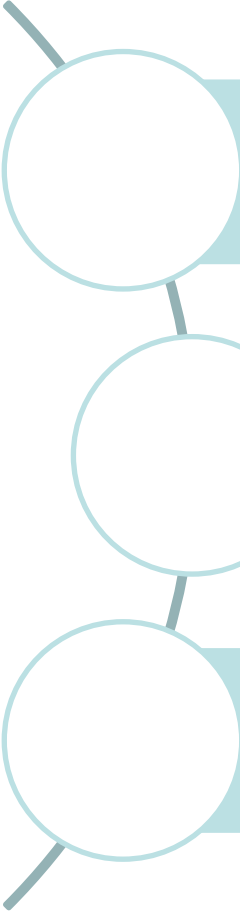
- Best Start Grant – for early years
- Pregnancy/Baby payments
- Early Learning Payment
- School Age Payment

Further benefits to be delivered:

- Job Start Payment
- Scottish Child Payment
- Child Disability Payment
- Child Winter Heating Assistance

- Replacements for Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payments (PIP) and Attendance Allowance (AA)
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payment

Universal Credit Scottish choices




Since October 2017, offers of:
Payment of housing costs directly to landlords; and
Twice monthly payments.

Aim to provide more choice for people to manage their finances, protect tenancies and reduce build up of rent arrears.

What's happened in the last six months?
DWP's housing payment changes;
Take up rates steady; and
Evaluation.

Split (or separate) payments



Policy aim remains: to provide everyone in receipt of Universal Credit with access to an independent income, based on their individual needs.

Policy and delivery assessments gaining pace

Current proposal is based on household characteristics, rather than exact pounds and pence.

Expected announcement in summer has been delayed.

Questions



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