

Scottish Government Updates

Housing and Welfare

Homelessness

- We are absolutely still committed to ending homelessness for good
- Our updated Ending Homelessness Together action plan renewed our commitment to ending homelessness and our recently published annual report on progress (7 October 2021) demonstrates that, with the right approach and funding, local authorities and their third sector partners have the means to end rough sleeping in Scotland.
- There are promising signs that our efforts are working, with a recent report from Crisis showing rates of the worst forms of homelessness are significantly lower in Scotland than in England.
- Our PfG commits us to ensuring everyone has a safe, warm place to call home – taking forward an ambitious programme of affordable housebuilding and eradicating homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Our plans will be backed by a further £50m for our Ending Homelessness Together Fund this parliamentary term.

Since the beginning of the Pandemic, some further action has been taken to help prevent homelessness including the following:

- Evictions have been put on hold to help prevent homelessness. This expected to remain in place until at least March 2022.

Support for those who are struggling with rent due to changes in their finances due to covid has been a priority for us.

- The tenant hardship loan fund has been introduced to help those who need it.

Tenant Grant Fund

- This new fund was announced in June 2021.
- Local Authorities will be administering this fund
- £10m provided to LAs to support tenants

Winter Support Fund

- We will invest £41 million in a Winter Support Fund for low income households to help people struggling financially during the winter.

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
 - Ongoing engagement with DWP regarding the 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.
- Work underway with social and user researchers to inform policy decisions.
- Regular workshops with the DWP to ensure our formal policy proposal is as informed as possible.

Questions

