

Scottish Disability Equality Forum

Leading Disability Equality in Scotland

Consultation: A New Future for Social Security

Consultation on Social Security in Scotland

About Us

Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) works for social inclusion in Scotland through the removal of barriers to equality and the promotion of independent living for people affected by disability.

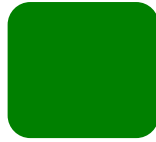
We are a membership organisation who represent individuals affected by disability and organisations and groups who share our values. Our aim is to ensure that the voices of people affected by disability are heard and heeded within their own communities and at a national and political level.

Summary

On 29 July 2016 the Scottish Government launched an inquiry into “A New Future for Social Security – Consultation on Social Security” in Scotland

<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-security/social-security-in-scotland>

Scottish Disability Equality Forum prepared a questionnaire for our members and prepared an online survey for both our members and the public. The survey was available for response from 17 August 2016 until 23 October 2016. SDEF received 17 responses in total. The responses received will be submitted directly to the Scottish Government.



Questions and Responses

The questions asked and responses received are detailed as follows:

Part 1 What the Scottish Government hope to achieve

Question 1

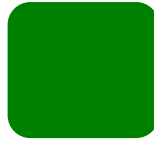
We have told you the Scottish Government's ideas on:

- Writing what they want to achieve into a new law.
- Delivering social security
- Independent advice

You may want to tell us what you think on all of these or just some of them. Please tell us if you are giving answers to idea 1 or idea 2 when you answer the next two questions.

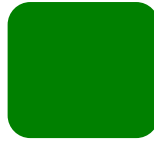
What do you think of these 2 ideas?

- I think that your ideas are pretty impressive and covers all areas. I am sure that some things will have been missed or could perhaps be done differently, but all such will come out in the wash so to speak
- Support these ideas
- I think these ideas are very focussed and important for UK citizens within the environs of Scotland
- These ideas are good provided there is no postcode lottery
- I favour the Claimant's Charter
- Ideas are good, but are they workable? Will it cost more in the long run?
- Making our aims – there is a need for this at present, particularly if disabled are made to feel that they are a burden on society and



not entitled to any help. The service delivery must be treated with respect and dignity, helpful accessible buildings.

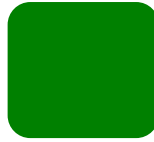
- It is vital that any agreement is easy to read and access so that people know their rights, but it is not made clear whether a charter would be equally enforceable or have less power than an actual law. A law might give more security, especially if the Human Rights Act is abolished.
- I think having both a Charter and then having it incorporated into law would cover all angles. It will be more effective than having one or the other
- It think it's a great idea, as the system is very confusing. I like the sound of the new system. I think it will be fair and less judgement will be made on people who claim benefit
- My view is that making aims part of law would not be as effective as a Charter, we legislate for enough these days. Delivering social security should be devolved to local authorities, we do not require another "dept" which will in itself draw up valuable money out of the system. LA's already have systems in place for scrutiny and could easily be set up for delivery of new powers.
- Idea A – A Claimants Charter, a good idea to ensure the fine points (nuances) are readable and enforceable
- A Claimant Charter is a good idea as it allows nuance and detailed reference for an enquirer who may need layman's terminology, rather than legalise with its legal imperatives, not always readily understood
- Idea 1 – the Claimant Charter, it may be easier to add, amend or change but what legal weight does it have to idea 2, having it as law? If the Social Security is in law then it is mandatory whilst as Claimant Charter then the 'security' element could be undermined, or at least less secure.
- Delivery of Social Security is this relating to the organisation aspect or delivery of the security itself? If the former, then it should be a single entity and not go into several units or outlets to spread around Scotland to deal with a particular area which could become a 'postcode lottery'. If the latter, I am not sure what is meant by delivery of 'goods' as mentioned above, it is like vouchers or what? If it is about money, or equivalent, then various options should be made available provided that it isn't expensive to administer.



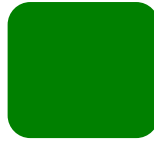
Question 2

Is there anything else you would like to say about this section?

- A full list of benefits will be covered under the social security system. Having to deal with some benefits in Scotland and perhaps other in England, it could be a bit ham fisted, especially if a Scottish decision differs from an English decision.
- Need to remember legislation is about make enforceable law and not sending a message. If there is to be a statutory charter it must be something the courts can enforce
- I would like to present my ideas regarding PIP which should not be implemented in Scotland, but to retain DLA, but adapted to clear up loopholes
- There are people out there that get benefits and they know how to play the system. How would it be stopped?
- Some people may find it easier to receive goods as opposed to the money to pay for them, as part of the overall benefits, but it should never be compulsory, policing people's lifestyle or publicly visible (for instance people having to use benefits car to buy goods in a shop in front of others). A person cannot manage mainstream employment but volunteers to the best of their ability when their condition allows, should not be penalised by not being allowed to purchase a bottle of wine for the weekend; they should not be collateral damage because some people spend all their benefits on alcohol
- I think that would help as a lot of young people don't have certain items to go to an interview or someone who can help purchase the items needed
- I would welcome the new powers, but have reservations that a new industry will emerge that takes money out of the system that could be utilised for those in need
- A regulator or ombudsman to ensure impartiality and fairness to complainants
- In difficult times we need help that lasts not just short term, so please consider the true meaning of security in the long term



- Should social security payments in Scotland be cash only, or should there be a choice of goods and cash? – Give people the option, but ensure they are able to use the money wisely and don't blow it. Stress the responsibility we all have in making our society work well for all
- A legal framework gives client confidence and assured delivery



Part 2 Benefits the Scottish Government will provide

Question 3

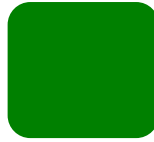
We have told you the Scottish Government's ideas on

- Ill Health and Disability Benefits
- Carer's Allowance
- Best Start Grant
- Funeral Payments
- Winter Fuel and Cold Weather Payments
- Universal Credit
- Job Grant

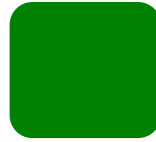
You may want to give us answers on all of these or just some of them.

What do you think about the ideas?

- Excellent as long as the people who administer the system are honest and genuinely trying to help people
- Devolved benefits are a good idea. Support ideas for ill health and disability benefits and Carer's Allowance
- These ideas are good, but Scotland will not control work related benefits
- Regarding the mobility scheme, down payments or premiums should be taken for the Scottish Welfare Fund in the first instance
- All brilliant ideas, but doesn't fill you with much confidence especially in Moray with its lack of funds
- Where's the money coming from?
- Discretionary Housing Payments – discretionary payment get assessed every year. Does this mean the person who is on it with a severe disability suddenly changes in that year?
- There are some benefits not thought out as there are so many. Training our young adults from 16/24 should be reconsidered. They do not come out of school trained, it takes about 5 years.



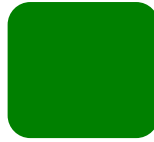
- Discretionary Housing Payments need to stay
- DLA – people who have this and were over the age of 64 before the new PIP came in, must be allowed to remain on this. If not it could be seen as discrimination, treating people in Scotland worse than in other parts of the UK.
- Invisible and unprovable conditions (such as autism, mental illness or fatigue) should be given equal respect, compassion and credibility when assessing claims
- (Discretionary Housing Payments).... Absolutely should not change. One bedroom accommodation is in very short supply and many people would benefit from having a spare room for people who support them to stay over on occasion. Nobody should lose their home or have to face the upheaval of moving because of bedroom tax. There should be an exception for autistic children who could not cope with sharing a room with a sibling. There should also be help available for people forced to move house for whatever reason when they are not in any fit state; this could take form of a grant to pay someone to help with the exhausting work of packing/decluttering. There should also be something in place to prevent an ill person from having to lose a much needed therapeutic pet because they have to move (for instance fostering while they are in temporary accommodation or if they have to take a private let where pets are not allowed, so they can visit and do not lose contact). Nobody would be expected to ditch a human family member because their circumstances changed, but nobody thinks twice about expecting someone to cope with rehoming their beloved cats or dogs
- If people are on DLA they should automatically transfer to PIP if this move is continued. They should not have to be reassessed. Also the fear surrounding being assessed for the Disability Benefits must be significantly lessened and fair. Also all the bonuses paid to staff and assessors for finding against clients should be axed completely. The GP's and Consultants and other health professionals reports and views must always be sought and taken seriously. If it is necessary for an Assessor to visit an applicant, then that Assessor must have experience in dealing with people with that complaint. The system must be fair above all else to stop more unnecessary deaths.
- Agree totally with discretionary housing payment



- I think these ideas for these benefits are good. I think a few should be expanded to apply to all ages to make it fairer for all
- As a parent of a disabled child, it is vital the benefit they get as I wouldn't be able to help my child with the help he needs on my own
- Agree with discretionary housing payment
- I think these ideas are the best ever and cannot wait. I hope it gets started and I wish you all the best, will give Scotland's people a start at a better future
- I agree with discretionary housing payment, but the system needs to be simplified
- (Discretionary Housing Payment)..... put a cap on landlords who provide accommodation for those in need. It is in their interests to observe the cohesion from a common good approach
- These ideas seem progressive and in the interests of society
- It is inappropriate to assess or review DLA needs by telephone as claimants find that uncomfortable, during which there can be difficulty in expressing the reality of where they're at. Advocacy may be essential

III Health and Disability Benefits

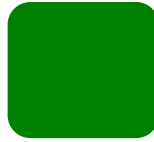
- if a person has proof, they never get better or die; why do they keep getting asked if your necks broken and you can't move. You're never going to move
- needs for the future to be looked at. Disability does not get better unless you get a miracle. Need for regular checks – people attempt to gloss over their bad, bad days resulting in not getting the help they actually need.
- Reviews need to be kept as streamlined and simple as possible to minimize stress and a constant feeling of being on trial. The word of the claimant backed up by relevant, specialist professional should suffice
- this is something I would welcome although it would require both careful management and honesty for it to work. LA Social Work depts already have a good knowledge of most claimants, this could, along with third sector be utilised to accomplish this



- Assessment and review of DLA should not be made over the phone. A disabled person's week can be variable, suited to part time work, rather than full time. Whole of life should mean that, subject to professional verification e.g a polio victim

Carer's Allowance

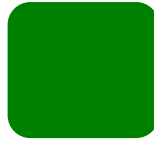
- I work as well as care and I am being charged a huge amount by my local council for the privilege of working, the system is unfair towards me as a carer and I would want it to be changed. I do not get paid for being a carer as I work this is not fair, the whole thing needs to be looked at
- When I was a carer I worked two part-time jobs and did not claim any carer's allowance because I did not know what was available to me. The chance to work or study without constant worries about the person you are caring for would be a great bonus. It is harder to get back into the job market as they lose skills
- I think Carer's get a raw deal
- Carer's Allowance is a good idea
- What about carers? Are they still going to be treated as non-workers and get paid the same as someone who does not work?
- Why does the Carer's Allowance stop when I turn 60?
- If carers were given a decent income and stop handing out these bits and pieces, we could pay all our bills with handouts. Only pay to those who need it
- The Carer's Allowance is a joke. My carer is 71 and diabetic, he gets absolutely nothing, nor do we get any help whatsoever.
- Online support for carers would be good, as many miss out on support groups/meetings because they cannot leave the person they are caring for
- The Carer's Allowance must be made to include Young and Elderly Carers. They all need the help. Putting up the Carer's Allowance should be an advantage to helping all carers to take part in activities outside the home and outwith caring activities
- This is the best thing ever, as I was told I could not due to claiming carers and I felt isolated; not that it's my son's fault but the government for all the sanctions they put in place. I think it's a fantastic idea



- This would require further respite care being made available, this could be sourced through LA's and third sector
- Carers do this free/voluntary and should be treated and respected for the value that brings to society
- Caring should be highly valued as it is freely given and requires commitment which is conducive to society wellbeing and harmony, the hallmark of a caring society which offers respite care as Crossroads do

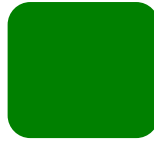
Best Start Grant

- A good start is important
- Some people might get the money for kids, but money could no on drink/drugs. Should be another format so the money goes to the kids
- Yes, help family as I did not get it for my eldest girl
- Should be limited to people on benefits and low income families that have a combined income of £25,000 and under, but should not be paid when the children start school or nursery. I think that if any changes should be made, it is to the way and amount that is paid for claims for school uniforms, because the cost does not match the amount that parents can claim. Also free school meals should be done for low income families
- Best Start Grant would be good
- Why apply this across the board when are struggling to address poverty? Surely it should depend on a persons position as to whether this is applicable
- Good especially if accompanied by parenting know-how, if needed
- The First Minister has already committed to significant importance given to early years support and we welcome that. There should be parenting support where needed because sadly, parenting skills don't always accompany childbirth



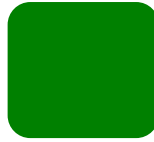
Funeral Payments

- I think there should be a standard Scottish utility basic funeral, same cost all over Scotland
- Why doesn't the money go straight to funeral parlors
- Rather than paying a grant which families spend on private suppliers, the government should provide discounted funeral services directly
- Bring down the cost of cremation, which is healthier than burying
- This needs to be looked at carefully. It was only on the death of our son at age 12 we discovered that although we had taken out insurance, they were only worth the money that we had paid in and that was negligible. We had to borrow money
- People need to be informed of this before they have to think about it while coping with bereavement. Clear information and contact details should be included in the award of other benefits, with a note explaining that this is to save having to start looking into it at a traumatic time and reminding the recipient to keep the information safe
- Funeral payments should be a fair amount for people on benefits or earning under a certain income, and the amount should be based on research into costs across Scotland. Others on a higher income should have to fill in a claim form that is assessed rapidly
- My family have been there and my mum had to borrow and it has taken her nearly 6 years to pay off my brothers funeral, as it's a thing that cannot be predicted when it's going to happen and the financial strain is overwhelming
- With local authority involvement, this could be easily managed. LA's are best placed to be aware of individuals financial affairs if on benefits and therefore in a good place to allocate funds for this purpose
- Funeral directors/companies should be inspired to do not for profit arrangements in the interests of society wellbeing
- Funeral companies/directors should offer where appropriate not for profit=low cost funerals as a contribution to our society in which they are for the most part, rewarded handsomely for the service they provide



Winter Fuel and Cold Weather Payments

- Elderly people who are resident in Homes, where the heating is already paid for, do not require WF allowance.
- Very important there should be a senior tariff
- Winter fuel payments should be means tested
- Support cold weather payments
- Cold weather payments are crucially important
- Winter fuel payments are absolutely essential in Scotland. I would like to see this increased not abolished
- Most old people need winter fuel payments
- Cold weather payments; what about people that need heating all year round because of their injuries to their body; or they have to wash/dry machine all the time because they wee all the time
- Keep winter fuel payments
- Cold weather payments should only be paid to those who need it
- This needs to be looked at again. It has been the same amount for years, but pensioners who have high incomes and private pensions, do they really need this?
- I live in the North East of Scotland, I am disabled and have Reynauld's Disease, so am always cold and need to keep the house warm. We rarely get a cold weather payment
- Winter Fuel Payments are definitely very important in Scotland. The cold weather is starting earlier and lasting longer than it used to.
- We definitely need to keep this and perhaps introduce discretion when the temperature falls just short of qualifying for two or more consecutive weeks
- Winter Fuel Payments should be paid to all pensioners who have an income of under £40,000. If the payments are done at this level, there will be very little criticism from people and it should be paid to as it is £200 per couple, split there is only one person who can claim.
- Cold Weather Payment should be given to people in a more fair way. At the moment they are given based on only a few meter in Scotland. There needs to be a lot more, because the weather and

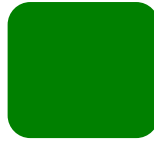


temperatures vary vastly within a few miles because of the topography of Scotland

- Winter Fuel Payments - I think it should help families also. Not all families can afford heating either
- They do not give it when it's really cold. I think it should be thought of again when to give it as it's a vital payment
- Winter Fuel Payments can be really crucial payment to many pensioners, but I would advocate it being allocated on a basis of need. Many pensioners don't need this payment and by applying it to a benefit related payment it could allow an increased payment to be made to those in greatest need
- Winter Fuel Payments are essential for some, but should have an opt out facility for those who don't need it
- Cold Weather Payments resolve the additional costs related to metered energy. Power companies should absorb the cost penalty
- Winter Fuel Payments - Essential for some, but an opt out facility should be available for those who have no need of support. Admin via HMRC procedures. This also applies to Cold Weather Payments, those who need it get it. Others can decline as a contribution to a cohesive society

Universal Credit

- Would not support paying rent direct to private landlords without strict controls in place as there is potential for abuse
- Agree with discretionary Housing Payments
- Paying landlord directly will alleviate evictions
- Paying rent directly to private landlords – private landlords are a joke. They need to be brought down on rent charges
- Paying rent direct to landlords would save people getting into arrears, especially private landlords
- Yes please regarding paying rent directly to private landlords. This would help a lot with some of the prejudice against DSS tenants. More frequent payments are also a much better idea as some people do struggle with budgeting. Paying rent directly to any type of landlord is the logical thing to do. I have no idea why that was ever changed. As long as a record is kept so that

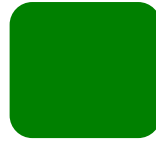


it can be proved that the landlord received the benefit. Not an issue with my landlord, but there are some dodgy ones out there

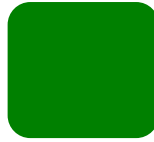
- Agree with the changes to Universal Credit because it gives people the options they will be more in control of their lives
- I think all rents should be paid as its put people I know into debt due to having so much money they don't know what to do with it
- Rent should be paid directly to the landlord regardless of status. LA's are already feeling the effects of rent being paid to the recipient of the benefit. This has caused arrears to accumulate that will be very difficult for the claimant to make up, this in turn could lead to evictions and homelessness
- Yes, re paying private landlords because that would provide the local authority monitor on capping
- Rents should be capped and payment of housing benefit should be direct to the landlord as a way of monitoring and controlling unfairness in amount of rent and quality of accommodation

Job Grant

- Support this. Free travel should be extended beyond 3 months to as long as it is needed to get a job. Potentially even lifetime free bus travel for getting to work
- Agree
- Like the idea of the job grant, have found that through a job that I do that some young people need equipment, such as safety boots, to start a new job and after a period of unemployment, cannot afford these sort of things
- Job grant bus pass is good idea if it gets people to work
- It's high time business people started to train young people and pay a good wage to live on. Get back to training
- Agree
- Agree



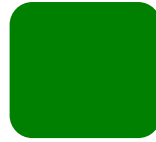
- Only concern with the Job Grant is it may be a disincentive once it gets to 4 or 5 months, as some may want to hold out for 6 months in order to become eligible
- The Job grant scheme should be for people of all ages, who have been out of work for more than 6 months. People of all ages need help to get into or back into work with retraining
- Agree with Job Grant, but think that all ages should get this grant when they go back to work or get a job for the first time, because being older does not mean that ones' difficulties for the first month are any less than those of a 16-24 year old. Also, there should be a limit on how many grants any one person should get. I think 3 times would be fair.
- an amazing idea that would help a lot of young people
- I appreciate that there will be costs involved, but it is often as hard for someone 50+ to find employment as it is for the younger generation. This could be looked at as applicable to need rather than a universal payment
- should help remove the unfortunate NEET's tag
- Yes to Job grant, but ensure effective job seeking help via a one to one structure whereby a jobseeker has a specific helper who brings "emotional/personal skill" as well as structured help
- Job grant is a more positive tag than the unfortunate NEET, which suggests failure with no hope
- good news as claimants wellbeing and hence fitness of availability for work will be enhanced. They should also have a named person for emotional and structural aspects of job seeking



Question 4

Is there anything else you would like to say about this section?

- Excellent idea. I am fed up having to prove my disability in conditions which have been diagnosed as deteriorating. Such repetitive claiming which more often than not includes an Appeal, does nothing for my depression. On the last ESA claim form, there was a section for your GP to complete. It was a list of questions which required ticks. Out of, I think 11, I had 10 ticks, and ticks were meant to give points. I was awarded NIL points!!
- Can't wait
- The whole benefit system should be looked at, and get the changes made fairer. I feel we are constantly being punished since my husband became ill, through no fault of his own.
- Support general principles
- Scrap PIP
- The “whole of life” approach to disability benefits is something that is currently missing
- I would like to see carers treated with more respect. Most of us have given years caring for our own sons and daughters from birth until such times as they can, but still treated as non-workers, yet most of us are working 24/7 on a small income
- “whole of life” disability – I was born with a disability and yes DWP don't class me as disabled because I can look after my daughter, do shopping and washing. What has that got to do with it? I have 2 curvature of the spine and born with a rare blood, which means I am allergic to all food, fruit and juices. I can only drink water and Chinese tea.
- Support anything that helps young people get into work.
- The systems all need to be far more fair all in Scotland. All bonuses paid for saving money that should be paid out, must stop. This has been a source of so much unnecessary death and stress, which makes the claimants more ill
- Goes some way to Nicola Sturgeon's inclusion



Part 3: Making it work

Question 5

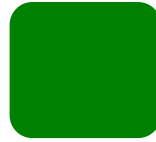
We have told you the Scottish Government's ideas on

- Advice
- Complaints. Reviews and appeals
- Where you live and benefit issues
- Managing overpayments
- Fraud
- Protecting your information
- Raising benefits yearly

You may want to give us answers on all of these or just some of them. Please tell us what you are giving answers to when you answer the two questions below.

What do you think about the ideas in this section?

- Happy with what you suggest. Things will come out in the wash – trial and error
- All of these issues are very important
- PIP must not be implemented in Scotland
- Initially complaints are better dealt with by a phone service
- Who are DWP?
- Please make information simple to read and understand. Please let people know what they are eligible for, do not let it be a stigma when they ask. We should not have to plead. Treat us as equals, not as something you consider a burden.
- As much help is needed to make sure people know what they are entitled to and what help is available for them
- It is vital that the Government continues to back and fund condition specific support services for less well understood/more complex conditions, such as the one stop shops for autism. There is no substitute for informed official backing when it comes to these

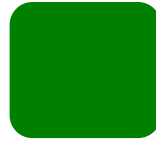


conditions; as well as being able to guide and help the claimant to inform decision makers more accurately, many people will have had such bad experiences with general mainstream services including advice agencies, they are afraid to approach them because they have no reason to trust them to “get” them. Existing services are overstretched and it is difficult to get an appointment in time or be allocated enough time to put across complex needs/situations.

- The citizens advice bureau needs to be funded far more than they are now, because they both help people to claim benefits and give very valuable feedback to the Government about how laws and benefits affect people in the ground. Money Advice for debt management works really well with CAB. Funding these organisations should be long term, not short term.
- In general, these ideas are good, but in some instances they need honing to apply to all ages and in some circumstances, limiting to those on incomes under £40,000
- There should be a named person for emotional and structural aspects of their need for support throughout all services in “Making it Work”

Advice

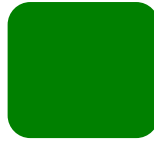
- The provision of independent advice is very important. However, if there are many ‘advisers’ all over Scotland then one adviser may be more, or even less, skilled than another. The question is how to maintain same level of skilled advisers across the country.
- Independent Advice – if it is to be separated from the rest of the UK, then yes I would like it to be kept separate
- Independent advice is crucial but we already have an efficient system in place with CAB’s surely they could be enhanced to allow engagement with advice at a more advanced level
- Independent advice, impartial not condescending. The disabled person is treated with respect, but this must be a two-way system
- I think that the independent advice is a must, but it must be truly independent with no one gaining anything from it in the way of unfair advantage
- Too many sources of advice, charities, local and national, DWP etc



- Anytime I have went to get help and advice, it has not been there. I went to CAB recently and they could not help as they had no idea about ILF and SDF
- As a working carer, I am not being treated fairly. I have appealed my local councils decision and it has up to now taken nearly 2 months for it to be looked into and my debt is growing every week. I know I am not going to be able to pay all the monies owed. I have told them my concerns but they just say don't worry about it, it will get sorted
- Agree appeals should be by independent tribunal, but essential that appeals are free of charge and legal aid is available in complex appeals
- I think you are doing a great job
- Utilise the existing CAB network, it already provides advice from both paid and volunteer workers. If this were to be more inclusive service, working with local authorities, it could provide a one stop shop for advice and information on benefits and assistance with forms, which is often the biggest obstacle for many claimants
- Advice is very fractal at present – need to be more focused and coherent e.g central website

Complaints. Reviews and appeals

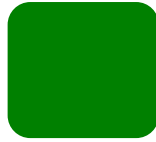
- The word tribunal can be somewhat daunting and attendance at such can also be daunting as the panel members are all QC's, senior doctors etc. Not people that you normally deal with
- Reviews and appeals need to be dealt with quicker that they are being dealt with at the moment
- in all aspects, a named person/helper/official is the way to ensure whole person involvement
- this could be costly and time consuming process, hardly something relevant when a person has no money or in crisis. I feel local authorities are already in place where this could be provided, perhaps with third sector involvement
- I think this could be intimidating to some people, but if its how your voice can be heard then yes



- I think this is necessary and that people should be able to ask, in certain circumstances, that the tribunal attends their house. This should be the exception, not the rule.
- Timescales must allow for instances when the claimant cannot get someone to support them in time because of busy schedules (of the support services). There should be scope for tribunals to take place in a venue which feels safe and is accessible to the claimant and does not involve their professional support having to take a lot of time out to travel because this will make it harder to get an appointment with said support, if say five hours have to be block booked instead of two
- Tribunals need to have some lay people on them. Too often it is just so-called professionals, so why bother appealing a decision, no professional is going to criticise another
- Very important

Where you live and benefit issues

- It shouldn't matter where you live, everyone should be treated as an individual. For instance, if you have to travel 15 miles to get to the nearest shop, this should be taken into account, if you do not live in a bus route e.g. if the nearest stop is 4 miles from your door. If the pavements are too narrow in the town that you live for your wheelchair that it is impossible to get into the town without a vehicle, as I have already said you should be treated as an individual and where you live should be taken into account.
- the openness of the system should be apparent to all so that its fairness in practice can be seen and understood by all
- yes, of course we don't have a bottomless pit of money. Openly fair assessment is crucial so that recipients don't feel discriminated against
- You need to be resident in Scotland to receive the benefits devolved
- I'm not sure as many people have to take what they are given
- I think the criteria should be fair, but that a person who does travel should be registered to vote up here and when relevant, paying

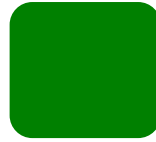


taxes here. They should spend at least seven or eight months in this country

- it should be simple enough according to whether a person's permanent address is in Scotland or England
- this rubbish, you are disabled whether you live in Glasgow or a rural area, in fact worse off if you are in a rural area as you have added transport cost and you need a car
- I don't like this test based on where you live. We should be treated all the same
- good
- agree
- Sounds logical idea

Managing overpayments

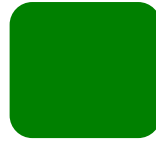
- Provided that the rebate is not all claimed as once, repaid over a long period of time (Overpayment etc)
- this is unfair and you should not have to pay it back
- Given a high level of perceived fairness, there should be less resistance to repayment, unless changed circumstances have brought more difficulty
- Repayment is fair as long as it doesn't bring hardship due to changed circumstances. Seen to be fairness is always positive
- By reducing the administration of a centralized service, overpayments should be minimized. This is often caused by estimations of entitlements, mitigating estimations by fast, accurate and realtime needs assessment locally could go a long way to alleviate this. If overpayment is a factor and not the fault of the claimant, efforts to establish a repayment schedule should be established
- People should not be penalized if it's not their fault for mistakes
- I think that the claimant should pay the overpayment back, but if it is not their fault, then they should be allowed to pay back at a reasonable rate. Also the staff need full training for the jobs of checking



- It needs to be looked at on a case by case basis. If a person's condition prevented them from realizing an overpayment had occurred, they should at least be allowed to pay a little bit at a time
- Not if this is proved not to be the claimant fault, then there needs to be something put in place that they do not end up in debt, or worse off than they were
- Needs careful explanation and small reduction for stress caused and payment stretched over longish period
- I would propose a LETS (Local enterprise Trading System) system where people can pay off debt like offering services
- This is ok as long as repayment would not cause claimant substantial prejudice

Fraud

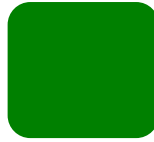
- The people who are claiming could be in a computer bank and tapped into by the police, doctors so on, if they think something is not right
- Penalised rather than punished. Community cohesion and we're all in this together can be used in monitoring and validating what happens in welfare dependence – there is not a bottomless pit
- Anonymity for whistle blowers as a way of bringing community action into reducing the abuse of the system
- Absolute anonymity for whistle blowers
- Local authorities have a duty to investigate fraud and are generally very good at this function. It can pay dividends by having local intelligence when investigating this type of fraud, they would need the power to deal with fraud when found and proven
- I think they should keep an eye on them more as there is a lot, but so many people lose money while others are raking it in with false information they give, but the honest lose out
- Yes they should be punished, but they should be going after the big fraudsters as well and those should be jailed, prosecuted and their assets stripped. I think that the smaller ones should not necessarily be prosecuted, but made to do community service and made to pay back at a reasonable rate



- They need to be sure of their facts before proceeding and make sure they know the difference between oversight and deliberate fraud. An elderly person known to me had a severe discrepancy amounting to less than a pound a week and was investigated so harshly and intimidatingly, he had a small stroke and almost died (not to mention thus costing the NHS money and becoming unable to sustain a small post-retirement job which did him good).
- Make this as hard as possible. Being disabled and having great difficulty walking, it makes me angry to see people abusing the system, getting benefits and help and I am left to struggle on as best as I can
- Make sure the money is for food, rent and bills
- Must do what is needed to discipline offenders
- DWP fraud investigation is infamously harsh. SG should take sympathetic approach and not assume fraud is taking place without sufficient evidence

Protecting your information

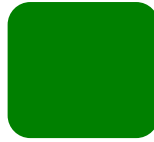
- Happy to share information
- Sharing is the ethos which should prevail. Inclusion is the mantra for a caring Scotland.
- Agree. Gives us all in this together way of doing things
- Sharing information is vital. There are many instances where information is requested over and over again by different services. This can be eliminated by secure sharing, a facility that already exists within local government
- I like my privacy I'm sorry to say
- I think that sharing information with the HMRC, councils and DWP should be made clear verbally at the outset and should be a matter of course
- As long as it is done with permission and not in a way which could identify individuals, it could be helpful and constructive.
- As is necessary, but people must be protected, too often this happens
- You can share this, someone else might have other ideas
- Agree



- Agree

Raising benefits yearly

- Yes, write this in plain English
- Is there a simpler way regarding raising yearly benefits
- Raising benefits- triple lock. Named person will enhance the relationship between the giver and receiver
- Triple lock on raising benefits
- In the current financial climate where low increases are the norm, it may not be in the best interests of claimants to have universal increases, in my own case I get increases where they are not particularly required – more should be on a case by case basis
- Yes, I believe so as many cannot live on them and that why there is such a huge debt crisis
- I think there should be a rise in line with the cost of living. I think this is necessary for people to afford to use the money for the care they need from the authorities and outside carers and services
- Yes, they should be kept in line with inflation. A notification of how much the increase is and what the new amount to be paid will be and when it will start is all that is needed.
- Should be in line with inflation
- Agree
- Benefits should be in line with inflation



Question 6

Is there anything else you would like to say about this section?

- In Moray any adult autism service would be nice. Some other authorities deal with this very well
- The Scottish system needs to be far more fair than the English system – fair and strict. It needs to be more open so that people who need and are entitled to these benefits should get them promptly and with far less trouble than the English system allows. If more staff are needed for this then employ them and make sure they are trained properly for the job. If the number of people employed goes up then it will help the economy too. It must be fair.
- I really hope this can begin
- Scotland should adopt, reaffirm and live by the “Golden Rule”
- Treating everyone equally – of course this is right, but make it plain that this is the case