

Scottish Carer's Assistance Consultation

Easy Read

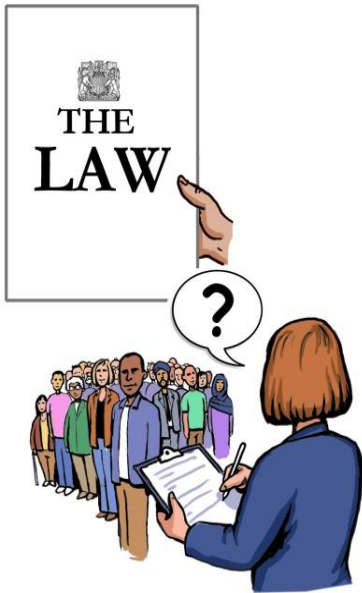
February 2022

Scottish Carer's Assistance Consultation



Easy Read Version

What is a Consultation?



The law says that the Scottish Government has to ask people their views before important changes are made.

When the Scottish Government asks people for their views it is called a consultation.

The Scottish Government would like your views on **Scottish Carer's Assistance**.

The responses should be provided by **23rd May 2022**.

What is this consultation about?

~~CARER'S ALLOWANCE~~

SCOTTISH CARER'S ASSISTANCE



35 hours +

We are designing a new benefit for carers in Scotland.

This will replace the Carer's Allowance benefit. We hope to be able to confirm soon when the new benefit will start.

Carer's Allowance is a benefit for people who spend 35 hours or more each week caring for someone who gets a disability benefit. It is £67.60 a week.



We would like to hear your views on how Scottish Carer's Assistance could be different from Carer's Allowance.

Introduction



Unpaid carers are people who look after a family member or friend who needs help. This is because of illness or a disability. They are not paid for the support they give.



Unpaid carers give important support to the people they care for. They also have a huge impact on Scotland as a whole.



Caring can be a positive experience for unpaid carers and the people they care for. But it can also affect carers' health and their ability to study or work. Carers may also have less time for themselves or feel lonely.



We want all carers to have support which lets them keep caring if they wish to. We want them to have good health and wellbeing, and a life of their own outside of caring.



**The Scottish
Government**
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

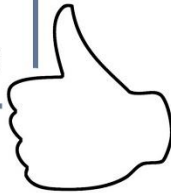


The Scottish Government has had some powers to pay benefits to carers since 2017. We make extra payments to people who get Carer's Allowance in Scotland. This is called the Carer's Allowance Supplement. We also provide the Young Carer Grant.



Carers can also get other support. Carers in Scotland can ask for a plan from their council that says what their needs are as a carer. It says what help they can get. This may include short breaks from caring, or information and advice on money. The support may be from a local carer centre or a charity.

**National
Care
Service**



We are also working to create a National Care Service. A National Care Service would mean the Scottish Government would be responsible for social care services. The National Care Service would help make social care and support for unpaid carers in Scotland better.



We are also working on a Carers Strategy for the future. This is a plan for how we can support unpaid carers.

What are we doing?



Scottish Carer's Assistance will replace Carer's Allowance in Scotland. Carer's Allowance is a benefit. People getting Carer's Allowance may be less able to work because they are caring for someone.



People who are carers can also get extra amounts in other benefits because they get Carer's Allowance. These are mainly paid by the Department for Work and Pensions, like Income Support and Universal Credit.



This means we need to think carefully about changes to our new benefit. We want to make sure that carers can keep getting the extra money they get from other benefits.

Case transfer

~~CARER'S ALLOWANCE~~

SCOTTISH CARER'S
ASSISTANCE

Once we start paying Scottish Carer's Assistance, we need to move people on to the new benefit. Carers who are getting Carer's Allowance will start getting Scottish Carer's Assistance instead. This is called case transfer.



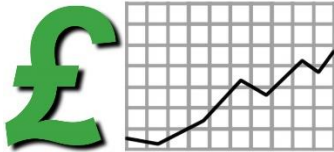
We need to make sure people get the get right payments at the right time. No one will be asked to apply again. We will tell people what will happen and when.

Aims for Scottish Carer's Assistance



We have worked with carers and organisations to create aims for the new benefit.

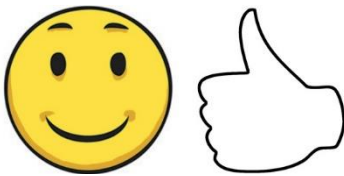
These are:



Aim 1: Scottish Carer's Assistance provides income for unpaid carers. This is because of their important role and its impact on their lives. It meets the different needs of different carers.



Aim 2: Scottish Carer's Assistance supports carers to have opportunities outside of caring.

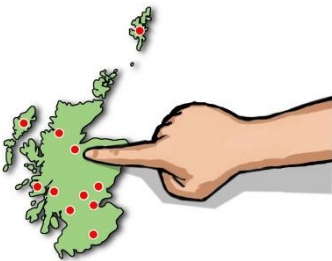


Aim 3: Scottish Carer's Assistance is designed to make sure carers have a good experience of the social security system. It helps carers get support.

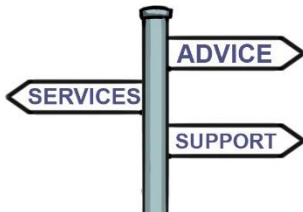
Section 1: Scottish Carer's Assistance



Scottish Carer's Assistance will be provided by Social Security Scotland. This is the new Scottish benefits agency. We will work with carers to design it so it meets their needs.

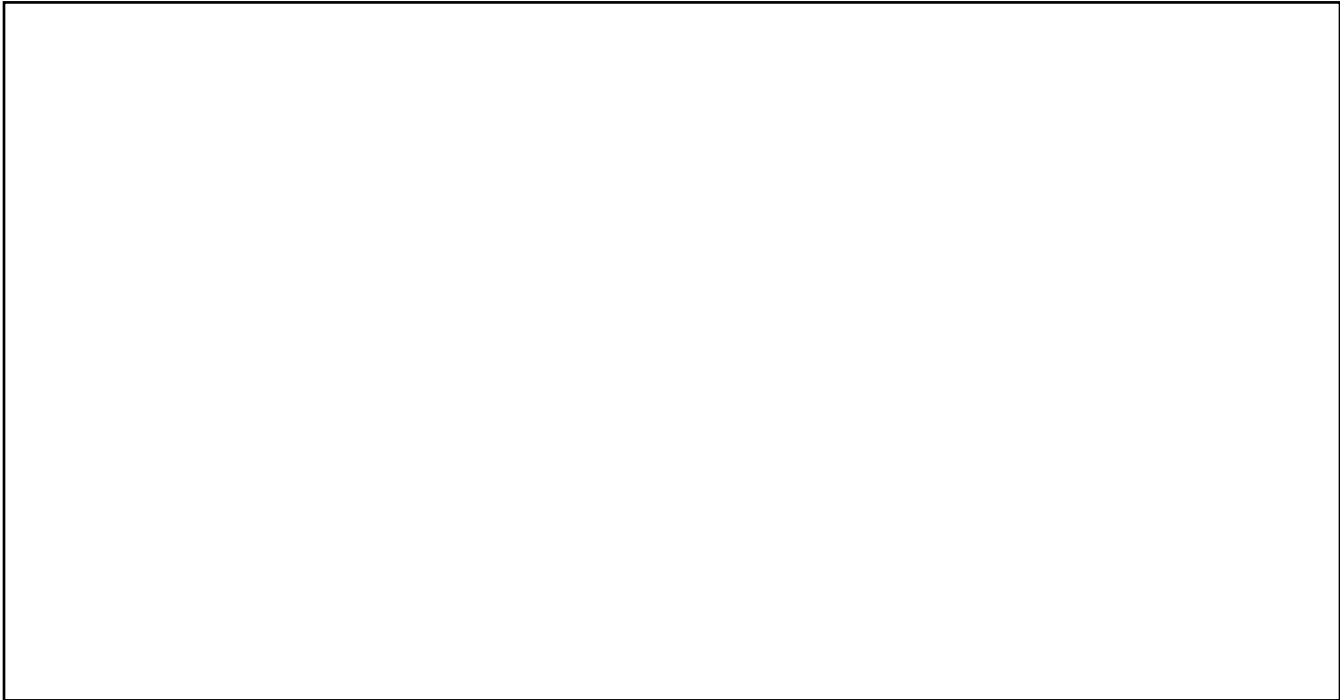


Social Security Scotland has teams in local areas in Scotland. They are called Local Delivery service. These teams will offer face to face support. They will be able to answer questions about benefits and help fill forms. This can be in person, on the phone or by video call.

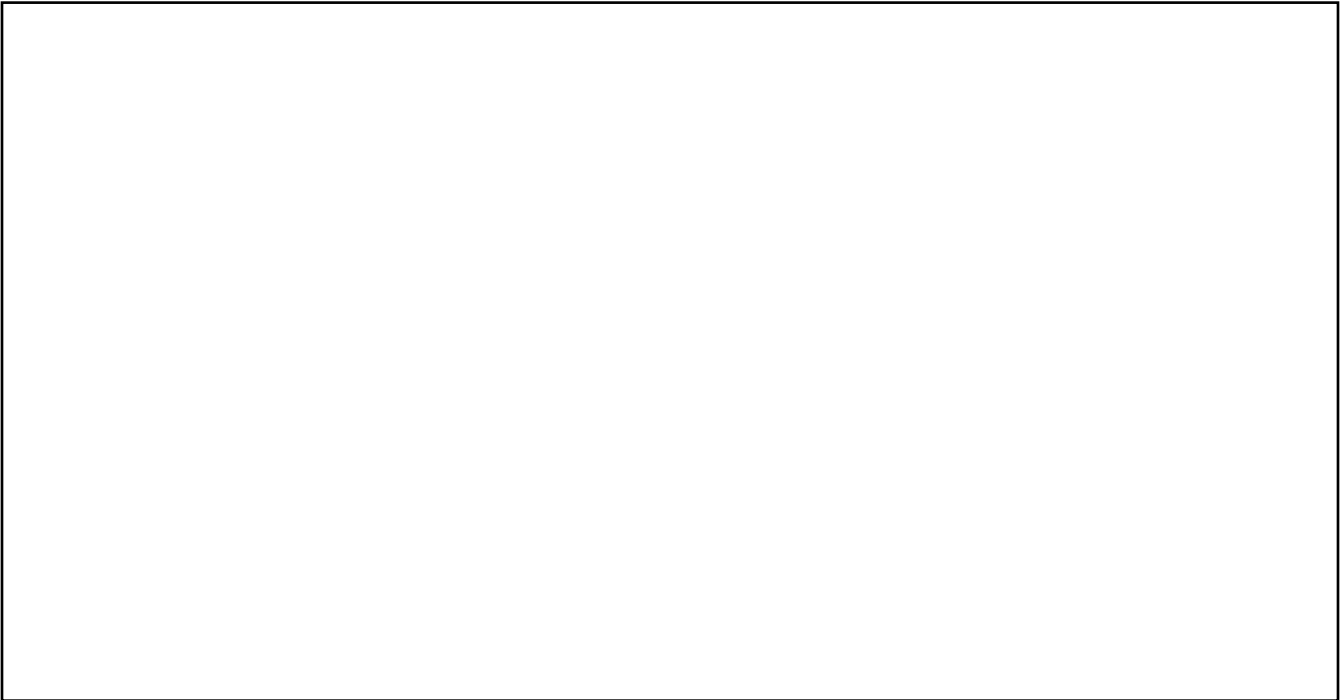


We want to make sure that carers using the service are told about other benefits and services. Carers have told us it would help to make links with other support for things like study, work, or when their caring role ends.

Question 1: How can Scottish Carer's Assistance services meet carers' needs?



Question 2: What support could Scottish Carer's Assistance link to?



Who will be able to get Scottish Carer's Assistance?



When we start paying Scottish Carer's Assistance, most of the rules will be the same as Carer's Allowance. This means carers will need to:



- be 16 or over



35 hours +

- be caring for 35 hours or more each week
- be caring for someone getting a disability benefit



- not be in full-time education



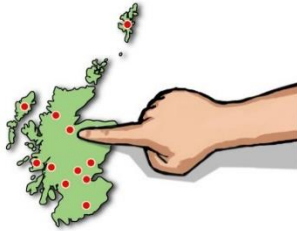
£128 a week

- not earn more than £128 a week from paid work. This is the amount for this year and may change in future.



Carers would not be able to get Scottish Carer's Assistance at the same time as some other benefits. This includes the State Pension. Scottish Carer's Assistance and State Pension are both benefits for people who are less able to work.

Rules about where carers are living



Scottish Carer's Assistance will mostly be paid to carers living in Scotland. The other rules about where carers live will mostly be the same as for Carer's Allowance.



Getting Carer's Allowance depends on how long you have been living in the United Kingdom. You need to have been living here for two of the past three years.



We know that some people think this is too long. If we decided to have a different rule from Carer's Allowance we would need to speak with the Department for Work and Pensions. We want to make sure carers still get the extra support they get in other benefits.

Question 3: Do you agree or disagree that carers need to have been living here for two of the past three years?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

What happens when a carer is not happy with a decision?



If carers disagree with a decision on an application for Scottish Carer's Assistance, they can ask us to look at this decision again.



This can be done by a re-determination. A re-determination is when a carer asks us to look at a decision again. A new team will look at the carer's application.



Carers should have 42 days to ask for a re-determination. Social Security Scotland should have 56 days to make the new decision. These times are the same as for the Scottish disability benefits.

Carers may take longer than 42 days to ask for a re-determination if they have a good reason for taking longer.



The carer can then appeal if they do not agree with this new decision. An appeal is when a group of people called a Tribunal looks at all the information and makes a new decision.



Carers would have 31 days from getting a re-determination decision to apply for an appeal. They will also be able to ask for an appeal after 31 days if they have a good reason for doing so.

Question 4: Do you agree or disagree with the timescales for re-determinations?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

When payments need to stop for a short time



We may need to stop a carer's payments of Scottish Carer's Assistance in some situations.

We would do this when:



- we have asked a carer for information and they have not given it
- someone is getting payments for a carer but they cannot get the payments any more



- we think that there is a risk of financial abuse.



If a carer does not agree with a decision to stop payments they would be able to ask us to look at this again. When payments start again we would make sure the carer got any missed payments.



Getting Scottish Carer's Assistance depends on the person you care for getting a disability benefit. At the moment, if disability benefit payments are stopped, payments to their carer stop too.



We are thinking about what should happen to a carer's Scottish Carer's Assistance payments when the disability benefits of the person they care for stop for a short time.

Question 5: Do you agree or disagree with our ideas about when payments of Scottish Carer's Assistance should be stopped for a short time?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

Question 6: Please tell us what you think should happen to payments of Scottish Carer's Assistance when a cared for person's disability benefit is stopped for a short time?

Changing Scottish Carer's Assistance payments to £0

£0

Sometimes we will need to reduce the amount of Scottish Carer's Assistance to £0 per week.



Carers will get a Carer's Allowance payment of £0 if they are getting an overlapping benefit. This is a different benefit paid for the same reason as Carer's Allowance. This includes the State Pension.



We would also reduce Scottish Carer's Assistance awards to £0 for any week in which a carer earns too much money to get the benefit. This will stop them from being overpaid but would not end their award.



over 4 weeks

We also plan to set an award of Scottish Carer's Assistance to £0 for any week in which a cared for person's disability benefit is stopped or suspended. This may be if the cared for person is in hospital for longer than 4 weeks.



When an award had been £0 for six months in a row, we would end the award. If carers disagreed with a decision to reduce their award to £0 they would be able to ask us to look at this decision again.

Question 7: Do you agree with our reasons for setting an award of Scottish Carer's Assistance to £0?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

Support for carers who disagree with a decision



Short-term assistance is a new payment in the Scottish benefits system. We will give carers short-term assistance if they are asking for a decision be looked at again. This may be a decision to stop or reduce their payments.



We think that short-term assistance should not be paid when payments are reduced to £0 when:

- the carer is getting an overlapping benefit
- the carer is earning too much money to get the benefit
- the disability benefits of the person they care for are set to £0.

We also want to pay Scottish Carer's Assistance to carers when the person they care for is getting short-term assistance.



In most cases, we would not ask for any short-term assistance to be paid back. This would be the case even if a re-determination or appeal was not successful.

Question 8: Do you agree or disagree with these ideas?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

Question 9: Please give us any other views you want to share on Scottish Carer's Assistance.

Section 2: Extra Money for carers in Scotland

Carer's Allowance Supplement



Carer's Allowance Supplement is paid by Social Security Scotland to carers who are getting Carer's Allowance and living in Scotland.

~~CARER'S ALLOWANCE~~

SCOTTISH CARER'S ASSISTANCE

It gives extra support to carers. It is paid every six months and the payment amount this year is £231.40.



We have asked carers how the payment has helped them. They told us it has made a difference to their wellbeing. It helped them feel valued by the government.

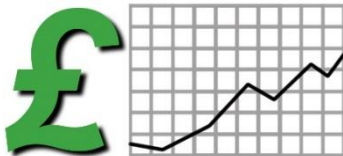


We will keep making payments of Carer's Allowance Supplement until all eligible carers are getting Scottish Carer's Assistance.

Payment of Carer's Allowance Supplement in future



In the future we will pay the extra amount although we could pay this in a different way.



Carer's Allowance Supplement could be paid at the same time as Scottish Carer's Assistance payments.



6 months

Or Carer's Allowance Supplement could be paid as a lump sum instead, for example, every six months.

**CARER'S ALLOWANCE
SUPPLEMENT**



**SCOTTISH CARER'S
ASSISTANCE**

We think that payments of Carer's Allowance Supplement should be made with Scottish Carer's Assistance payments in future.

Question 10: Do you agree or disagree that Carer's Allowance Supplement should be paid with Scottish Carer's Assistance?

Agree

Disagree

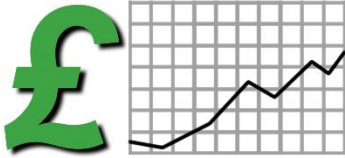
Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

Carer's Additional Person Payment



Caring for more than one person can have a bigger impact on carers' health and wellbeing.



We want to help by giving extra support to carers who are caring for more than one person. We plan to make a new payment. We plan to call it Carer's Additional Person Payment.

Who will be able to get Carer's Additional Person Payment?

SCOTTISH CARER'S ASSISTANCE



Carers must be getting Scottish Carer's Assistance. Carers will need to be caring for at least two people who are getting a disability benefit.



Carers will need to give 35 or more hours of care a week for the person they are getting Scottish Carer's Assistance for. Carers should be providing at least 20 hours of care a week for each additional person.



We do not plan to limit how many additional people a carer could get this payment for.

Question 11: Do you agree or disagree with the idea of Carer's Additional Person Payment?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

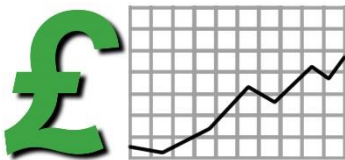
Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

How much will Carer's Additional Person Payment be?



£10 a week

The payment would be £10 per week. The amount will be increased each year as living costs go up.



We suggest that Carer's Additional Person Payment will be paid at the same time as a carer's Scottish Carer's Assistance. This will be every week or every 4 weeks.

Question 12: Do you agree or disagree with how often Carer's Additional Person Payment will be paid?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

Will it affect other benefits?



Carer's Additional Person Payment will not reduce the amount of support carers can get from benefits like Universal Credit and Income Support. This has been agreed with the UK Government.



HM Revenue
& Customs

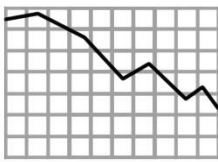
Carers can be taxed on their Carer's Allowance if they are earning over a certain amount. We are talking with HM Revenue and Customs to see if people will need to pay tax on Carer's Additional Person Payment.

Targeting Carer's Additional Person Payment at carers getting Scottish Carer's Assistance



Carer's Additional Person Payment would not be paid to people who get another overlapping benefit. This includes people who get a State Pension.

We will only pay Carer's Additional Person Payment to carers who get Scottish Carer's Assistance.



This is because carers getting Scottish Carer's Assistance are likely to be on lower incomes. We want to target the new payment at carers on the lowest incomes.



We know that not everyone gets the benefits they are entitled to. Some carers getting Universal Credit might be better off if they apply for Scottish Carer's Assistance. We will work to help people who would be able to get new benefits to apply.

Question 13: Do you agree or disagree with the idea to target Carer's Additional Person Payment at carers who are getting payments of Scottish Carer's Assistance?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

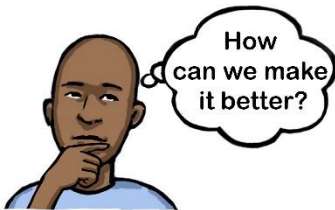
Section 3 Changes to Scottish Carer's Assistance



To start with we are not making big changes to who can get Scottish Carer's Assistance. This is to make sure people already getting Carer's Allowance are treated fairly. But we know there are things that carers would like to change.

~~CARER'S ALLOWANCE~~
SCOTTISH CARER'S ASSISTANCE

When all carers in Scotland are getting Scottish Carer's Assistance instead of Carer's Allowance we plan to make changes. These are longer term changes. They will not happen when Scottish Carer's Assistance is first introduced. We would need to speak with the Department for Work and Pensions about these changes.



We will keep looking for ways to make changes sooner than this if possible.

We will not be able to make all of the changes people want. This is because:



- Carer's Allowance has links with other benefits. Many carers rely on support from the Department for Work and Pensions which is linked to Carer's Allowance.



- We need to think about the costs of making changes. We need to make sure we spend money where it will make the most difference.



We are also working to create a National Care Service.



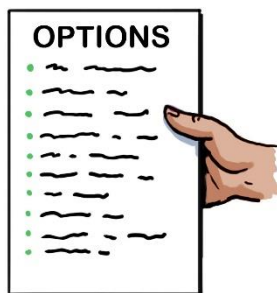
We are working to see if we can have a Minimum Income Guarantee for everyone. This is an agreed amount of money that people need to live on. We would need to make sure that no-one's income was below that level.



The National Care Service and a Minimum Income Guarantee could have a big impact on the everyday lives of carers.



To decide which changes to make and when, we worked with carers and support organisations and people in government. We made a list of options that would meet our aims for the new benefit.



What we have suggested below is based on what we found out from this process.

1. We want to remove education limits from Scottish Carer's Assistance.



At the moment, carers in education for 21 hours or more a week cannot get Carer's Allowance. This may stop carers from studying full-time.

Changing the rules could allow more carers to study.

Question 14: Do you agree or disagree with the change to allow carers in full-time education to get Scottish Carer's Assistance?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

2. We want to allow carers to add up hours spent caring for two people to reach the 35 hours per week caring requirement.



35 hours +

Carer's Allowance is only paid where 35 hours or more of care is provided each week for one person. This means:

- If someone is caring 35 hours or more a week for two or more people, they will not get Carer's Allowance
- Where two people are sharing care for the same person, only one of them can get Carer's Allowance.



At this stage we are saying that hours could be added together for two cared for people. We would then look at how this works before we allow hours to be added across more people.

Question 15: Do you agree or disagree with the change to allow carers to add together hours spent caring for two people?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

3. We want to keep paying Scottish Carer's Assistance for 12 weeks after a cared for person has died.



When a cared for person dies, Carer's Allowance payments stop after eight weeks. Carers have told us this is not long enough.



An extra four weeks of support would give carers more time to adjust. We would also help carers to find other support at this time to help them cope with the end of their caring role.

Question 16: Do you agree or disagree with the change to continue to pay Scottish Carer's Assistance for 12 weeks (rather than 8 weeks) after the death of a cared for person?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

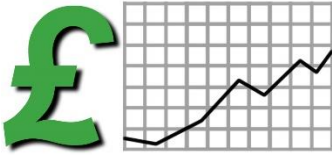
Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

4. We want to keep paying Scottish Carer's Assistance for 12 weeks when a cared for adult goes into hospital or residential care.



over 4 weeks

Carer's Allowance payments also stop after 4 weeks when a cared for person goes into hospital. We know this is a difficult time for carers.



Paying Scottish Carer's Assistance for 12 weeks when a cared for person goes into hospital or residential care would give carers a more stable income.

Question 17: Do you agree or disagree with the change to continue to pay Scottish Carer's Assistance for 12 weeks when a cared for person goes into hospital or residential care?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

5. We want to increase the amount carers can earn and still get Scottish Carer's Assistance.



£128 a week

Carers cannot earn more than £128 per week and still get Carer's Allowance. This is the amount for this year and may change in future. We have heard from carers that this is too low.

~~CARER'S ALLOWANCE~~

If carers earn £1 over this amount, they lose all of their Carer's Allowance award.



We could increase this to allow carers to work 16 hours a week and be paid the Real Living Wage. This would mean carers could earn £158 a week and still get Scottish Carer's Assistance.



We want to bring in rules that would mean carers keep getting payments for some weeks after they earn over the limit. Payments could then reduce more slowly to help them adjust. This could also help carers who have earnings which change weekly.

Question 18: Do you agree or disagree with the change to increase the earnings limit for Scottish Carer's Assistance? This would allow carers to work 16 hours a week and be paid the Real Living Wage.

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

Question 19: Do you agree or disagree with the idea of making payments for some weeks after a carer earns over the earnings limit?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

Support for a wider group of unpaid carers



We know that some carers would like Scottish Carer's Assistance to support people who are not paid it as they are getting another overlapping benefit. This includes people who get State Pension. These people have what is called underlying entitlement.



We looked at options to make payments to carers with underlying entitlement. We found these would not be targeted at carers on the lowest incomes.



Many carers on State Pension have been caring for a long time. We know that having a long term caring role can have a big impact on how much money carers have.



We would like to know your views on whether we should look at a new payment for long term carers.



More work would be needed to look at how a payment like this would work. It could require a large amount of money to work properly.

Question 20: Do you agree or disagree that a payment for long term carers should be looked at?

Agree

Disagree

Not sure

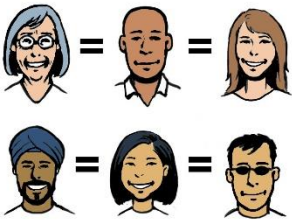
Please tell us more about your answer in the box below.

Question 21: Please give us any other views about Scottish Carer's Assistance.

Effect on different groups of people and businesses.



We would like your views on how Scottish Carer's Assistance could affect different groups of people and businesses.



We want Scottish Carer's Assistance to work for everyone. We need to think about how changes could affect different people and groups differently. For example, if they would affect people differently because of their age, disability, sex, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, or pregnancy.

Question 22: Please let us know if you have views on how Scottish Carer's Assistance or the ideas in this consultation could affect people from different groups differently?



We need to think about if Scottish Carer's Assistance could affect people living on an island community differently from people in other communities. We need to make sure it works for people wherever they live.

Question 23: Please let us know if you have views on the impact of Scottish Carer's Assistance on Island communities.



We need to think about how Scottish Carer's Assistance can help make things fairer by helping people on lower incomes, or who have other challenges because of their background, or where they live.

Question 24: Please let us know if you have views on the impact of Scottish Carer's Assistance on reducing inequality.



We need to think about how Scottish Carer's Assistance could help protect and improve children's health and wellbeing and help them to know more about their rights.

Question 25: Please let us know if you have views on the impact of Scottish Carer's Assistance on children's rights and wellbeing.



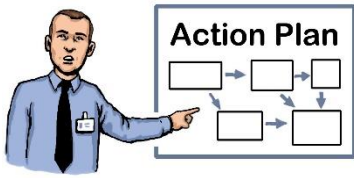
We need to think about how Scottish Carer's Assistance might affect businesses in Scotland.

Question 26: Please let us know if you have views on the impact of Scottish Carer's Assistance on businesses.

Next Steps



The consultation will be open until **23rd May 2022**.



We will look at all the responses. We then then develop and agree a plan for Scottish Carer's Assistance, Carer's Allowance Supplement and Carer's Additional Person Payment.



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