

## Delivery timetable

### **Q: What benefits have you delivered so far?**

In 2018 we opened our new agency, Social Security Scotland to deliver devolved benefits. We started with our Carer's Allowance Supplement which brings Carers Allowance to the same level as Jobseeker's Allowance – an increase of 13% and investment of £33 million. We also took over funding for Carer's Allowance. We then introduced our new Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment for low income parents and carers, offering £600 on the birth of their first child and £300 for any subsequent children. This is an improved and increased benefit which replaces the UK Government's Sure Start Maternity Grant.

We have also previously announced our plans for delivery of four new benefits for low-income families and carers in 2019:

Best Start Grant school age payment, starting in June – a new £250 payment that will be made to low income families around the time a child can start school.

Best Start Grant early learning payment, starting by summer – a new £250 payment that will be made to low income families around the time a child can start nursery.

Funeral Expense Assistance, starting in the summer – replacing the UK Government's Funeral Expenses Payment and providing eligible low income families with a contribution towards the cost of a funeral with improvements that widen eligibility by around 40%.

Young Carer Grant, starting in autumn 2019 – the grant will be awarded to young carers aged 16 to 18 who do at least 16 hours of caring a week, but don't qualify for Carer's Allowance. It will help to improve young carers' quality of life, helping them take part in employment, social or leisure opportunities.

We are also currently consulting on our new Job Grant, to provide support for young people moving back into employment.

## **Q: What benefits will be delivered next?**

On 28 February we set out our plans for delivery of the disability and other devolved benefits.

From April 2020 we'll take full responsibility for the remaining devolved benefits, which means benefits will start to be fully funded by the Scottish Government.

This also means that for the first time, two governments will need to share clients. Many people will be eligible for payments from both the UK Government's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and our agency Social Security Scotland, and those payments will affect and in some cases interact with one another. We must make sure our systems work together seamlessly, so people get the right money at the right time; and we will be dependent on DWP to do their bit to make this happen.

The benefits for delivery from 2020 are more complex than any we have delivered so far, because they involve regular payments to individuals, who will have an ongoing relationship with Social Security Scotland – and their circumstances may well change during that relationship, requiring adjustments to their payments.

As we take over these benefits, our top priority is to make sure that people continue to get the regular payments they're entitled to, on time, every time. [Research with our Experience Panels](#) – people with lived experience of the current system – underlines how important it is that we strike a balance between moving at pace, but also taking enough time to ensure we safeguard people's payments.

We have borne this in mind in determining on the timetable for the delivery of new claims for devolved assistance, which will start next year:

- Our new claims service for Disability Assistance for Children and Young People (the Scottish replacement for Child Disability Living Allowance) in summer 2020
- Our new claims service for Disability Assistance for Older People (the Scottish replacement for Attendance Allowance) in winter 2020
- Winter Heating Assistance (Winter Fuel Payments) to the families of children who receive the highest care component of Disability Assistance, by end of 2020
- Additional payments for carers of more than one disabled child in early 2021
- Our new claims service for Disability Assistance for Working Age People (the Scottish replacement for Personal Independence Payment, or PIP) in early 2021
- Our new claims service for the Scottish replacement for Carer's Allowance, by the end of 2021

- Winter Heating Assistance payments to eligible families in Scotland who receive another type of payment from Social Security Scotland, by the end of 2021
- The first payments of Cold Spell Heating Assistance, from winter 2021.

**Q: What will you do about transferring cases from the UK Government?**

On 28 February we set out our plans for the safe and secure transfer of the devolved benefits caseload – transferring people’s existing benefit claims from the DWP to Social Security Scotland. This involves moving over half a million cases from DWP to Social Security Scotland. This equates to approximately 10% of the population of Scotland which is why it must be handled carefully to ensure people continue to get the right payment in the right amount.

Such transfers have in the past proved problematic when DWP has migrated people within its own benefits systems. What hasn’t been done before is transferring people from the agency of one government to the agency of another government. So it is vital that we do this safely and protect people and payments.

We will do this in a way which causes minimal stress, and keep people updated through the transfer. We have also said that at the point of transfer we will not require anyone to make a new claim; payments will be protected; and we’ll keep people informed before and during the transfer process so they know what will happen and when. Also from early 2021, when we launch our PIP replacement benefit, we will ensure that no one in Scotland will undergo a DWP face-to-face reassessment for disability benefits. Before someone reaches the end of their DWP award period, we will take over their case so this cannot happen.

We will start this transfer next year in 2020. According to current plans, and assuming that DWP is able to match our pace, the majority of cases will be transferred by 2023. We expect to complete our work of transfer by 2024 - though will not do so if this creates unacceptable risks for clients. Equally, if we find we can safely transfer cases more quickly, then we will.

**Q: What input will you need from the UK Government?**

Delivering the devolved benefits is very much a joint enterprise with the UK Government’s Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and we rely on them to match our ambition in order to meet the timescales we have set out for delivering the devolved benefits. For the first time, people will get payments from both governments, and those payments will affect one another. The complicated nature and interdependencies of both social security, and of devolution, means this is a complex process we must get right. We effectively need to untie one set of benefits from the current DWP system, build our own system to allow for the transfer, and then make sure the systems work together seamlessly. It is imperative we get this

right so people not only get the right money at the right time but are also still eligible for other assistance they can be passported to.

We will depend on DWP to do their bit to make sure that happens.

**Q: How did you choose what to deliver first?**

We have carried out a very large amount of work to get us to this point, and the timetable for the remaining devolved benefits is the product of careful, detailed consideration. We have today published a series of position papers setting out the extensive work that has gone into designing how these benefits will operate, which you can find here.

We have also asked our experience panels - people with lived experience of the current benefits system – what they thought. It was clear from their [responses](#) that it's really important for them to keep getting paid the right amount at the right time.

Therefore we are striking a balance between moving at pace and ensuring that we take over the devolved benefits safely, with minimal disruption to people who rely on them.

The three types of Disability Assistance – for children and young people, older people, and working age people – are inextricably linked. The safest and securest way of delivering them is to launch them in sequence, building up to the largest and most complex – Disability Assistance for Working Age People which replaces the UK Government's PIP.

Then we will move on to Carer's Allowance: a benefit which is very different from the disability benefits because as an income replacement benefit it impacts on tax and other benefits and requires us to agree particularly complex data sharing arrangements with HMRC and DWP. For example, it acts as a "gateway" to a number of entitlements and concessions, including a "carer premium" worth around £36 per week which is reserved to the UK Government. Making sure that people still get this "passport" support when they claim Carer's Allowance in its Scottish form will require us to build a large number of information feeds to DWP as we design the new claims system, adding to the complexity of delivering this benefit.

We are also clear that as applications for Carer's Allowance depend on someone being in receipt of a disability benefit, we should deliver Scottish Carer's Allowance when we have put in place Disability Assistance.

## **Q: Who decides policy on these benefits?**

As of 1 April 2020 the Scottish Government will have policy and payment responsibility for the remaining devolved benefits. We've already taken responsibility for carer benefits: our Carer's Allowance and Carer's Allowance Supplement together are an investment of £320 million in 2019/20 alone.

As well as fully funding the benefits, taking on this responsibility allows us to develop our own distinctive Scottish approach to social security, co-designed with people who have lived experience of the current system and ensuring that we embed our principles of dignity and respect at the heart of this new public service. For example, it allows us to take a person-centred approach to Scottish Disability Assistance: reforming the assessment process, significantly reducing face-to-face assessments, and delivering them (where needed) through our own agency, not through the private sector.

From next year when we take on responsibility for these benefits, we will progressively take over administering them, while taking the time to ensure that we safeguard people's regular payments. We will work with DWP to develop agency agreements to partially administer the devolving benefits until Social Security Scotland is delivering them in full.

Agency agreements are necessary to ensure there are no gaps in service for people who rely on these benefits as they are transferred. They will ensure people receive the regular payments they've already been awarded, with minimal disruption and distress.

This is an administrative function only. It does not affect when we commence powers or start funding benefits. For example, we already have an agency agreement with DWP to deliver payments for Carer's Allowance: this allowed us to pay carers more money as soon as possible through the Carer's Allowance Supplement, with Carer's Allowance being paid through an agency agreement with DWP whilst Social Security Scotland pays the Carer's Allowance Supplement.

## **Q: What will happen to my current claim?**

We will start transferring people's existing claims from next year. If you have an existing claim with DWP for one of the devolved benefits then you don't need to worry. You will not need to make a new claim in order to move onto the Scottish benefits. Instead, we'll work with DWP to arrange for the transfer to happen automatically, and we'll keep people informed of what will happen and when – before and during the process.

We will protect people's payments during the transfer, and from early 2021 when we launch new claims for our PIP replacement, we will guarantee that no one in Scotland will have to undergo a DWP face-to-face reassessment for disability benefits. Before someone reaches the end of their DWP award period, we will take over their case so that this cannot happen.