

Document 1 – MiCase case reference 202200283208

Original query and subsequent communications:

From: [redacted] on behalf of Minister for Equalities and Older People
Sent: 23 February 2022 11:58
To: Public Engagement Unit <correspondenceunit@gov.scot>
cc. Minister for Equalities and Older People <MinisterEOP@gov.scot>
Subject: (Case Ref: IB28264)

Hi PEU,

Can the below correspondence be added to MiCase for MR please?

Thanks,

[redacted]

Assistant Private Secretary to Minister for Equalities and Older People | Christina McKelvie MSP | Scottish Government | MinisterEOP@gov.scot

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@parliament.uk>
Sent: 23 February 2022 10:45
To: Minister for Equalities and Older People <MinisterEOP@gov.scot>
Subject: (Case Ref: IB28264)

Dear Christina

Ian has been contacted by a constituent who has raised concerns regarding the State Pension in Scotland following independence.

The email received states the following:

“Recently there has been some discussion in the media about payment of DWP State Pensions to Scottish pensioners after independence.

The DWP website states clearly that anyone who has the qualifying years of National Insurance is entitled to a DWP State Pension wherever they live. I have seen examples of pensioners who have moved to Spain and of Polish nationals who worked here for the qualifying years and returned to Poland retaining their State Pension.

I note that the annual increments are not paid and the pension is set at the amount on leaving.

After independence would the DWP State Pension continue to be paid by the DWP to pensioners in Scotland?

If the DWP stopped making annual increments would the Scottish Government pay the increments?

Dr Timothy Rideout, a member of a SNP Policy Committee, has stated in the media that the Scottish Government would take over paying DWP State Pension completely. Is this correct and where did he get this information from? Has the DWP agreed to this?

[Redacted under Section 38(1)(b) of FOISA]”

Your comments on this would be greatly appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

[redacted]

[redacted]
Caseworker to Ian Blackford MP Ross, Skye & Lochaber
Leader of SNP Westminster Parliamentary Group

29 High Street
Dingwall IV15 9RU
E: [redacted]@parliament.uk
T: [redacted]

Final Ministerial Response from Ben Macpherson MSP:

Minister for Social Security and Local Government
Ministear airson Tèarainteachd Shòisealta agus Riaghaltas Ionadail
Ben Macpherson BPA/MSP

T : 0300 244 4000
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Ian Blackford MP
Ian.Blackford.MP@parliament.uk

Our Reference: 202200283208
Your Reference: FW: (Case Ref: IB28264)

4 April 2022

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your email of 23 February to Christina McKelvie, Minister for Equalities and Older People, regarding State Pensions in an independent Scotland. As Minister for Social Security and Local Government, I have been asked to respond. I apologise for the delay in replying.

On 7 September 2021, the Scottish Government published the [2021/22 Programme for Government](#) which set out that the Scottish Government will work to ensure that a legitimate and constitutional referendum can be held within this Scottish Parliamentary term, and if the Covid crisis is over, within the first half of this Scottish Parliamentary term. Further decisions on the timing of a referendum will be for the Scottish Parliament to determine in due course.

In regards to your query about pensions in an independent Scotland, the Scottish Government's position remains the same as that set out in out in the 2013 publication [Scotland's Future Your Guide to an Independent Scotland](#): that is, responsibility for paying

for pensions after independence will rest with the Scottish Government. That covers pension entitlement accrued before and after independence.

It is crucial that the people of Scotland have the information they need to make an informed choice about their future. The Scottish Government will therefore prepare a detailed prospectus for an independent Scotland which will be available in good time before a referendum takes place.

Kind regards,



BEN MACPHERSON

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
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Document 2 – MiCase case reference 202200314319

Original query and subsequent communications:

From: [redacted] on behalf of Minister for Social Security and Local Government <ministersslg@gov.scot>
Sent: 04 August 2022 13:18
To: Public Engagement Unit <correspondenceunit@gov.scot>
Cc. Minister for Social Security and Local Government <ministersslg@gov.scot>
Subject FW: Constituent enquiry re. Pension Credits - Ian Blackford MP

AO [redacted]

Hi PEU,

Please can the below be added to MiCase for Mr [Macpherson].

Thanks,
[redacted]

[redacted]

Assistant Private Secretary to Ben Macpherson MSP, Minister for Social Security and Local Government
Email: MinisterSSLG@gov.scot

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From: [redacted] <[redacted]@parliament.uk>
Sent: 04 August 2022 13:12
To: Minister for Social Security and Local Government <MinisterSSLG@gov.scot>
Subject: Constituent enquiry re. Pension Credits - Ian Blackford MP

Dear Mr MacPherson,

Ian has received the following enquiry from a constituent and I would be very grateful if you could advise me whether there are any plans in the pipeline to address this issue?

“Dear Mr Blackford

My name is [redacted] and I am one of your constituents in [redacted].

I am emailing you about the concern I have concerning Pension Credits.

[Redacted under Section 38(1)(b) of FOISA]

My husband [redacted] receives £185 weekly so it takes him £2 over the threshold for pension credit. [Redacted]. It doesn't seem fair at all that other people get their

pension made up to £185 and receive free everything. [Redacted]. I hope you can take this to Parliament and hopefully get things changed. Thank you so much for taking the time to read this email.”

Thank you for any assistance you can give me with this matter.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

[redacted]

Senior Caseworker for Ian Blackford MP

Mamore House

The Parade

Fort William, PH33 6BA

E: [redacted]@parliament.uk

T: [redacted]

Final Ministerial Response from Ben Macpherson MSP:

Minister for Social Security and Local Government

Ministear airson Tèarainteachd Shòisealta agus Riaghaltas Ionadail

Ben Macpherson BPA/MSP

T : 0300 244 4000

E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Ian Blackford MP

ian.blackford.mp@parliament.uk

Our Reference: 202200314319

Your Reference: pension credits

2 September 2022

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your email of 4 August regarding your constituent's concerns around Pension Credit.

Thank you for bringing this case to my attention. [Redacted].

[Redacted]. Whilst we fully appreciate the concern and distress this has caused them both, Pension Credit is the responsibility of the UK Government and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) administer it on their behalf. Unfortunately, this means Scottish Ministers have no powers over this policy. Nonetheless, I would urge your constituent to raise their concerns about the social security system with the UK Government. If you have not done so already, you may wish to do this on their behalf.

Your constituent may be eligible for Adult Disability Payment if they aren't already receiving it. Adult Disability Payment, the Scottish replacement for Personal Independence Payment, is now open for new applications.

They can find more information on Adult Disability Payment, including eligibility criteria at <https://www.mygov.scot/adult-disability-payment>.

Free NHS-funded eye examinations are available in Scotland to all UK residents, refugees, asylum seekers and some eligible overseas visitors. You can find more information on our website at <https://www.eyes.scot/for-the-public/looking-after-your-eyes-and-free-nhs-funded-eye-examinations/>.

Some people, in particular children aged under 16 and those on a low income, may be entitled to help towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses in the form of a NHS optical voucher. Some people may also be entitled to a NHS optical voucher to help with the cost of repairing or replacing glasses or contact lenses.

Further information on NHS optical vouchers can be found on <https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-supportand-rights/nhs-services/ophthalmics/your-entitlements-to-nhs-ophthalmic-services#nhs-optical-voucher>.

It may be helpful if I explain that patients pay 80% of the cost of their NHS dental treatment up to a maximum of £384 per course of treatment unless they are in one of the groups entitled to free NHS dental treatment or help with the cost.

In the case of adults, help with the cost of NHS dental treatment is mainly based on an assessment of the individual's ability to pay. Those adults in receipt of certain benefits or tax credits, e.g. income support, entitled to, or named on, an NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate, are automatically entitled to free NHS dental treatment while others may be entitled to help with health costs under the NHS Low Income Scheme (LIS). I should note that everyone is entitled to a free NHS dental check-up.

The LIS is designed to provide help with NHS charges for those who are not automatically entitled to free treatment, but have difficulty in paying. Help under the scheme is income related and based on an assessment of each claimant's ability to pay in the light of his or her financial circumstances at the time a claim was made or a charge was paid.

If your constituent [redacted] would like to apply for help with health costs they can obtain form HC1 by telephoning 0131 275 6386. Some dentists and opticians may also stock the form.

You may wish to note that the removal of all dental charges for NHS dental treatment for patients in Scotland is a Scottish Government manifesto commitment and will take place in the lifetime of this parliament. The precise details and timings will be announced in due course.

More generally, if your constituent [redacted] would like to speak to someone or get information and advice about their financial situation, there are a number of organisations that are funded by the Scottish Government to provide free and impartial advice to individuals who are experiencing financial difficulties.

If they have not already done so, they may want to contact their local Citizens Advice Bureau who can provide free, independent and confidential advice on a range of issues, including Pension Credit. They can also check that they are getting all the benefits that they are entitled to. They can find details of their local Bureau by visiting the Citizens Advice Scotland website at www.cas.org.uk or by calling 0800 028 1456 Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

Similarly, the Money Talk Team is an income maximisation service funded by Scottish Government and delivered by the Citizens Advice Network in Scotland. The service offers personalised advice to low incomes families on money matters - from benefit take up and council tax reduction to free school meals and reducing household energy costs. It aims to ensure that families are claiming all the grants and benefits they are entitled to and they don't pay more than they need to for basic services like utilities. The service is backed by £1.5 million in funding every year. Since the service began in November 2018 to March 2022 it has supported over 52,500 clients across Scotland. It has put over £44 million into the pockets of nearly 20,500 clients – averaging over £2,000 per client. They can access the service either online, using web chat, through a dedicated national freephone number (0800 085 7145) and in person at your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

They may also find it helpful to use the <https://moneymap.scot/>, delivered by Citizens Advice Scotland. The Money Map is an online resource which people can use to find ways to maximise their money from benefits and grants as well as accessing budgeting advice and tips on reducing bills.

Age Scotland offers free benefit and entitlement checks and can support older people with pension credit claims. Age Scotland's helpline can be reached on 0800 12 44 222 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. I also include a link to Age Scotland's free guide to claiming social security benefits and grants for older people in Scotland: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/moneylegal/benefits-entitlements/benefits-calculator/>.

I hope the information I have provided is useful to your constituent.

Kins regards,



BEN MACPHERSON

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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