

Briefing on changes to Carer's Allowance in Scotland

Carers UK's position to date

Inadequate financial support through the low level Carer's Allowance and the freeze on many working age benefits mean many caring round the clock face financial hardship and poverty. **Half of working age carers live in a household where no-one is in work, 1.2 million are in poverty¹.**

Currently at £64.60 (2018/19 rates), Carer's Allowance is the lowest benefit of its kind.

Carers UK wants to see an increase in Carer's Allowance and the Carer's Premium in the rest of the UK, rising annually with upratings, so that carers living in all parts of the UK all see an increase.

Extending the changes to Carer's Allowance occurring in Scotland to the rest of the UK would affect 778,953 carers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland².

Carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (November 2016):

England	682, 441
Wales	50,017
Scotland	70,578
Northern Ireland	46,090

At the 2017 General Election Carers UK called on all political parties to commit to raise Carer's Allowance significantly over the longer term, and in the short term at least raised to the level of Jobseeker's Allowance to match the pledges made in Scotland.

¹ New Policy Institute (2016) Informal care and poverty in the UK

http://www.npi.org.uk/files/2114/6411/1359/Carers_and_poverty_in_the_UK_-_full_report.pdf

² Using figures of recipients of Carer's Allowance as of November 2016, England and Wales figures from Department for Work and Pensions dataset: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/> and Northern Ireland from Assembly research briefing: <http://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2017/06/15/carers-in-northern-ireland-key-statistics/>

What's changing in Scotland: Carer's Allowance Supplement – an extra payment

The Scottish Government will be introducing a new benefit for carers in future, but in advance of this is introducing a Carer's Allowance Supplement from 2018.

- This will be paid twice a year, with the first payment made be in the summer of 2018, backdated to April 2018.
 - It is a separate 'top-up benefit' that will be paid to people who **receive** Carer's Allowance from the DWP to increase the value of their award to the same level as Jobseeker's Allowance (increasing from £64.60 – 2018/2019 rates - to £73.10 per week).
 - It will only be paid to people **in receipt of Carer's Allowance** on the qualifying date. It cannot be paid to carers who do not receive Carer's Allowance but instead have an "underlying entitlement". An underlying entitlement is where another benefit is paid at a higher rate. This applies to, for example, the state pension and employment support allowance.
 - This is an interim arrangement prior to the Scottish Government taking full control of Carer's Allowance itself at a later date.
 - When the benefit is fully devolved it will be a weekly sum at the rate of Jobseeker's Allowance.
 - Carer's Allowance Supplement will not affect other benefits such as Housing Benefit, Income Support, Universal Credit or Council Tax Reduction. You do not need to tell anyone about this payment for benefit purposes and it will not affect the amount of any other benefit you receive.
 - The Scottish Government has also agreed with HM Revenue and Customs that Carer's Allowance Supplement will not be counted as income in calculating your Tax Credits award. However, Carer's Allowance itself continues to be counted as income for Tax Credits.
 - Carer's Allowance Supplement will also not be taken into account in income assessments for college student support.
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Young Carer Grant

The Young Carer Grant will be introduced by autumn 2019. It will be a £300 grant for 16 and 17 year olds (and 18 year olds if they are still at school) who care for 16 hours or more each week, but who do not receive Carer's Allowance.

The support will also include a young carer element to the Young Scot National Entitlement Card and, at a later date, concessionary travel

More information is available in the [Young Carer Grant Q&A](#) on the Scottish Government website.

The Social Security (Scotland) Bill

The Social Security (Scotland) Bill was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament on the 25th April.

The Carers (Scotland) Act came into force on 1st April and a Carers' Charter has been published in March 2018 outlining carers' rights in Scotland.

The Scottish Government will, between 2018 and 2021, take over responsibility for a range of benefits. These include:

- Carer's Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance and Personal Independence Payment, Industrial Injuries Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance
- Winter Fuel and Cold Weather Payments
- Funeral Grants
- Sure Start Maternity Grants (which will be renamed Best Start Grants)
- Discretionary Housing Payments

They will also have the ability to make variations on Universal Credit on request including fortnightly payments and direct payments of rent to your landlord.

The Scottish Government will also create new or supplementary benefits. The first of these is the Carer's Allowance Supplement in Summer 2018 and a Young Carers Grant in 2019.