

Help available for those hit by the 'Bedroom Tax'

by Marco Biagi MSP

The Scottish Government have increased the level of support offered to those hit by the bedroom tax – and it's vital that those eligible apply.

Under pressure, the UK Government lifted a cap on the level of funding the Scottish Government could put towards Discretionary Housing Payments, which can offset the money lost by anyone hit by the bedroom tax.

This means that The Scottish Government can increase the money available to those who need it.

I'm glad that the SNP have been able to provide this assistance to those who've been unfairly penalised by this draconian and heartless welfare reform. Many of those hit by the bedroom tax are disabled or amongst the most vulnerable and poorest in our society. And the unfair policy is not even fit for purpose – there are not enough one bedroom flats for everyone affected to downsize, meaning even those willing to move property are often unable to do so.

The lift in the cap means that the Scottish Government are able to completely fund the deductions made by the bedroom tax. But this money does need to be found from elsewhere – and this is a challenge in the face of ever tighter budgets.

It is an utterly ludicrous situation that the Scottish Parliament has to scramble to find money to mitigate the mistakes made elsewhere. It's even more ludicrous when you consider that the policy was designed to solve a problem in the London housing market which simply wasn't an issue here in Scotland.

The bedroom tax saga demonstrates the need to make decisions here in Scotland. If the SNP were re-elected in an independent Scotland then we would scrap the bedroom tax once and for all. We'd also work to make sure that our welfare system works for those who need it, ending the demonisation of those unable to work while helping those able into employment.

But for now, it's vital that those affected by the bedroom tax apply for a discretionary housing payment and ensure they don't suffer needlessly.

To find out more about discretionary housing payments, [see the Shelter Scotland website](#).

Submitted by [Marco Biagi MSP](#)

