

Holyrood plan to reform social security



The Social Justice Secretary Alex Neill has said that a Social Security Bill will be introduced by early 2017 to ensure a fairer social security system in Scotland.

The promised bill will be wide-ranging and will underpin the government's approach to introduce a fairer system.

Speaking ahead of a visit to MECOPP, the ethnic minority carers centre and the Parliamentary debate on Social Security, Mr Neil outlined the Scottish Government will work with stakeholders and those with experience of benefits to develop the bill, which was set out in the Programme for Government.

Through the Scotland Bill the Scottish Government will receive powers over 11 existing social security benefits.

We have already confirmed we will use new powers to:

- Increase Carer's Allowance to the same rate as Jobseeker's Allowance
- Abolish the bedroom tax
- Introduce flexibilities around how Universal Credit is paid
- Scrap the 84-day rule which removes income from the families of disabled children.

Mr Neil said:

"By spring 2017 we will bring forward a Social Security Bill which will pave the way for us to create a fairer approach to social security that protects and supports the most vulnerable people in our society.

"We will use our powers to ensure our approach to social

security meets people's needs, addresses their priorities and respects their rights.

"This morning I will speak to carers in Edinburgh about our plans to increase the Carer's Allowance to the same level as Jobseeker's Allowance.

"This move is a priority for us as it is unacceptable for carers to be paid one of the lowest benefits, if not the lowest benefit, that currently exists under the UK Government's system."