

Scottish Government wants your views on social security



Give your views on social security

By Jeane Freeman – Minister for Social Security

Social Security is an investment we all make in ourselves and in each other. None of us know when the day might come when we will need that support and thousands of people across Scotland rely on social security – in one form or another.

Changes to the system in recent years, and the austerity approach from the UK Government has made life even harder for many people.

In Edinburgh, nearly 18,800 people currently claim Disability Living Allowance, more than 4,100 receive Carers' Allowance and around 7,600 rely on Attendance Allowance. And over 4,400 households were affected by changes to the Bedroom Tax that we have fought hard to mitigate against.



But the time is soon coming when the Scottish Government will be responsible for delivering a number of benefits and we want people in our capital city to help shape how that's going to be done.

New regulations were laid at the beginning of July that made it possible, for the very first time, for Scotland to make laws allowing us to deliver our own social security system.

We have now launched a consultation on social security in Scotland, looking for views on how we can deliver a Scottish system that treats people fairly and with dignity and respect.

An important part of this work is getting out and about around the country to hear what people think. That's why on Wednesday I'm meeting with the Cyrenians, who do important work supporting homeless people and those in need of support in Edinburgh, to hear views on the social security system.

This is the biggest transfer of powers since devolution. And it is complex. But once they're fully devolved – a lengthy process expected to take a few years – these new social security powers will account for around £2.7 billion – or 15% of the total Scottish benefit bill.

So it's incredibly important that the people who use or could use the social security system – which actually is all of us – have a say in shaping it. We want to hear about people's experience of the system as it is now and how the Scottish Government can improve things.

Of course, as far-reaching as all this is, we still won't be responsible for all benefits, with about 85% of spending left in the hands of the UK Government.

But we will always use all of the powers available to us in the best interests of Scotland and we want people in the capital to help us do that.

We've already started with our commitment to a number of positive steps – including increasing Carer's Allowance to the level of Jobseeker's Allowance and replacing the Sure Start Maternity Grant with an expanded Maternity and Early Years Allowance, which is now called the Best Start Grant.

We want to build a fairer social security system that treats people with dignity and respect and we want your help to do it.

The consultation runs until 28 October and can be found by clicking [here](#).

You can also get involved in the consultation by email at socialsecurityconsultation@gov.scot or telephone on 0131 244 7763 or in writing to Social Security Consultation, 5th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU.