

Thousands helped with funeral costs

Almost 6,000 people received a Funeral Support Payment in its first full year, according to statistics published today.

Since it started making payments last September, Social Security Scotland has paid out £8.7 million to people who have lost a loved one. Eligible applicants currently receive an average of £1,761 to help with the costs of a burial or cremation and expenses such as travel and flowers.

Funeral Support Payment replaced the UK Government's Funeral Expense Payment in Scotland.

Social Security Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said: "Coping with the death of a loved one is one of the most difficult events any of us can face – it's even harder when there's extra stress trying to find the money to pay for a funeral.

"It's important that we support people at key times like this. We want to do what we can to stop those who are dealing with grief having to get into debt too.

"The economic impact of Covid-19 means many more people are receiving Universal Credit or other qualifying benefits than previously, which means they could also be eligible for the Funeral Support Payment.

"I'd encourage anyone who thinks they might qualify for this important financial support to find out more and apply. People can apply for the payment up to 6 months after a funeral has

taken place, although if you could not apply within this timescale because of Covid-19, we'll accept your application as on time.

"Making sure that everyone gets the financial support they are entitled to is a basic step in putting dignity and respect at the heart of social security in Scotland."

Apply online, via a paper application form or by calling the government's specially trained Funeral Support Payment team on 0800 182 2222.