

New government campaign to promote applying for disability benefits

The Scottish Government is beginning a new campaign to urge disabled people to find out if they are eligible for government disability benefits. The intention is to get more people to take up benefits which they are entitled to.

The campaign is to raise awareness of support that can help with the extra costs that disabled children and adults may face.

The Social Justice Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville explains the background here:

The Child Disability Payment offers financial support for children and young people with a long term health condition. Adult Disability Payment is available to people between 16 years old and the state pension age who are disabled, have a long-term health condition or terminal illness. All of these benefits come from Social Security Scotland replacing the Department for Work and Pensions' Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for Children, DLA and Personal Independence Payment. Anyone who is already in receipt of DWP disability benefits will automatically transfer to the new system.

Piper, aged 9 is the main focus of the campaign video. She has Down Syndrome and her mother Caroline says that without the disability benefits it would have been difficult to offer Piper opportunities that she has had. But it was made possible by knowing that essential costs were covered.

Caroline, from Edinburgh, said: "Piper is such a unique character. When she was born we were told she wouldn't walk until she was around six, but she was walking at two. She's so determined and knows her own mind. If she wants to do something she'll do it.

"Disability benefit allowed me to buy her a sensory swing and a tablet that gives her access to games that help her learn. She just thinks she's having fun but the games have taught her so much. She plays them with her five-year-old brother sitting beside her and he learns with her.

"Child Disability Payment helps cover the costs of buying Piper new clothes and duvets as she is always chewing holes in them. It also allows me to send her to holiday clubs. She loves them and they're really good for her, but they cost about £40 a week.

"Piper is such an amazing girl and she makes everyone's lives better. Without disability benefits we'd not have been able to give her all the experiences and opportunities she's had to learn and connect with the world."

Social Justice Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said: "Being disabled or having a long-term health condition can come with a variety of extra costs, such as paying more for accessible transport. We want to make sure that disabled children and adults get all the extra financial support they are entitled to, to ease the impact of those costs.

"This campaign is not just about raising awareness but also has an important role to play in helping to remove any stigma that people may be worried about when applying for social

security. We believe social security is a human right. It is here for any of us should we need it and we want to make sure people are accessing what they are due.

“This is the first time that we are proactively promoting disability benefits as part of a national advertising campaign, including adverts on TV. We are not aware of the UK Government running a campaign on the equivalent UK benefits for over 30-years. I want to actively encourage people to check if they are eligible for Child and Adult Disability Payments and make sure they get extra financial support to help them live full and independent lives.”