

# Care Leaver Payment Consultation

November 2023

## **Ministerial Foreword**

The Scottish Government wants Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up. To make that happen, we are taking a progressive and continually improving approach to support our children and young people to have the best possible outcomes.

In February 2020, Scotland's Independent Care Review published a series of reports called The Promise. The Promise narrated a vision and told Scotland what it must do to make sure that all children and young people are loved, safe and respected so that they can reach their full potential.

We are absolutely committed to Keeping the Promise to all of our children and young people. This includes making sure that all children and young people with care experience are given the support they need to help them transition from care and move on into adulthood and independent living.

Many young people with care experience do not have the same informal support network that other young people have during transition points in their lives. Our intention is to provide additional financial support for young people moving on from care and into adulthood to help reduce some of the challenges faced during these periods of transition.

I am delighted to launch this consultation which seeks views on our proposed Care Leaver Payment.

The payment will form part of the broader package of support which already exists for those with experience of care, and includes, but is not limited to, access to Continuing Care and Aftercare support for care leavers, the Care Experience Bursary, and Council Tax Exemption for care leavers.

Co-designing the new payment with people who have experience of care and those who provide support to people with care experience will help us develop a payment which best meets the needs of our young people as they move on from care. We want to work with our delivery partners and those with lived experience of care to ensure we get this right.

If you have experience of care, are a kinship or foster carer, work with young people in care, support people with care experience, or have a particular interest in this subject, I encourage you to respond to this consultation and I thank you in advance for taking the time to share your views. Your valuable insights will contribute to the development of a payment which has the potential to positively impact the experience of young people moving on from care in Scotland.

**Natalie Don, MSP**

Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise

## **1. Consultation Process**

### **1.1 Responding to this consultation**

The consultation will run for 12 weeks and will remain open for responses until 26 January 2024.

In order to respond, please use the Scottish Government's consultation hub Citizen Space, which can be accessed [online](#).

You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. However, please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date above. You do not need to respond to every question.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form and send your responses and consultation questions to [careleaverpayment@gov.scot](mailto:careleaverpayment@gov.scot).

### **1.2 Handling your response**

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, if you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document. To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our [privacy policy](#).

### **1.3 Next steps in the process**

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, checks will be undertaken to ensure the responses do not contain potentially defamatory material. After this process has completed the responses will be made available to the public on the Scottish Government's consultation hub. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available as soon as possible once the consultation closes.

There will be a further consultation on the details of the Care Leaver Payment in advance of the use of the regulation-making powers taken in the Social Security

(Amendment) (Scotland) Bill. The use of this power will also be subject to the Bill's parliamentary passage and commencement.

#### **1.4 Scottish Government consultation process**

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinions and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all of our consultations online: [Scottish Government consultations](#). Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision-making process, alongside a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review;
- inform the development of a particular policy;
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals; and
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented.

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments. These should be directed to the relevant public body.

## 2. Introduction

In 2020, the Independent Care Review published its report, [The Promise](#). The Scottish Government, along with local and national partners, has committed to deliver all of the actions set out within it. In order to do so, in March 2022, the Scottish Government published its [Promise Implementation Plan](#), which sets out the actions and commitments that will be taken across the Scottish Government to Keep The Promise by 2030. This signals a generational opportunity to realise the ambition for every child in Scotland to grow up loved, safe and respected so they can reach their full potential.

The Scottish Government recognises the particular challenges faced by young people who are moving on from care and into adulthood. At any age and for any young person, moving on from home is a challenging time, but when there are limited support networks in place, these challenges can be exacerbated.

In addition to possible adverse childhood experiences and often multiple placements during childhood, young people with care experience continue to leave care at an earlier age than their peers who are not care experienced, with less preparation, less support and often before they are ready.

Financial stress and strain for young people moving on from care can quickly escalate to create a multitude of challenges and can lead to financial hardship. The Independent Care Review listened to the experiences of 5500 people with lived experience of the care system, over half of whom have experience of care themselves. Many spoke about the anxiety they felt about moving on from care and living alone for the first time.

The Independent Care Review highlighted and recognised the links between those with care experience and the increased risk of poor mental health, addiction, homelessness and exploitation. Care experienced people are over one and a half times more likely to experience financial difficulties and have more than double the chance of experiencing homelessness, mainly before age 30. Multiple reports have also found money management to be a top concern for young people moving on from care.

The Scottish Government recognises that the needs and experiences of people with care experience is varied and wide-ranging. To address some of the challenges faced by care leavers and those with care experience, there is a package of support for those who are moving on from care and for young people with care experience. This includes Continuing Care and Aftercare support. The broader support available to care leavers and those with care experience aims to offer additional help when and where it may have most impact.

To ensure the broader package of support meets the needs of people with care experience, the Scottish Government has committed to a further public consultation on the current support available to people with care experience and care leavers. The Scottish Government wants to understand how this support can be better

aligned to ensure all people with care experience get the support they may need. It is anticipated that this consultation will launch in early 2024.

### **3. Proposed Care Leaver Payment**

In the SNP Manifesto 2021 and the subsequent Programmes for Government in 2021/22 and 2022/23, the Scottish Government committed to developing a payment to provide young people moving on from care with additional financial security. To fulfil this commitment, the Scottish Government proposes the establishment of a Care Leaver Payment. This payment has been referred to as the 'Care Experience Grant' in previous Manifesto and Programme for Government commitments.

The name of the assistance set out in the previous commitments has been changed to better reflect the intention of the payment, which is to support young people as they move on from care and transition into adulthood. The name of the payment has also been changed to align with other forms of assistance currently provided by the Scottish Government.

The proposed Care Leaver Payment will form part of a broader package of support which includes, but is not limited to, access to Continuing Care and Aftercare support for care leavers, the Care Experience Bursary and Council Tax Exemption for care leavers.

It is proposed that the Care Leaver Payment will provide a one-off payment to young people moving on from care, with the intention of helping to reduce some of the financial barriers they face whilst moving into adulthood and more independent living.

A provision has been included within the [Social Security \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) which will give Scottish Ministers the power to establish one or more schemes to provide care experience assistance. This power will allow the Scottish Ministers to establish the proposed Care Leaver Payment by way of regulations.

Details of the eligibility criteria, application processes and delivery model of the payment are still to be determined. Future consultation on the details on the payment, including the administrative arrangements, will be conducted before the new powers in the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill are exercised. However, for the purposes of this consultation, the current proposal for the Care Leaver Payment has been set out below.

## 4. Consultation Questionnaire

### Purpose of the proposed Care Leaver Payment

The Scottish Government proposes the establishment of a Care Leaver Payment.

The purpose of the payment is to help reduce some of the financial barriers which young people face whilst moving on from care into adulthood and more independent living.

1. How well do you think the name of the payment represents its purpose and intention?
  - Name of the payment represents the purpose and intention of the payment
  - Name of the payment somewhat represents the purpose and intention of the payment
  - Name of the payment does not represent the purpose and intention of the payment.

Please explain why you think this and what you would call the payment instead.

2. Do you think the payment can fulfil the purpose set out above?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Unsure

Please explain your answer.

### Payment amount and processes

Previous commitments made by the Scottish Government indicated that the Care Experience Grant (now known as the Care Leaver Payment) would be an annual payment of £200 for 10 years.

Based on stakeholder feedback and early user testing, the Scottish Government has revised its approach to the Care Leaver Payment.

The Scottish Government now proposes the Care Leaver Payment is a one-off lump sum payment of £2000.

This change reflects views on the current cost of living and the potential limited impact of yearly payments of £200. It has also been highlighted that it could be challenging to deliver annual payments over 10 years without a re-application process.

3. What are your views on the revised approach proposed by the Scottish Government?



4. How helpful would a payment of £2000 be at the point of moving on from care?

- Not at all helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Helpful
- Very helpful

Please explain your answer.

5. Would it be beneficial for applicants to have a choice in how their payment is made?

For example, having the payment made in instalments of smaller amounts over a period of time rather than as a lump sum.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please provide any suggestions you have.

6. At what point would it be most helpful for care leavers to receive the payment?

- In preparation of moving on from care
- At the point of moving on from care
- Within one year of moving on from care
- Within 18 months of moving on from care
- Other

Please explain your answer and provide any other suggestions you have.

### **Impact of the proposed Care Leaver Payment**

7. What might this payment help young people achieve when they are moving on from care?

8. Do you think this payment could have any negative impact on young people leaving care?

Please explain your answer.

## **Eligibility criteria for applicants**

The Scottish Government proposes that people leaving care from the age of 16 will be eligible to apply for the payment if they are looked after by a local authority in Scotland at the point of moving on from care.

The care settings and placement types which would be considered eligible include:

- foster care
- residential care
- formal kinship care
- informal kinship care where a Kinship Care Order is in place (as per section 72 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014)
- secure care, and
- those in receipt of Continuing Care, which is where a young person born after 1 April 1999 who is looked after in foster, kinship or residential care is eligible to remain in their current care placement until they turn 21.

9. What are your views on the proposed eligibility criteria for applicants of the payment?

10. Is there anything else you think the Scottish Government should take into consideration related to eligibility criteria for the Care Leaver Payment?

## **Age requirements for applicants**

The Scottish Government proposes that young people moving on from care, aged 16 to 25, will be eligible to apply for and receive the payment.

The reasoning for the age range proposed is that it will include the cohort of young people with care experience that the Scottish Government thinks should receive a Care Leaver Payment.

This age range includes individuals leaving care from the age of 16 and individuals potentially in receipt of Aftercare support, which care leavers are eligible to access until they reach their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday.

11. What are your views on the proposed age requirements for applicants of the payment?

## **Income requirements for applicants**

The Scottish Government proposes that an individual's income should not impact their eligibility for the payment.

The Scottish Government also proposes that the receipt of this payment should not negatively impact an individual's entitlement to other support.

12. What are your views on an applicant's income impacting their eligibility for the payment?

13. What are your views on this payment impacting an individual's entitlement to other support?

### **The application process**

The Scottish Government is considering which body or organisation could deliver the proposed Care Leaver Payment.

To help inform this decision, consideration is being given to how the application process and receipt of the payment will be experienced by applicants.

14. What should the experience of applying for and receiving the proposed Care Leaver Payment look and feel like for applicants?

### **Support to apply for the payment**

The Scottish Government proposes that support is provided to those who require it when applying for the payment.

15. Do you think young people should have support to apply for the payment?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

16. What support might a young person need when applying for the payment?

17. How should this support be provided?

### **Support for those who have received a payment**

The Scottish Government is considering what further support, such as financial management support, may be required for those who receive the payment.

18. What support might a young person need once they have received the payment?

19. How should this support be provided?

## **Awareness and publicity**

The Scottish Government wants to ensure that as many people as possible who may be eligible for the payment know about it and have the opportunity to apply.

In order this information is widely shared and understood, we will use a variety of methods of communication including but not limited to:

- public awareness campaigns
- social media
- community hubs
- healthcare practices
- educational establishments, and
- key workers in the lives of children, young people and their families.

20. Are there any other communication channels you think we should consider which have not been set out above?

## **Future consideration of financial assistance for people with care experience**

Legislation is required to deliver the proposed Care Leaver Payment. A provision has been included in the [Social Security \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) which will allow Scottish Ministers to provide financial assistance to people with experience of the care system. The proposed Care Leaver Payment would be delivered using this legislation.

A further consultation will be conducted on the details of the payment and its administration in advance of the power in the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill being exercised.

21. Is there anything else you think the Scottish Government should consider in the development and delivery of the payment?

22. What other financial assistance might those with care experience benefit from in the future?



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EH1 3DG

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