



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Bob Doris MSP
Convener
Social Security Committee

SocialSecurityCommittee@parliament.scot

6 May 2020

Dear Convener,

I wrote to you recently to inform you about our changes to regulations and guidance for Carer's Allowance to ensure that carers who could meet the usual eligibility requirements due to coronavirus would continue to receive the benefit.

I write to you now to let you know I intend to include provisions in the Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill 2, which is due to be introduced next week, to make an additional payment of £230.10 in June this year to carers eligible to receive Carer's Allowance Supplement for the period from 01 April to 30 September 2020.

As you will be aware, people who receive Carer's Allowance provide at least 35 hours of unpaid care and can earn no more than £128 each week. As such, they often have the most intense caring roles and lower financial resilience, making the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic particularly challenging. Services which provide care for disabled children and adults have been affected during the outbreak, meaning many carers may need to provide additional care and face additional financial pressures due to having to stay at home, for example increased energy bills, and additional costs in providing food, activities or other resources.

It is worth noting that more than two thirds of Carer's Allowance recipients are women. Evidence showsⁱ that women are more likely to rely on social security payments as part of their incomes than men, and there is some initial evidence to show women will be disproportionately affected by the economic impact of the pandemic due to lower incomes and increased caring responsibilities. Finally, the vast majority of Carer's Allowance recipients will not benefit from the increase to Universal Credit provided by the Department of Work and Pensions.

I, therefore, propose this additional payment to carers this year. If legislation is passed, the Coronavirus Carer's Allowance Supplement of £230.10 will be paid into around 83,000 carers' bank accounts alongside the standard Supplement payment of £230.10 in June, an

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot



additional investment of some £19.2 million to that already planned through Carer's Allowance Supplement. This means carers would get an extra £690.30 this year on top of their Carer's Allowance, bringing our total investment in carers through Carer's Allowance, Carer's Allowance Supplement and the proposed new payment to almost £350 million this year.

Making the payment in this way means that it does not compromise the priorities I have set out of maintaining provision of our current benefits for people on low incomes, and of introducing the Scottish Child Payment as soon as we can. It also means we do not need to request any further data from DWP, at a time when they are seeking to meet unprecedented demand for Universal Credit.

I hope you will be able to lend your support to these provisions which will ensure an additional payment that would make a vital contribution to the health and well-being of our carers, on whom our society depends so much.

SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE

Copied to:

Mr Lewis MacDonald, Convener Health and Sport Committee

Mr Murdo Fraser, Convener of the COVID-19 Committee

ⁱ Close the Gap (2020) [Working Paper 21: Gender Pay Gap](#); Engender (2016) [Securing women's futures: using Scotland's social security powers to close the gender equality gap](#)

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

