

CELCIS Education Forum May 2024

Closing the poverty related attainment gap webinar transcript

Introduced by:

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Featuring:

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Linda Peat

So good morning, everyone and a very warm, warm welcome to our May Education Forum meeting, although I'm aware that it's not very warm outside despite it being May. My name is Linda Peat and I'm the Education Lead at CELCIS. And it's really nice to see those of you that I have not had the chance to meet before. And for those of you who have been to a few of our Forum meetings, it's lovely to see you again. I'm delighted today to be able to welcome along are contributors from Social Security Scotland. We have got Tony Mitchell and Emma Mcginlay with us who will be taking us through a presentation today about the support and financial assistance that Social Security Scotland may be able to provide to families, young people and care leavers. We will get the chance to properly meet our contributors and ask some questions throughout the morning. And we've also got some other CELCIS staff with us today who will be taking part in discussions and helping to facilitate the breakout rooms. Before going into today's theme, I just thought it would be helpful to run through the agenda and also cover some housekeeping. You will have seen on the slide as you arrived that we will be recording the formal input session. And that we will make the videos and any of the materials that are produced today available on our website in a couple of weeks' time. We will only be recording the main presentation session, not the breakout rooms. So people can have a good discussion when they are in there and are looking at the question that Tony and Emma have set. As we are recording during the main presentation section, we would ask if you wouldn't mind switching your cameras off. And if you'd prefer that your name wasn't identified, please anonymize that, so that doesn't show up on the recording.

Before we start, I thought it would be helpful just to give some context to the session, as everyone in the room is probably aware, the Scottish Government has had a significant focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap in recent years. We know that the evidence shows us that there's a persistent gap in attainment between children who live in the most and the least deprived areas in Scotland. And we also know that children and families who have care experience are disproportionately negatively impacted by poverty. And that's due to the intersectionality of other areas of vulnerabilities that they might face. So that means that children and young people who are or who have previously been looked after are more likely to experience the impact of poverty than all other children. And I think it's important that we recognise when we're talking about poverty, that this isn't solely related to a lack of money or material goods. But this can also impact other areas such as access to social community and relational opportunities. And that can have a really significant impact on children's life experiences and outcomes. We know that education is an area that we see these outcomes in and is often one of the first places that is able not just to identify areas where families may be struggling are in need of support, but is able to intervene to offer support, advice or signposting to families. Education is the universal service where your children spend most of their time and we know that our schools and education provisions are often the heart of our communities. Teachers and other education practitioners have a lot of contact with parents, with learners, carers and wider families. So, they're often the first people that families and young people approach when they need help. We know though, that it can be really difficult to understand and to keep up to date with what support is out there. And the children, young people and families can sometimes be reluctant to open up about their circumstances, or to seek help if they need it. So that's the reason that we've invited Emma and Tony along today, we hope to be able to spread the word about what financial support may be available to families and young people through Social Security Scotland, and also to inform people about the types of support that the service is able to provide.

As I said, we know that education and children's services are often at the very frontline - the first port of call - for people to approach, so we hope that today will provide some information that can be passed along to colleagues in your own service, but also families and children and young people that you are working with, when they may be in need of support. We know that financial assistance alone will not close the poverty related experience and attainment gap, but we do know that making sure that families and children get the right financial support when they need it and the financial support that they are entitled too, can be really, really powerful in helping people to move out of poverty and deprivation. So before I hand over to Emma and Tony, I just want to acknowledge that everyone in the room will have different experiences in this area, and different levels of comfort, when we're discussing our themes today. So please feel free to step out or step away. If you need a few minutes, you're very welcome to do that. And if there's anything that you want to follow up with us afterwards, feel free to get in touch. We know that we may not all agree with each other's viewpoints, and everything discussed and that's okay. But we just

ask that we all agreed to be respectful and our contributions and of each other. And as I see, feel free to follow up with us afterwards. Tony and Emma will be doing a Q&A session. I just want to flag for anybody that is looking to ask a question that Tony and Emma can't discuss individual children and family circumstances that you may be working with will be able to give you details of a phone number and an email address to contact if there's something really specific that you'd like to discuss. But they're more than happy to answer questions about the different benefits and questions that you've got about particular areas that you would like to know more about based on today's input, and like I say, Tony and Emma will also share the details of teams that queires can be forwarded to if you would like to follow up on anything if we're not able to address it in the rooms today. So if we could just ask everybody to switch off their camera and switch off their microphone, I will hand over to Emma to get started. Thanks, Emma.

Emma Mcginlay



The slide features the Social Security Scotland logo in the top left corner, with the Gaelic name 'Tearamteachd Shòisealta Alba' below it. The main title is 'Social Security Scotland' in a large, bold font, followed by 'Low Income Benefits' in a smaller, pink font. Below this, it says 'Presented by the National Engagement and Partnership Team'. On the right side of the slide, there is a photograph of Emma Mcginlay, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a pink t-shirt, sitting and holding a pen. The background of the photo shows a wall with a geometric pattern. At the bottom left of the slide, there is a pink box with the text 'Dignity, fairness, respect.'

Hi, everyone. Thanks for that, Linda. Good morning. My name is Emma, I am from the National Engagement Team in Social Security Scotland. And I've come along with my colleague, Tony, today. And we're really excited to speak to you all and thank you so much to Linda, Michelle, and Michael for organising. I will warn you, we do have quite a lot to cover today, it might seem a wee bit overwhelming with the amount of information that we have. But please don't worry, we will have that question slot at the end. And we will be telling you about the resources that we have available. And our inbox is always there as well. So please, if there's anything that you feel like you don't manage to capture today, and we're happy to kind of pick that up, and we will be sharing the slides also. We will tell you a wee bit more about our website as well. We do have a lot of resources, stakeholder fact sheets and information on our payments. So hopefully, these will be really beneficial. But after today, fingers crossed, you will have a kind of better understanding of who we are and what we do.

Agenda

Social Security Scotland Overview

Five Family Payments

Job Start Payment

Support Available

Okay, so this is just our agenda. I'm going to give you a brief overview of Social Security Scotland. And I'll then talk you through our Five Family Payments package. Tony is then going to give you an overview of Job Start Payment, and then we'll tell you a bit more about the support that's available. So just to give you a little bit of an idea of our agency, we are an executive agency of the Scottish Government. We were created back in September 2018, and will soon be celebrating our sixth birthday. We help the people of Scotland by delivering a number of social security payments. Our ethos is dignity, fairness, and respect.



Who we are

We are an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government, created in September 2018, putting dignity, fairness and respect at the heart of everything that we do.

We currently deliver benefits to support people on low incomes, people with disabilities, carers, and young people entering the workplace.

Our head office is in Dundee, and we have a second operational site in Glasgow. We also have colleagues based across the country who support clients in our local communities.

And if you've ever come across our website or seen any of our materials, then the likelihood is that you're very aware of this phrase. That's because it's very much at the centre of everything that we do. So how we interact with clients, stakeholders, and colleagues or everything that we design and deliver, we very much keep this at the forefront of our minds. So just to give you an idea of the scope of our work, when all our benefits have been introduced and our client/clients have been transferred over from the Department for Work and Pensions, Social Security Scotland will support 2 million children and adults. So that's around one in three people in Scotland. We deliver benefits for a variety of different groups in society. This includes people on low incomes, people with a disability, carers and young people entering the workplace. We have a head office in Dundee, which is Agnes Husband House. This is the big glass building that you're probably aware of across from the V&A. And we also have a second operational site, which is in high street, Glasgow. It's always been really important to us that our service is accessible for clients all over Scotland, no matter where they're located. And this is where a local delivery service comes into play. These teams are based within every local authority across Scotland.

And this is to support both clients and stakeholders in the local communities. But we will tell you a wee bit more about that in the presentation. Just to raise as well that we are not part of the Department for Work and Pensions, we are a separate organisations and Social Security is not a branch of Department for Work and Pensions. This used to be more of a previous misconception. And as people become more aware of our brand, we don't hear this as much. But especially as we are moving into newer client groups such as those of a pension age, we just want to keep reminding people.



To give you a visualisation, you will see our current 14 benefits on the screen just now. So today we will be covering the five family payments and job start payment but as you can see, it has been a very busy five and a half years for us since we initially launched.

Benefits we will deliver in the future

- Pension Age Disability Payment
- Pension Age Winter Heating Payment
- Employment Injury Assistance



And moving on to what our future delivery will look like. Over the next couple of years, we will be launching another three benefits. So, Pension Age Disability Payment, which will replace Attendance Allowance, Pension Age, Winter Heating Payment, which will replace Winter Fuel Payment, and we also have Employment Injury Assistance, which will replace Industrial Injuries Benefit in Scotland. That's quite a mouthful. Both our pension age payments will start being rolled out later this year. And from the 21st of October, Pension Age Disability Payment will be piloted and that will be taking place in Argyll and Bute, Highland, Aberdeen city, Orkney and Shetland, and the benefit will become available in 13

more local authority areas from the 24th of March next year, before becoming available nationally across Scotland by the 22nd of April.



Five Family Payments



Dignity, fairness, respect.

Firstly, I'm going to talk you through our five family payments package. As you may have guessed, these are five different payments which are intended to support families on a low income.

What are the Five Family Payments?

Scottish Child Payment helps towards the costs of supporting a family.

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are payments that help towards the costs of being pregnant or looking after a child.

Best Start Grant is made up of 3 one-off payments:

- Pregnancy and Baby Payment
- Early Learning Payment
- School Age Payment

Best Start Foods is money to buy healthy foods like milk or fruit. It is paid via a prepaid card that can be used in shops or online.

This is just a very quick overview, of the five family payments that you can see on screen just now. We have Scottish Child Payment. This helps towards the cost of supporting a family. Our Best Start Grant and Best Start Food payments help towards the costs of being pregnant or looking after a child. Best Start Grant is made up of three one off payments. This includes the pregnancy and baby payment, the Early Learning Payment and the school age payment. These are fundamentally to provide support to families during key milestones of a child's life, such as starting school, go into nursery or the arrival of a baby. And then at the end there we have Best Start Foods. So this is money to buy healthy foods like milk or fruit. It's paid via a prepaid card that can be used in shops or online. And this was some of the feedback that we got from user research when we were launching Best Start Foods was about the introduction of a card, or moving away from the usual vouchers just because of the stigma that people still felt and the card was very much welcomed.

Pregnancy and Baby Payment

Pregnancy and Baby Payment helps with the costs of having a baby. Clients can apply for this payment during pregnancy to help prepare for the baby's arrival, or after the baby is born.

- A client will receive a Pregnancy and Baby Payment of **£754.65** for their first child (their oldest child under 16).
 - The payment also provides support for people who have had a stillbirth.

Any child that comes after, the payment will change to **£377.35**

So, let's start with Pregnancy and Baby Payments. This helps with the cost of having a baby. It can be claimed anytime from the end of the 24th week of pregnancy until the baby is six months old. If someone has taken over looking after the child or for example, through adoption, then they can apply up to the date before the child's first birthday. So £754.65 is paid for the first child with a payment of £377.35 for each subsequent child. There's also an additional multi-birth supplement of £377.35 to help with the costs of having more than one baby. For example, twins or triplets, there is more details available on additional payments for multi-births. And I think Tony is going to kindly just put that in the chat bar for us just now (<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/asset-storage/production/downloads/Pregnancy-and-Baby-Payment-factsheet.pdf>). We will also share all these links separately after the event as well. Specifically for Pregnancy and Baby Payment. In certain circumstances, someone can claim that higher rate of £754.65 for a child that isn't their first child. So, for example, if an individual has been granted refugee status, or they have been forced to leave their home with the another child or children they're responsible for due to domestic abuse by their partner or ex-partner. And this really just provides greater support for families who are more likely to be starting from scratch without the items that Pregnancy and Baby Payment is intended to provide. So I know there is quite a few numbers up there, and a lot of information, but please be rest assured that we will be sharing this after the presentation. So don't worry about madly scribbling this all down.

Early Learning Payment

Early Learning Payment is a payment of **£314.45** per child to help with the costs of early learning.

A client will receive this payment when their child is aged between 2 years old and 3 years and 6 months old. To get this payment, the child does not need to go to nursery.

Clients can get Early Learning Payment for multiple children, as long as each child is the right age when they apply.

So next up, we have our Early Learning Payment. This is a payment of £314.45 per child. And it can be paid when a child is aged between two years and three years and six months old. So to get this payment, a child doesn't actually need to take up a place at nursery, but the client has to apply when the child is within that correct age bracket, so two years to three years and six months old. It can be paid for multiple children as long as the child is within that age bracket that we've spoke about.

School Age Payment

School Age Payment is a payment of **£314.45** per child. It helps with the costs of preparing for school when the child is first old enough to start primary school.

The application window runs from 1st June to last day in February in the year their child is first old enough to start primary school. Client can get the payment for multiple children, as long as each child is the right age when they apply.

To get a payment, the child does not have to take up a place at school.



And now moving on to School Age Payment. So this is a payment of £314.45 per child. And it helps with the cost of preparing for school when a child is first old enough to start primary school. So this one's slightly different. It has an application window, which runs from the first of June to the last day in February. And this is in the year that the child is first old enough to start primary school. So children who do not start primary school or who defer starting until the following year should still apply during that initial window of that take up year. So School Age Payment can be made for multiple children, as long as each child is again within that correct age bracket. It's also worth pointing out that the School Age Payment has not replaced the School Holding Grant. Details of this are available on the mygov.scot website, and Tony has just kindly put that in the chat bar for us (<https://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods>).

So School Age Payment is very much a separate payment and it does not affect payments of the School Clothing Grant in any way. So both can be applied for.

What are these payments for?

Best Start Grant

Clients can use the payment for anything they might need for themselves and the child/children. This could include:

- pregnancy clothes
- a pram
- a cot
- baby clothes
- toys
- trips to new places
- stationary for school
- school trips



So what are these payments for? These are designed to support clients during those milestones of caring for a child. It can be used for buying a pram, toys, school clothes, anything that the client or the child might need during these times. So as you can see on screen that is the kind of feedback that we get from parents and families about what the payments are usually spent on. But obviously it is for the client to decide how that would best fit.

Best Start Foods

Best Start Foods is a regular payment to buy healthy foods like milk or fruit, during pregnancy and if someone has a child under 3.

A client becomes eligible as soon as they know they are pregnant

The amount received will change depending on the age of the child.

- **£21.20** every 4 weeks during pregnancy – the payment amount is per pregnancy. This means the payment amount is the same whether pregnant with one baby, or twins or triplets
- **£42.40** every 4 weeks from a child's birth up until they're one year old or reach the first anniversary of their estimated delivery date, whichever is later.
- **£21.20** every 4 weeks when a child is between the ages of one and 3 years old

Now I will take you on to Best Start Foods. This launched back in 2019, and it was replacing the Healthy Start Voucher Scheme in Scotland. The aim of this is to help tackle the impacts of child poverty by supporting families on a low income to buy healthy foods. It provides eligible pregnant people and families with children under the age of three with money to buy foods such as milk or fruit. The payment doubles when the child is under one. And this is to support breastfeeding mothers or to help with the costs of providing first infant formula milk as well as first infant formula. These payments are all made on a prepaid card as we mentioned. And as you can see on screen the amount is purely dependent on the age of the child. And this ranges from £21.20 to £42.20 and it's paid every four weeks. So just to really highlight that a person becomes eligible as soon as they find out that they're pregnant. This is something that we're really actively trying to promote because we know that so many clients do end up applying later down the line. We just want to make sure that people are receiving that as soon as they are eligible.

What are these payments for?

Best Start Foods

Best Start Foods is paid to help clients buy healthy foods for themselves and their family. These foods are:

- plain cow's milk
- first infant formula
- fresh, frozen or tinned fruit or vegetables
- fresh, dried or tinned pulses like lentils, beans, peas and barley
- fresh eggs

What are these payments for? So this can be used to help clients buy healthy foods and there is a list of approved foods. This is also included on the back of the best start foods card as well. So, we have plain cow's milk, first infant formula, fruit and veg pulses beans, peas and fresh eggs as well.

Using Best Start Foods card

Clients can use their Best Start Foods card in large supermarkets and smaller local shops. As long as the shops sells the healthy foods listed on the previous slide (a list is also shown on the card) and displays the Mastercard logo. This also applies to shopping online.

Clients can pay for items just like they would with a normal contactless bank card.

Clients can check their balance online, over the phone and by using a cash machine.

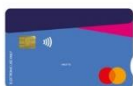
For more details on lost or stolen cards, requesting a new pin, refunds, and more, please go to:

[Using your Best Start Foods card - mygov.scot](https://www.mygov.scot/using-your-best-start-foods-card)

The Best Start Foods card can be used in a number of shops - big and small. As long as they stock the eligible food shown on the card and display the MasterCard logo, then they're good to go. It can also be used online for shopping. And it's just used like a normal contactless bank card. Balances for the card can be checked online, over the phone and also at a cash machine. However, you cannot make withdrawals from the cash machine using the card. There's also information available online about what to do if you have lost a card or if it has been stolen, how to request a new PIN. And Tony is just popping that in the chat bar for you just now (<https://www.mygov.scot/using-your-best-start-foods-card>).

Payment of Best Start Foods

- Clients will get a card from our third-party supplier allpay
- This will include information on how to use the card and it must be activated before use
- It is a Mastercard so will look like a regular bank card and the leaflets will include allpay's logo



So clients will receive this card from our third party supplier, which is allpay and this will include information on how to use the card and how to activate it. As you can see, as well, it does very much look like a normal bank card in which was the resounding feedback that we got during the user research when we were designing Best Start Foods.

Changes to Best Start Foods

- Income thresholds have been removed
- Working Tax Credit is a qualifying benefit in its own right for Best Start Foods
- Aligning eligibility with Best Start Grant to improve access for young parents



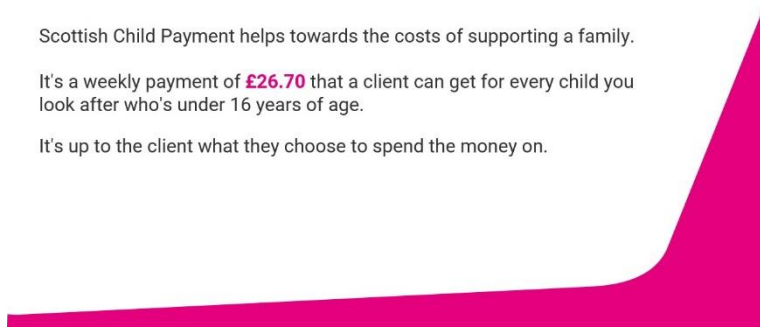
So there have been a few changes to best Start Foods that came into force from the 26th February this year, and we're very keen to raise awareness of this. This is because around 20,000 more people in Scotland are now eligible for the benefit. So the main changes are that the income thresholds have been removed. And this was a commitment in both the Programme for Government and also the latest Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Working Tax Credit is also a qualifying benefit in its own right now for Best Start foods. And we've also aligned some of the eligibility with Best Start Grant just to improve that access for young parents. So earlier on this year, we also hosted a number of events to roughly 250 stakeholders just to talk them through these changes and make sure that they and the clients that they supported, were aware of this.

What is Scottish Child Payment?

Scottish Child Payment helps towards the costs of supporting a family.

It's a weekly payment of **£26.70** that a client can get for every child you look after who's under 16 years of age.

It's up to the client what they choose to spend the money on.



Okay, so moving away from our Best Start Payments, we will now have a look at Scottish Child Payment. So this is to help towards the cost of supporting a family in Scotland. If the client is eligible it is a weekly payment of £26.70 for every child under 16 years of age, and it's paid every four weeks. So if someone has three children, and they're eligible, then they could be entitled to over £300 every month. So prior to November 2022, this was only available to children under six years of age. And this was later amended to include children under 16. So for any clients already claiming for a child under six, additional children can be added to an existing claim by completing a change of circumstances form.

But for those who had previously not been entitled due to the age of their children, they would have to complete a new application form.

Eligibility

Clients may be able to get the Five Family Payment if all of the following apply:

- The client lives in Scotland
- the client, or their partner, are getting certain benefits or tax credits
- the client, or their partner, are pregnant, or are the main person looking after a baby or child who's the right age for a payment

Qualifying Benefits:

- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Pension Credit

Okay, so we will now look at the eligibility for the five family payments as a whole and what this looks like. So clients may be eligible to get five family payments if all of the following apply:

- The client lives in Scotland,
- the client, their partner, or getting certain benefits or tax credits,
- the client or their partner affected, or were pregnant, and are the main person looking after a baby or child who's the right age for a payment.
- Or they may be looking after a pregnant person who is under 20.

And as you can see, we also have our qualifying benefits up there. So these are all the same for all of our five family payments.

Eligibility

Under 18 years old:

- Do not need to be on any payments or benefits to get Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods
- For Early Learning Payment or School Age Payment, the client will need to apply themselves
- For Pregnancy and Baby Payment and Best Start Foods, someone else can apply for the under 18 years old as long as they are in receipt of for them:
 - Child Benefit
 - Child Tax Credit
 - Universal Credit child payments
 - the child addition part of Pension Credit
 - A Kinship Carer with a legal order or letter from local authority

18 or 19 year olds who don't get any benefits or payments:

- Can still apply for Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods if their parent or carer are in receipt of one of these for them:
 - Child Tax Credit
 - Child Benefit
 - Universal Credit child payments
 - the child addition part of Pension Credit

Okay, so we have highlighted some of the main points for eligibility for under 20 year olds in this slide. So for anyone that's under 18, they do not need to be on any payments or benefits to get Best Start Foods. Someone else can apply for an under 18 year old as long as they are in receipt of one of the benefits shown on screen for the young person in question. So similarly, for an 18 or 19 year old who doesn't get any benefits or payments, they can still apply for Best Start Foods if their parent or carer are in receipt of one of the payments shown on screen. So this is just your usual Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, Child Payments from Universal Credit, or the Child Addition part of Pension Credit.

Evidence

To show the client is the main person looking after a child, the child must be named on either their, or their partner's, claim for one of these benefits:

- Child Tax Credit
- Child Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Pension Credit



So to show the client is the main person looking after a child, they must be named on either their or their partners claim form for one of the benefits that you can see on screen. And it's just the same ones that we covered previously.

Evidence

If the client or their partner are kinship carers, they need to have something to show they look after the child. This can be either:

- a letter from your local council
- a copy of a legal order

The type of legal order the client need to have includes:

- a Kinship Care Order
- a Residence Order
- a Guardianship order

The client or their partner might have a written kinship care agreement with the local council. This can also be used as supporting information for their application for one or more of the Five Family Payments.



So those who are kinship carers are eligible for Best Start Grant, also. We will need to see a letter from their local council or a copy of a legal order. The different types of orders that we accept includes Kinship Care Order, Residence Order, or Guardianship Order. And we're also aware that they may have a written Kinship Care Agreement with their local council also.

Automatic Payments

Social Security Scotland recognises that applying for benefits can be difficult. To make things easier, we can now make automatic payments for certain benefits without the need to apply.

If a client gets Scottish Child Payment, and their child meets the age conditions, we also automatically check if they can get these payments:

- Early Learning Payment
- School Age Payment

If you do not get Scottish Child Payment, you need to apply for these payments separately.



So we understand, especially when we talk about families, that applying for benefits can be quite time consuming, it can sometimes be stressful and people might find it difficult. So to really improve that client journey and make sure that people that are eligible are applying. If a client qualifies for Scottish Child Payment, and their child is within the correct age bracket, we will check on our system if they qualify for the Early Learning Payment, which is the nursery age or the School Age Payment. So when we do that Social Security Scotland would send the client a text or an email to let them know that we're checking this. And if they don't get Scottish Child Payment, then they would need to apply for these separately. We cannot automatically pay Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment or Best Start Foods. But another thing that we have introduced to save time, is making sure that Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods as a joint application with the option for the client to include Scottish Child Payment as well. So it really is just about simplifying it and making sure that that client journey is as easy and seamless as possible. And our most recent feedback from clients is that an application form for the five family payments normally takes between 10 to 20 minutes.

Okay, so I am now going to hand over to Tony, who is going to talk to us about Job Start Payment.

Tony Mitchell



Job Start
Payment



Dignity, fairness, respect.

Thanks very much, Emma. So yes, as Emma says, I'll be covering Job Start Payment as well as some of the assistance and resources that are available to help you as stakeholders, as well as clients. And I am aware that some of you may be particularly interested in Job Start Payment given some of the job roles that you have.

What is Job Start Payment?

It's a one-off payment of **£314.45** available to young people in Scotland who are on certain benefits and need help with the costs of starting a new job. If the person has a child, they could get **503.10**. This money doesn't need to be paid back.



So, what is Job Start Payment, then? It's a one off payment of £314.45 and it's available to young people in Scotland if you're on certain benefits, and may also need help with the costs of starting a new job. And if the person has a child, they can qualify for £503.10. And it's worth pointing out that this money does not need to be paid back.

What is it for?

It can be used for things like:

- travel costs, such as a bus or train pass
- lunches
- new clothes or a uniform
- childcare

It's received in one payment and can be spent on things that might cost more, like a travel pass.



It is there to help cover the costs of starting a new job. And that can include things like travel costs, lunches, clothing, or uniforms and protective clothing or tools and childcare costs. It can be used for anything the client wants or needs to use it for. We don't check what it will not be used for, we don't ask for receipts, this kind of does fall into our ethos of Dignity, Fairness and Respect. We're going to pay the money to the client and it's entirely up to the client to use the money for whatever they need to use it for. And again, as I've said, it doesn't need to be paid back.

Eligibility

A person must meet all of the criteria below to be eligible:

- are 16 to 24 years old
- live in Scotland on the day of the job offer
- they have a job offer for paid employment
- they must apply within 6 months of the job offer
- the job must average 12 hours or more per week, over a 4-week period. It doesn't need to be a permanent job
- be out of paid work and in receipt of a qualifying benefit for 6 months or more,



To qualify a client must live in Scotland, they must be aged between 16 and 24. And on the date that the job offer was made, that's not necessarily the date that the job starts but the date that the job offer was made. If the job offer is made on the day that the turn 25 they would not be entitled and less about a care leaver and I'll touch on what that means very shortly. They need to be paid work for at least six months on the day that the job offer was made. Now, if someone has been doing voluntary work, that's fine. But if payments have been made, even if it's for just one day's work during that six month period, they would not be entitled - unless it was a work trial - a one shift work trial - and they were paid for that one shift, we will disregard that, and the client will still be eligible. They must have been offered paid work for at least on average 12 hours a week over a four-week period. It doesn't have to be exactly 12 hours every week, as long as over a four-week period that averages out to at least 12 hours a week. And they can't have already received Job Start Payment previously in the last two years. Also worth pointing out that the point at the Job Start Payment can be claimed up to six months after the job offer was received. So, if a couple of weeks or a couple of months go by, someone has received the job offer and they've started work and they find out they could have claimed Job Start Payment, as long as it's within that six month period of the job offer be in made, they can still claim Job Start Payment.

Eligibility

Qualifying benefits include:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income Support
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit (UC)



As with the vast majority of our benefits, to qualify for Job Start Payment clients must have been receiving one of the following benefits on screen such as

Universal Credit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, income based or Employment and Support Allowance, also income based.

Eligibility for Care Leaver

A Care Leaver must:

- be 16 to 25 years old
- be out of paid work and in receipt of a qualifying benefit at the time of the job offer
- live in Scotland on the day of the job offer



For care leavers eligibility is slightly different. They can apply if they're 25. They can also apply if they were out of work on the day the job offer was made without the need to meet that previous six month requirement. The qualifying benefits are again the same, but there is no need to have been receiving them for six months, as long as they've been in receipt on the day that the job offer was made. So that's quite substantially different. In a regular claim, they need to have been out of work for at least six months and in receipt of a qualifying benefit and under 25. For care leavers, they could be 25, the only need to have been in receipt of the benefit on the day that the job offer was made. And the only need to have been out of work again on the day that the job offer was made. The number of hours of work offered and not to have received jobs that payment within the last few years. That is unchanged. That's no different from a regular claim.

Care Leavers

A person is a care leaver if they've spent time in care on, or after their 16th birthday. This could have been either a foster, residential, secure or formal kinship care placement.

We will only request evidence of having been in care if the care leaver is 25 years old, or has not been in receipt of a qualifying benefit for 6 months or more, or has not been out of paid work for 6 months or more. In all other circumstances, care leavers must meet the same eligibility criteria that applies to all other applicants.



Most of you will be aware of this, but care leavers - for those of you who don't know are anyone who has spent time in either foster care, residential care, secured unit or a formal kinship care placement on or after the 16th birthday.

And with those who are care leavers, we will only ask for evidence of this if they are 25. And they haven't been in receipt of benefits or out of work for the six months. If someone as a care leaver, and they are under the age of 25 and they have been in receipt of benefits for six months or more and they've worked for six months or more, it makes no difference that they're a care leaver, so we don't ask them to provide any evidence, they wouldn't even have to mention it. It's only if they're outside those qualifying criteria if they're 25, and have only been on benefits or out of work for a short period of time. A care leaver evidence form will be sent out as part of the application process, provided that they tell us that they've been in care at some point. And this will need to be signed by a professional person, for example, a social worker, a doctor, a nurse, a counsellor, family mediator, advocacy worker, lawyer or solicitor teacher or advisor from a school or college. And when they make the claim, if it does come to light that they are a care leaver and that they do meet that criterion, our client advisors will keep them right on what it is that they have to provide with regards to filling in the care leaver evidence form.

Responsible for Children

Evidence of having responsibility for a child can be shown from a claim for the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Child Benefit

Although Social Security Scotland should be able to view entitlement to the above, clients may have to provide a letter dated within the last 6 months showing that they're receiving one of the benefits or a bank statement dated within the last 6 months showing that they're receiving one of the benefits.



I also said at the start that those who are responsible for children could be entitled to a higher rate of Job Start Payment and clients will have to provide evidence that they are responsible for a child or children. And this can be shown from a claim for Universal Credit, Child Tax Credit or Child Benefit, for example. We at Social Security Scotland should be able to see if a claimant is receiving one of these benefits, but if for whatever reason we weren't able to do so, clients may need to provide evidence that they were in receipt within the last three months. So that could simply be a letter from the Department for Work and Pensions, or a copy of a bank statement. And when it comes to the bank statement we've been asked this before, we won't be checking the balance - we don't care how much money a person does or doesn't have in their bank account. Job Start Payment isn't means tested. It would only be so we could see the payments going in for either Universal Credit, the Child Tax Credit or Child Benefit just to prove that they are receiving benefits and are responsible for a child.

Responsible for Children

If the client does not receive any of these benefits, they'll need a copy of one of these legal orders for each child they're looking after:

- a Kinship Care Order
- a copy of a decision made under regulation 10(1) of the Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009
- a section 11 order
- a residence order
- certain orders made by courts outside of Scotland
- a letter from a solicitor or local authority confirming the client has an order



If a client isn't receiving one of those three benefits, then they'll need some other form of supporting evidence. And that could be a copy of a legal order that demonstrates the responsibility. So, for example, a kinship care order, a residence order or certain orders made by courts outside of Scotland, or a letter from a solicitor from a local authority to confirm that an order is in place in the guaranteed responsible for a child.

Evidence/Supporting Information

Confirmation of the job offer needs to include 3 pieces of information. This can be a text message, a letter, or an email from the employer. Photocopies or screenshots of these are acceptable and can be uploaded or provided by post:

- The client's full name
- Personal details – address, email, telephone number etc.
- The date the offer was received
- The name of the person who offered the job
- Employer's details

If the job offer was made over the phone, the client will need to ask the employer for a written job offer confirmation confirming the above.



So, in order to support the claim for Job Start Payment, we at Social Security Scotland will require evidence of any job offer confirmation. This would be written proof from an employer and any information will need to match what's provided on the application form. So we recently changed this, it used to be all five of the details on screen, but now it only needs to be three of the following five details. So that's essentially their name, and their personal details, and that can be an address and email address, or phone number. And if the job offer confirmation was made by text or a mobile messaging app like WhatsApp, messenger, it doesn't need to include one of those personal details. They will need to provide the name of the person who offered the job. And one of the employer's details and that can be the name of the employer, the employer's address, it could be the email address or the phone number. And if the name of the company is the same as the person who offered the job, then they will need to provide that email address or phone number as well. And the date that obviously the job offer was made. And that's the day they had received written confirmation or some form of confirmation from the employer, not the date that

they started the job unless they do happen to be the same date. If someone is self-employed, they will need to send Social Security Scotland to proof of an offer of work. So that could be a contract for work through a recruitment agency, it could be an agreement for recurring work, or it could be a letter confirming that they'd won a contract or an invitation to tender. If the job offer was made over the phone they will to ask the employer for a written job offer confirmation. They can send them that list of the details and the employer can then provide that information to Social Security Scotland. I am aware that this has been an awful lot of information. As with Emma and the five family payments we are trying to condense it into a short a time frame as possible. All this information will be made available to you. So that wraps up a selection of our low-income benefits package.

How people can access our service

Currently applications can be made by:

- Applying online at mygov.scot
 - Calling us free on 0800 182 2222
 - Calling us when living abroad on +44 (0)1382 931 000
 - Requesting a paper form by Freephone and completing and returning this by post
 - British Sign Language users can use the [contactSCOTLAND](#) app to contact us by video relay
 - If a client does not want to apply in English, they can apply over the phone in over 100 languages
- 

What I'd like to do next then is take you through some further information on how to access our services and some of the support that is available. People can access our services through the various points on screen. Applications or change of circumstances can be made on line at the mygov.scot website, they can be made over the phone Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm on the free phone number or 800 182 2222. Clients can also request a paper form from us and British Sign Language users can use the contact Scotland app to contact us by video relay. Also, if a client doesn't want to or isn't able to apply in English, they can apply over the phone and over 100 languages. We use a translation service that can help someone get through an application or change of circumstances.



Local Delivery Service

Clients can also apply through our Local Delivery team; this can be done either:

- in person, with a Local Delivery client support advisor
- by video, with a Local Delivery client support advisor
- by telephone, with a Local Delivery client support advisor

Clients can book an appointment with Local Delivery by calling us free on **0800 182 2222**, through our Web chat facility or by writing to request an appointment.

There's also additional support available. We did mention this earlier that we do have a local delivery service and this is available across all 32 local authorities in Scotland and some of you may already be familiar with our local delivery service. So, they're really there to help support clients with their applications to carry out identity or document checks to help people submit change of circumstances or help people submit a compliment, complaint or feedback and Emma has just popped a link to our local delivery service factsheet into the chat bar (<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/asset-storage/production/downloads/Local-Delivery-service-factsheet-March-2022.pdf>). A local delivery team can help in person they can pop out to people's homes or they can meet up in a local venue such as a library or a GP surgery over video or by phone. To book an appointment, clients can call for free using that same free phone number that 0800 182 2222 or they can use our web chat. Our local delivery relationship leads are also available to support yourselves as local organisations and stakeholders so whether this is to answer general inquiries it can be also to explore partnership working or to understand how we can promote Social Security Scotland payments to our shared client groups, we do usually have a list of the leads at all 32 local authorities. Unfortunately, we don't have that to hand. There is a bit of a restructuring going on and certain people have moved on. So, we will send you the list, some of it would be obsolete. However, just this morning, I did receive a list of a handful of leads from some of the areas I was lucky enough to be sent a list of some of the people that were attending today and I managed to secure some local authority leads, I will be able to pass that over to Linda and Michelle, and they'll be able to share that out with you. Obviously, if your local authority isn't on that list, do get in touch with ourselves at national engagement, and we should be able to provide that for you.

Resources and Toolkits

Our stakeholder resources include factsheets, toolkits, social media content and more. We have our resources in a range of different formats, such as Easy Read, and different languages.

You can access these resources on our website in '[Guidance and Resources](#)'



We also have a variety of online resources such as fact sheets and flyers that can be found for all our benefits and services in a variety of formats and languages as well as some video clips and social media toolkits. These aren't necessarily available for every benefit. But by all means do go on and have a look, Emma has just popped the link in the chat bar (<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/guidance-resources/resources/resources>).

There's also links to our guidance as well if you're interested to go in and have a look to see how our advisors are pointed towards making decisions for some of our benefits. And then you're in either of the guidance or the resources sections, if you scroll right down to the bottom, there is a link for you to sign up to our stakeholder newsletter. And this will keep you up to date of any changes any events, any changes to the spaces within Social Security Scotland, so if you haven't already done so I would definitely recommend that you sign up for our newsletter.

What more can we do?

- What channels are most effective in reaching yourself or any relevant groups within education settings?
- How do you currently receive information about support which may exist for pupils, students and their families?
- Have you supported someone to apply for one of our payments?



So just before it'll be finished today. We do like to ask what more can we do for you, however, in this morning, we'll be using the first couple of questions as discussion points in our breakout session. So, something for you to think about then, for going into that session is what channels are most effective in reaching you, or your organisation or any relevant groups within education settings, or if

you're not in an education setting within your particular organisation. So what channels are most effective for you. And also, as a follow up to that, how do you currently receive information about support which may exist for pupils, students or families or clients. The third one is really more of a plea from us. If you have supported someone to apply for one of our benefits - case studies - we're always on the lookout for clients who want to share their story about applying for a benefit from us. And this is really important is that allows potential clients to hear from someone firsthand about their experience. And often they can identify with hearing someone who's just like them talking about what it was like for them to claim the benefits. So if you do have someone you've supported to apply for one of our payments who may be interested, then please do get in touch with us at national engagement team. And I'll ask Emma to pop our email address into the chat bar


(NationalEngagementandPartnershipTeam@socialsecurity.gov.scot).


This could be completely anonymous, it could be just to supply a quick blurb. Or if they're happy to do a short video or a full interview, we're always open to ideas and our communications team would be delighted to have someone offer to help out in any way, shape, or form.


Keep up to date

If you are an organisation or individual who works with people who may need information or support on any of our benefits, sign up to our [stakeholder newsletter](#).

Follow us on Social Media:

 [X \(twitter.com\)](https://twitter.com)

 [LinkedIn](#)

 [Facebook](#)

If you want to keep up to date with us, as I said, the stakeholder newsletter is probably the best way to do so. But we also have a presence on social media. We have X the artist formerly known as Twitter. And that's probably more for



Thank you!

NationalEngagementandPartnershipTeam@socialsecurity.gov.scot

yourselves as stakeholders, it tends to be more corporate updates there, LinkedIn and the client facing side of our social media tends to go through Facebook.

And thank you, again for inviting us to come along. And thank you for listening. I know there's been an awful lot of information and you won't have absorbed, most of it to be honest. But information on our low income benefits, as I say is available on our corporate website and the mygov.scot website. So please do visit these for further information. And that is us for today. So, I will just close this down and hand you back to Linda.

[Linda Peat](#)

Thank you so much, Tony and also Emma. And as you said that was a huge amount of information. But I think the way that I structured, the information that you gave us, it was really helpful way to understand what may be available and I certainly learned things that I wasn't aware of in terms of what people might be entitled to, eligibility criteria. So, thank you so much for that. I can see some comments in the chat saying that it was really helpful. We do have a few minutes now for some questions and answers. I don't think we've got any questions that have come through in the chat. So, if I could just invite people to put their hands up if you've got any questions or any reflections, please don't be shy.

[Tony Mitchell](#)

You might come away from this, this morning and in an hour, a day or a week's time, think actually, I should have asked a question. Do get in touch with us at the National engagement team with any questions like that, and if we can't answer it, we will certainly get in touch with a colleague from either a policy or programme or comms team who will be able to answer the question and that goes likewise for this morning. Emma and I are not policy, we are kind of experts in our field, but we're not the real experts in our field. So we might not have the answer to your questions this morning. But we can certainly take the question away and get a full answer for you.

[Linda Peat](#)

Thank you so much. I'm not seeing any hands up.

[Tony Mitchell](#)

That is either a good thing or a bad thing.

[Linda Peat](#)

I think it's a good thing. I may be really selfish then and jump in. So I had a couple of questions that occurred to me, if that's all right with you guys. In terms of the care leaver eligibility for the Job Start Payment, I was really interested in that. And the flexibility that's been applied, and I suppose in recognition of the additional vulnerabilities that care leavers might face. But I

was just wondering, Tony, if I could clarify that a care leaver that is applying for the Job Start grant. That it doesn't matter how long that young person has been out of work for? Could it be a day? Could it be three days? Could it be six months? There's no...

[Tony Mitchell](#)

No, absolutely not, it could be they are simply out of work and receive the benefit, day one. They get a job offer on day one, they would qualify for Job Start Payment if they meet all the other criteria and can provide all the supporting evidence.

[Linda Peat](#)

So again, that means we know that sometimes things can be quite precarious, for our care leaver - I'm thinking of the young people that have maybe had to quite unexpectedly move house. And so they've maybe had a job or been in training or, you know, other education and not been able to sustain that because they've had to move house unexpectedly. So that removes that barrier.

[Tony Mitchell](#)

As long as it's just on the day that the job offer is made Linda, and provided they meet all the qualifying criteria, they would be entitled. One other thing if I can just be also put out a plea. We know that not just the care leavers, but this particular age group for this benefit the 16 to 24 year olds, sometimes if you're calling them back to request, perhaps some supporting information, they don't pick up the phones and we phone and phone, and if we can't get the supporting information, we have to close down the claim. We have to deny it and it does have quite a high denial rate Job Start Payment, I think that's part of it.

We are trialling an SMS text service that will send them a text to say hey, we are going to phone you at some point in time today. And that has actually can't give out the information because it's top secret, but it has yielded some benefits. It does seem to be improving. I think we are at week 15 of the trial, and it is encouraging, shall we say, but it would still be a plea that if you're supporting someone in a claim, if you can try and reinforce the point that we may get in touch with them. And it's definitely in their interest, because they could be entitled to £300 or just over £300 if they have children over £500 and that money is there to help them to get back on their feet to help them prepare for starting a new job. So that was just another additional plea from us. Please encourage them to pick up the phone and speak to their advisors when they call.

[Linda Peat](#)

Thank you. And I think that's a really good flag actually because we know just from our work with other organisations that that can be a bit of a barrier for them trying to contact young people, so I think the text trial is a really good way of trying to navigate some of that and there are some other organisations doing that too. So we'll certainly make sure that we're spreading the word about that too. I'm not seeing any other questions in the chat and I can't see any more

hands up. No, no more takers. I'll just ask one more question and I promise and then we'll go when to the breakout rooms. So, this one was about the Job Start Payment that goes to people. Does that go to people's bank accounts or as a prepaid card like the Best Start Foods grants, Emma, just again to get an understanding of the different ways that people get access to it.

Emma Mcginlay

So all the Best Start Grants which is like the pregnancy and baby the school age payment, the Early Learning payments, all get paid into a bank account. And Scottish child payment gets put into a bank account. Your Best Start Foods to buy healthy foods goes on that prepaid card. So that is the only one that's got a separate method of payment coming through. And it is really just so that people can go into the shops, they've got it there, it looks like a usual bank card, they can do the contactless. And it hopefully just makes it more usable and more user friendly.

Linda Peat

Thank you. And just like you were saying Tony with the Job Start Payment, it doesn't need to be paid back. And there's no need for any evidence. I hate that word evidence, but there's no need for receipts or evidence of what people have spent that on, people are able to make judgments about what they need and how they spend it.

Emma Mcginlay

Exactly. And all comes back to the Dignity, Fairness and Respect because all families are different. And you know, all families support their children differently. And they may need different things during these milestone eras. So no, we don't ever ask for the receipts. And it's always lovely to hear about, you know, the changes it's made to a family or what they've been able to purchase with it. And that's why we are so grateful for the case studies, we've had moms say it's great just to kind of have a wee bit more freedom when it does come that time that the kids need clothes, etc. or parents that say that even to have money to go and do something with the kids. So yeah, we really would appreciate any case studies, as always great to hear that it's making a difference.

Linda Peat

That's great. Thank you. And I think that what you guys refer to in your presentation is that, in some cases, people can be reluctant or maybe not understand how these payments can be used. So I think case studies which illustrate that, that there's other people in similar circumstances, can be really helpful for other families that maybe be reluctant and are not sure what it's all about. So yes, I would reinforce that - if there's anybody that knows of people who have been in receipt of these payments, that it's been beneficial for that we'd like to share their stories. And it's always good to get the word out.

Tony Mitchell

And likewise, we know that some people that are care leavers don't like to talk about it. It's an experience that they particularly want to share with other people. But if through those circumstances, they would qualify for the job start payment, we would appreciate them being encouraged. It's confidential, we don't tell anybody about it. We don't tell employers about it. It's only to ensure that if they had been out of work for less than six months in receipt of benefit less six months, and they maybe 25, they may be out of the traditional age range for Job Start Payment, that could be an extra few hundred pounds that comes in and hopefully makes life a little bit easier for them. So yeah, we would appreciate case studies for that in particular.

Linda Peat

Thank you. And we do have one hand up just before we go into the the breakout rooms. So Anita, I will come to you.

Anita

Thank you, Linda. Thanks, Tony and Emma for the presentation. Very, very useful indeed. My role as Employability Development Officer at Scottish Refugee Council, and I wasn't aware of the Job Start Payment. So, thank you very much for that information. One thing that I was wondering is Job Start Payment is sort of related to paid employment. Would somebody be eligible if they were starting self-employment?

Tony Mitchell

Yes, absolutely. That was mentioned in just towards the end of the Job Start presentation. If someone is self employed, then they need to send us proof of an offer for work or contract. So that could be through a recruitment agency, it could just be an agreement for recording work, or it could be a letter confirming that they've won a contract or an invitation to tender. So for self employed, absolutely. They would still be entitled provided they meet all the other qualifying criteria, Anita.

Anita

Thank you very much for that.

Linda Peat

So, I think that's a really good question. We know that there is a rise and people starting their own business or being self-employed. And I think that can be quite transformational for people that are at that point in their journey. Thank you that's a great question. I think we are ready to go into breakout rooms. So, while Michelle organises with that. I will just remind people that the questions that we'll be looking at are what channels are most effective in reaching your organisation or any relevant groups within education settings and also how do you currently receive information about support which may exist for pupils, students and their families. And I think there's a really nice opportunity here for us to have a bit of a discussion about how the information that we need - information like this - gets to us, what would help, what's working really well.

But we're also just really keen to hear your ideas about other ways, other communication methods, networks that this information could come through to make sure that we're getting information like that so that we can get it to the children and families that we work with. So we'll be in our break out groups for 15 minutes. When we come back, we'll just take a couple of bits of feedback from each group, and answer any final questions before finishing up. So just to say thank you again to Tony and Emma for giving us such a good springboard for those discussions. And Michelle, I will ask you to do your behind the scenes magic.

Breakout rooms discussions

[Linda Peat](#)

We usually just use the last sort of five minutes for a bit of feedback from the groups so that we can hear what the what the other groups have been talking about. So Michael, and Tony, can I come to you first, just for a bit of feedback about what the discussion was in your break out rooms?

[Tony Mitchell](#)

One of the overwhelming themes was how much people enjoyed these sessions and how perhaps bespoke sessions for their particular organisations would probably be very, very welcome. So yeah, that's something to think about whether it'd be ourselves at national engagement, or our local delivery colleagues. But I would certainly put it out there that if people are interested in having us come along to discuss any of our benefits (as I pointed out, we do have other benefits, not just the ones we spoke about this morning), then by all means, give us a shout in national engagement, and we can at least have a discussion about it. And whether it'd be ourselves of local delivery that come out, we're more than happy to do it.

[Linda Peat](#)

Thank you. Micheal, was there anything else from the group that you went to?

[Michael Bettencourt, CELCIS](#)

I'll probably be slightly repetitive. But I think it's worth repeating it. Like the first message around overcoming barriers, if there's any issues, ring them up, and they will try and sort it out. We know that asylum seeking families, we know that care experienced young people, face particular barriers and the message is ring up, they'll try and sorted. And as Tony said, triple asterik requests for bespoke sessions. This is live information, which is changing all the time, and people really want to be able to interact with it. And Tony finished the session by saying we've been around for six years. And still people are trying to get the information or are unaware. So an absolute willingness to give the information to different people in the sector.

[Linda Peat](#)

Thank you Micheal. Emma did you want to come in?

Emma Mcginlay

Yeah, I just wanted to do something before I forget, because I've only had half up half a cup of coffee, so my memory is like a sieve just now, another thing to say as much as we are more than happy to come out and do these bespoke sessions, we are also more than happy to come along to events. So our team in particular, we'll go to like a lot of the national events like the Child Poverty Action Group conference, the Voluntary Health Scotland, but if you or your organisation or your teams etc, are hosting events, please let us know and, either ourselves or local delivery are more than happy to come along in and speak to people, whether it be something that set up just locally with in small groups or wider, please get in touch and we'd be happy to attend those as well.

Linda Peat

Thank you, Emma. And I think that's important as well, because we are seeing an increase again, post COVID in more face-to-face national events. And I think people really value that opportunity to go along and speak to people face to face. And so thank you for letting us know about that.

Micheal or Tony, is there anything else from your groups that you wanted to raise or flag and make sure that we had captured?

Emma can we come to our group?

Emma Mcginlay

So, we had a really good discussion. And I think one of the main points that came out of it was having information available in different formats. And you know, a lot of people are still very much interested in leaflets, flyers - having something there that's printed, because I think a lot of organisations have moved to digital and social media. Whereas it's not always kind of what the client needs or what the client uses. And so, we were talking about that and the importance of still having those leaflets available. And one of the other things again was around the bespoke sessions and coming out and speaking to organisations. And also understanding that what might happen and one local authority or what teams or support might be available isn't the same in another local authority, but the kind of importance of not knowing everything, but maybe knowing who the right person is, or how we can signpost effectively, is a really big part of it.

Linda Peat

Thank you. And I think the only thing that I've got to add from my group is we had a really nice discussion about the how powerful word of mouth can be for parents in carers or others who are already in receipt of benefits or awards, talking to other parents and carers about their own experiences. And I think that speaks to Emma and Tony, your request for case studies to be able to spread that word, because we know that in some things, the most powerful thing is that peer support that people can get by hearing about the difference that things have made to their own life or who the application process was, or overcoming barriers. So I think the discussion in our group was that we don't as a sector overlook that and how important parents and carers themselves are in

advocating for themselves and each other. So I think that was a really nice flag. And I think it was really good, just again, to be reminded that we don't always all need to know all of the details, it is sometimes just having a knowledge that the supports are available, and who to signpost or who to go to. And I think that's been a really nice invitation, Emma and Tony, this morning about phone us, get in touch with us. If we don't know the answer, we'll link up the people who can help. Because it does just remind us that we don't need a huge level of detail. It's about the awareness and making sure that we're making the links between the people that need them to be made. So thank you very much for that. Can I ask if there's any final questions, final reflections or any more insights before we finish up this morning? Micheal?

Michael Bettencourt

I just wanted to catch the values, the dignity, fairness and respect that just seemed to be embodied and very real in what you were saying. And I really appreciate it. We all know of horror stories of people applying for support and coming up against barriers, or being traumatised by it. And it was just so refreshing to see what you were saying embodied. That was something that we missed from the discussion that I just wanted to catch.

Linda Peat

Thank you, Michael. And yeah, just to echo that, we really appreciate you taking the time to come along. And I think so often putting faces and voices to national organisations is a support in itself for practitioners. So we really appreciate you taking the time to do that this morning Emma and Tony, and I just want to say thank you for all the prep that you've put in today and come and share your things. And I'm sure it will not be the last that you see or hear from many of us in this room after this morning. So thank you very much for that. Is there anything that you guys want to add? Before we finish up?

Emma Mcginlay

I think just thank you so much for having us along. This really makes our role easier and what we're trying to achieve, and just making sure that people know that this money is there for them. It's theirs and as much as we can do to get that word out and also to make your lives easier and your teams and your organization's and being able to join the dots and do that signposting. And so, no, it's been a really great experience. So, thank you so much for having us along.

Tony Mitchell


Yeah, Emma sums it up. I like to think this is just the start of a beautiful friendship between us all. I mean this is what Emma and I do, come out and speak to people like yourselves, but we don't do it just because we get paid to do it but because we want to ensure that the people of Scotland are getting everything that they are absolutely entitled to. And the point I made in our little breakout group is that we rely heavily on you, as stakeholders to get the information out there. However, you can't do that unless we as a team come out and you know, impart that knowledge, signpost you to where you need to go.

So, really thank you, Linda. Thank you, Michelle. Thank you, Michael, for having us all on this morning and giving us this opportunity to make these connections with everyone that we've spoken to today. And hopefully we will make a few more connections out of this. So yeah, thank you, everybody.

Linda Peat


Thank you, Tony and Emma. And just to say in terms of next steps as we said several times, we are recording this, we will collate everything, we will put it on the CELCIS website, we will follow up and let everybody know with a link to that when it's ready. Please feel free to share that far and wide with your team, with anybody that you think it would be relevant to, and if you have any questions, please feel free to follow up with us. We'll also make the PowerPoint, the notes from breakout rooms and contact details of Social Security Scotland available on that website. So you should have in everything that you need.

I would like to say very big thank you to my CELCIS colleagues who have been working away behind the scenes and organising today and keeping us going throughout the event and in the follow up. And a big thank you to you for your time and coming along this morning and engaging in the discussions and Tony and Emma it's been great to have you. And please let us know if there's anything in the future that you want to update us on or comeback with. It would be great to have you again in the future. So thank you again, everyone. I hope you all have a very good Thursday, and we will see you at our next Forum meeting which will be in September and we will send an email out with more information about that nearer the time, but I hope you all have a lovely day and it was really great to see you.



CELCIS
Education Forum
Theme: Closing the poverty related attainment gap

With guest speaker:



Social Security
Scotland
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Webinar Recording
May 2024