



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Social Justice and Social Security Committee

The Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP,  
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions,  
UK Government

**8 April 2025**

Dear Ms Kendall,

### Financial considerations when leaving an abusive relationship

I am writing to you on behalf of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee at the Scottish Parliament to request information related to the Committee's inquiry into financial considerations when leaving an abusive relationship. Please find questions Members are looking for answers to below:

- How do the rules governing benefits the Department for Work and Pensions delivers take account of the impact of domestic abuse?
- Where rules have flexibility built into them to account for domestic abuse, what evidence is required from the client?
- Are staff at the Department for Work and Pensions trained to recognise different forms of domestic abuse, including economic abuse? Are they trained in trauma-informed working practices?
- How do the Department for Work and Pensions ensure its administration of benefits cannot be used to perpetrate economic abuse?
- In what circumstances would the Department for Work and Pensions offer split payments for Universal Credit?
- Will the Public Authorities (Fraud, Error and Recovery) Bill include protections for victim/survivors of financial abuse?
- The Committee have received a number of recommendations from stakeholders regarding various changes they would like to see to the policies governing the administration of Universal Credit (UC). Could you please indicate the UK Government's position on these:
  - Maternity Allowance should no longer be counted as income in calculations to determine levels of UC payments.
  - The two-child cap on UC should be removed.
  - The five-week wait for UC should be removed.
  - Further limit the level of deductions that can be made from Universal Credit.
  - Adjust the benefit cap.

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Contact: Social Justice and Social Security Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email [SJSS.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:SJSS.committee@parliament.scot). We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

It would be appreciated if you could please respond by **Tuesday 6 May**.

If you have any questions about this request, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Collette Stevenson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Collette Stevenson MSP**  
**Convener**  
**Social Justice and Social Security Committee**