



About YouthLink Scotland

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation, representing over 100 regional and national youth organisations from both the voluntary and statutory sectors. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of both the voluntary and statutory sector. Our vision is of a nation which values its young people and their contribution to society, where young people are supported to achieve their potential.

Scotland's youth work sector is as rich and diverse as the nation itself. Our sector has a workforce in excess of 80,000 – including over 70,000 adult volunteers. We reach in excess of 380,000 young people in youth work opportunities each week. Youth Work has three essential and definitive features:

- Young people choose to participate
- Youth work must build from where young people are
- Youth work recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process

As the national agency for youth work, and in our role as an intermediary we have endeavoured to respond to this response in the best interests of the youth work sector, however the views contained within this response may not be held by each of our individual members.

Comments

YouthLink Scotland welcomes the vision and principles underlining the Scottish Government's approach to new social security powers. Central principles of dignity, respect, transparency, accountability and a system which centres the needs of people further the outcomes cited by the Scottish Government. To ensure these are enacted and adhered to, consideration should be given to embedding rights within the legislation. Additionally, we believe children and young people's rights as set out by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) should also be embedded into the legislation to frame the way in which social security will operate in Scotland. A charter accompanying the legislation could provide further detail on these principles whilst allowing for flexibility and continuous improvement.

Consultation regarding all aspects of the social security system and agency should be conducted with those who will be users of the system. For example in developing the practical elements of this social security payment, the Scottish Government should take a co-production approach with young carers to ensure that the views of those most affected shape the delivery. As set out in the recent UNCRC Concluding Recommendations¹, a Child

¹ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations [CRC/C/GBR/CO/5]*, p. 2-3, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=987&Lang=en

Rights Impact Assessment should be carried out in addition to the existing Equality Impact Assessment when developing the social security legislation and related infrastructure.

It would be preferable that success of the new system is not measured by arbitrary 'positive outcomes', rather the approach is taken that the 'best outcome' is different for every individual.

YouthLink Scotland welcomes the introduction of a young carer's allowance. We would also be supportive of eligibility of carer's and young carer's allowance to include those who are in full time education or studying for 21 hours a week or more. Restrictions such as these are not conducive to facilitating those receiving social security to enter education or take up training opportunities. Furthermore, support for young people receiving any social security should extend and link to support to access to education, training and employment.

Acknowledgement of and alignment with the wider policy agenda and Government strategy would be useful for helping to achieve the outcomes, for example the child poverty strategy and forthcoming legislation. Taking a holistic approach would also recognise the support of third sector organisations in supporting people to access and navigate social security systems. Although advocacy services should be built into the new Scottish social security agency, the continued impact and reliance on the third sector should also be considered.

We recognise that the devolution of selected social security powers creates two systems for people in Scotland. The interaction between these systems should ensure that people are not faced with additional bureaucratic burden or complexity. Navigating both systems should be transparent, straightforward and positive. The same is true of the transition to a Scottish system.

YouthLink Scotland is supportive of the Best Start Grant as the replacement of the Sure Start Maternity Grant as a contributor to eradicating child poverty and closing the attainment gap. Flexibility for usage of the grant is critical to upholding the above principles. An integrated application process for the Best Start Grant and Healthy Start vouchers would be preferred in order to maximise the number of eligible people receiving information and support.

We believe that payments of Universal Credit should be automatically paid to individuals within a household, with the option to choose a joint payment. These payments should be in line with the individual's entitlements, for example the main carer should receive the additional relevant payments.

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