

Study gives stark poverty warning

The [Poverty In Scotland 2020 report](#) shows that poverty has been on the rise in Scotland in recent years and interim poverty targets will not be hit over the next three years.

The report warns that Scotland risks seeing a rising tide of poverty due to the economic impact of coronavirus unless political parties commit to bold action on job training, affordable housing and income support for families at next year's Holyrood election.



Award-winning veterans project moves to new phase

A project which has brought charities together to further support members of the armed forces has received a funding boost.

[Unforgotten Forces](#), a ground-breaking consortium of armed forces and civilian charities working to boost the health and wellbeing of older veterans in Scotland, has started a new phase with a fresh funder and a change of leadership.

A new investment of £750,000 by the Scottish Government will enable the consortium to continue its work up to March 2023, beyond the original three-year funding of £4 million from HM Treasury via the Aged Veterans Fund.

[SOURCE](#)

A new national support service will help children and adults diagnosed with autism to understand and embrace their identity.

The service will provide online support on a range of issues, offer practical help and connect autistic people and their families with peers.

Backed by £250,000 Scottish Government funding, the pilot National Post Diagnostic Support Programme will be led by Scottish Autism, in partnership with the National Autistic Society, Autism Initiatives and Autistic People's Organisations.

A new awareness campaign, which aims to challenge stigma and myths to give the general public a clearer understanding of autism, is also being launched.

Find out more about the campaign at <http://differentminds.scot>.

Click here for previous bulletins



[New Style Employment and Support Allowance: detailed guide](#)

Last updated 28 September 2020

New Style ESA is a contributory benefit. Normally, this means you may be able to get it if you've paid or been credited with enough National Insurance contributions in the 2 full tax years before the year you're claiming in.

Funding Opportunities - Debt Advice Journey Programme 2020-23

Applications are now being accepted for the [Debt Advice Journey Programme](#).

The **programme** will fund projects designed to improve access to free debt advice by assisting with the development of changes to working practices that help manage demand on services and improve people's experience of seeking advice.

If you are interested in applying, please download the key documents listed below.

- [Programme application guidance](#) (PDF)
- [Lead agency application form](#) (PDF)
- [Partner application form](#) (PDF)
- [Budget Excel form](#)

If you need any further information or have a question please contact grantfunding@slab.org.uk

The deadline for applications is 9:30am, Monday 16 November 2020.

Please submit your application using our ShareFile system, information about how to do this can be found in our Programme application guidance.

Further details [HERE](#)



Driving a car and Activity 1

A decision from the Upper Tribunal stating unequivocally that the grip used in driving is not the same as the grip used in peeling and chopping vegetables.

This position is supported by the DWP's representative (in fact the judge has adopted the DWP's reasoning.)

FTT's had been rowing back slightly from the position that it was automatically assumed if you could drive then you could prepare vegetables, but it looks like this decision puts that particular line of reasoning to bed once and for all.

[DECN-V Barton-05-10-20.pdf](#)

Scottish Campaign on Rights to Social Security

The Scottish Campaign on Rights to Social Security (SCoRSS) is a coalition of over 40 key NGOs, faith groups and unions as well as individuals from across Scotland who want to see a fairer social security system.



Our [Principles for Change](#) sets out the five principles we believe need to be at the heart of our social security system.

Any interested organisation or individual is welcome to join. Membership is free and simply involves confirming that you agree with the five principles. Members are welcome to get involved in the campaign steering group if they have the time and resources to do so.

To join the campaign please contact:

Neil Cowan, Policy and Parliamentary Officer, Poverty Alliance

neil.cowan@povertyalliance.org

Tel: 0141 353 0440

On 30 September 2020 the Home Office updated its [good character policy](#) for naturalisation to make it even harder for EU nationals to become British citizens.

The new policy doubles the period of time, from five years to ten years, during which certain EU citizens in the UK must have held comprehensive sickness insurance (CSI) or a European health insurance card (EHIC) issued by an EU country, in order to qualify for citizenship.

The Home Office had recently [updated a different nationality policy](#) along similar lines. It has evidently decided to double down despite the controversy provoked by the previous change.

Before we discuss the latest policy update in detail, some important points:

This only affects applicants for British citizenship.

- This generally only affects EEA and Swiss citizens (and dependants) who have been **students or self-sufficient** in the UK in the ten years preceding their application for British citizenship.
- Employed and self-employed workers were not required to hold CSI or an EHIC and are not required to under this policy either.
- Family members (within the meaning of the EEA Regulations) of workers were not required to hold CSI or an EHIC either.
- The good character assessment does not introduce a ten-year residence requirement. If a person moved to the UK less than ten years ago that's fine; the caseworker will just examine UK residence back to the date they first arrived.
- The new guidance does not say that everyone without CSI will be refused citizenship. The problem is it doesn't say they will be granted either.
- If a person is affected by this issue, there is nothing stopping them from applying and asking for discretion, which a caseworker can consider applying. If the application is refused, though, the applicant stand to lose their application fee of £1,349.20 (of which only the £80 citizenship ceremony element will be refunded). Refusal is costly but doesn't prohibit future applications.

[SOURCE](#)

EU FREE MOVEMENT

It just got even more difficult for EU nationals to get British citizenship

7TH OCTOBER 2020 BY JOHN VASSILIOU

Lords hear pleas for EU citizens to get physical proof of settled status

October 7, 2020

Approved settled status applications are digital only, making it hard for some citizens to prove their right to remain



The House of Lords has backed calls for EU citizens to receive physical proof of their right to remain in the UK after Brexit, a demand of campaign groups concerned by those who may be left behind when it comes to accessing resources online.

www.bigissue.com/latest/lords-hear-pleas-for-eu-citizens-to-get-physical-proof-of-settled-status/

New DWP guidance has been issued in relation to the right to reside of family members of British citizens returning to the UK.



Guidance was issued following the Upper Tribunal's judgment in [CSPC/330/2019 - Requirement for returning British Citizen to be 'qualified person' in order for family member to derive right to reside is unlawful \[2020\] UKUT 73 \(AAC\)](#)

DWP advises that access to benefits for a family member of a British citizen who is returning to the UK following time spent in another EEA country is not conditional on the family member showing that the British citizen is currently a qualified person. All the family member needs to show is that they have a right to reside and that they are habitually resident.

[DMG memo 21/20](#) and [ADM Memo 24/20](#)

Government to bring forward legislation to address Court of Appeal's ruling that failure to adapt income assessment rules in universal credit was irrational



Written questions, answers and statements

Universal Credit

Question for Department for Work and Pensions

[UIN 96745, tabled on 29 September 2020](#)

Q.

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Welfare Delivery on 25 June 2020 Official Report, column 1455, what progress she has made on implementing the Court of Appeal judgment of 22 June 2020 in the case of [Johnson, Woods, Barrett and Stewart v. the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions](#).

A.

In its deliberations, the Court of Appeal recognised the complexity of the issue which the Department is working to resolve for claimants as soon as possible.

We intend to bring forward legislation to address the issues raised by the Court of Appeal, so that in future for cases affected by this issue monthly earnings can be reallocated to another assessment period, which means that only one set of earnings should be taken into account rather than two.

BADAS consultation



The public consultation on the [Review of the Bankruptcy and Debt Advice \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) launched on 5 November 2019 and put forward questions which were developed after careful consideration of feedback from stakeholders.

This [consultation response report](#) provides a summary of the responses to the questions raised in the consultation. In addition to these responses, we will also give full consideration to all the feedback and comments given by respondents, to help inform future changes to bankruptcy and as part of the wider review currently being undertaken on Scotland's statutory debt solutions.

The publication of this report was delayed due to the overriding priority of supporting Scotland's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read the report here.](#)

Pilot Buchan transport initiative launches on Wednesday October 7



A new initiative offering free community transport has been launched in Buchan.

The Be-Link'D pilot scheme unveiled today (Wed, Oct 7) is being operated by Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus to help meet the needs of people in rural areas who cannot access suitable transport because of existing bus times, accessibility or cost.

It will be available Monday to Friday with pick-ups from 9am and a last drop-off at 3.30pm.

The Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus office is open from 8.30am-4pm Monday to Friday.

Bookings and informal enquiries can be made by calling Lynda McFarlane on (01771) 619191, 07397 270965 or by emailing booking@belinkd.co.uk

Carers who are in receipt of Carer's Allowance from the DWP on 12 October will automatically get a Carer's Allowance Supplement payment in December.

Those eligible will receive a letter in advance of this which will advise of the exact payment date, which has not been published yet.



Carers in Scotland who are getting Carer's Allowance from the DWP on 12 October 2020 will automatically receive a payment of £230.10 in December.



Sign and share to add pressure to reopen the only safe route for refugees in the UK
[@RefugeeAction](#) [#RefugeesWelcome](#) [#RefugeeResettlement](#)

Since March 2020 the UK hasn't welcomed a single refugee through its resettlement programme - the safest route to escaping war and rebuilding lives.

That was understandable at the start of the coronavirus crisis, but with air travel for foreign holidays running throughout the summer there is no good reason these life-saving flights can't resume.

Refugee Action is ready to support people when they arrive and we can't wait to get started. Will you email your MP and pressure the Government to reopen safe routes to safety and commit to a resettlement programme welcoming at least 5,000 refugees a year?

Sign [HERE](#)



Functional assessments in the UK social security system: the experiences of claimants with mental health conditions

Abstract

Eligibility for health-related income benefits in the United Kingdom is now determined through the use of functional assessments conducted by healthcare professionals. Claimant satisfaction with both Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and Work Capability Assessments (WCA) has been mixed and concerns have been raised that mental health conditions are not well-understood in this context, but academic research has so far been limited. Individuals with a range of common mental disorders and severe mental illness were interviewed (n=18) about their experiences of undergoing eligibility assessments for health-related income benefits. Data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach.

Eleven out of the 18 participants had been turned down for one or more income benefits and successful claims were more likely where supported by health and care professionals. Eligibility assessments were overwhelmingly perceived as focusing on physical health with limited scope to explore the impact of mental health on functioning. Evidence from this and other studies suggests that improvements are needed to the eligibility assessment process for all claimants but particularly those with a mental health condition.

Read report [HERE](#)

Presented by **Sara Spencer**, Cost of the School Day Project Manager and **Alison Brown**, Cost of the School Day Information Officer, **Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland** For many families, the last few months have been financially difficult. Covid-19 means that many more people are now having to live on lower incomes while still facing the same costs.

We already know that children and young people from low income households can face cost barriers to participation and learning at school. Poverty awareness and finding ways to overcome cost barriers is even more crucial in the current context.

Parents, carers and Parent Councils are in a great position to help their schools tackle the cost of the school day, reduce cost pressures and promote inclusion.

Join us on October the 29th 2020, when we will be talking about:

- Child poverty in Glasgow and the impact of Covid-19
- What children, young people and parents say about school costs and their impact
- How Parent Councils have helped to tackle the cost of the school day in Glasgow and beyond
- Cost considerations and mindfulness in your school post Covid
- What you can do in your schools to reduce cost pressures and support families.

Register [HERE](#)

**Cost of the School Day
and Covid-19**
Thursday 29th October 7pm

**THE COST OF
THE SCHOOL DAY**



Scottish Government launches updated plan for tackling homelessness, including the replacement of night shelters with 'rapid rehousing welcome centres'

New centres form part of plan to phase out night shelters entirely by expanding rapid rehousing approaches such as Housing First



The Scottish Government has launched an updated [Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan](#) that includes the steps it intends to take to end the use of night shelters.

NB - the Action Plan was first published in November 2018 following input and recommendations from the [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group](#), and was last updated by the Group in June 2020 after it was reconvened to provide guidance on how to end homelessness in the light of COVID-19.

Amongst a range of measures outlined in the new updated plan, the Scottish Government says that it wants to modify night shelter provision this winter, and end night shelter use along with dormitory-style provision in future -

'Night shelters will be replaced with rapid rehousing welcome centres for people who would otherwise be sleeping rough this winter ...

The centres will provide emergency accommodation for people who have no other options, encouraging them to move on to other services. People using the centres will be offered targeted support, including for wellbeing, health and social care issues, legal rights, employment and welfare.'

The government says that the new centres will form part of its greater use of rapid rehousing approaches, such as Housing First, to provide settled accommodation as quickly as possible.

NB - the updated action plan also provides details of changes of approach in relation to -

- ◆ minimising the risk of evictions;
- ◆ strengthening protections for people experiencing domestic abuse;
- ◆ giving people with lived experience of homelessness or rough sleeping a greater say in the development of policy; and
- ◆ exploring alternative routes to reducing migrant homelessness.

[Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group](#)

For more information, see [Night shelters to be phased out](#)

The government has announced it is expanding the Job Support Scheme (JSS) from 1 November 2020 to pay two-thirds of employees' salaries where their employer is required to close in a local or national lockdown.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Introducing the new rules today, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said -

'Throughout the crisis the driving force of our economic policy has not changed. I have always said that we will do whatever is necessary to protect jobs and livelihoods as the situation evolves.

The expansion of the Job Support Scheme will provide a safety net for businesses across the UK who are required to temporarily close their doors, giving them the right support at the right time.'

Details of the scheme - that sits alongside the [original JSS](#) and the £1,000 [Job Retention Bonus](#) - include that -

- businesses whose premises are legally required to shut for some period over winter as part of local or national coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions will receive government support of two-thirds of each employees' salary (67 per cent), up to a maximum of £2,100 a month;
- employers will not be required to contribute towards wages and only asked to cover National Insurance contributions and pension contributions;
- businesses will only remain eligible for grants while subject to restrictions, and while the scheme is operating (from 1 November 2020 for a six month period);
- employees must be off work for a minimum of seven consecutive days in order to qualify; and
- it covers the whole of the UK, with the government working with the devolved administrations to ensure the scheme operates effectively across all four nations.

In addition, the government advises that to be eligible, employees must be employed and an RTI submission notifying payment in respect of that employee must have been made to HMRC on or before 23 September 2020.

For more information, see [Job Support Scheme expanded to firms required to close due to COVID Restrictions](#) from gov.uk

[MoneySavingExpert](#) article.

New employment programme launched



Department
for Work &
Pensions

This week DWP has launched **Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS)**, a new programme that will provide employment support for those out of work for three months.

Those put forward for the scheme by their Work Coach, will have access to tailored, flexible support to help them quickly get back into employment. The new programme will offer a range of help, including specialist advice on moving into growing sectors, as well as CV and interview coaching. This will give jobseekers the boost they need to return to employment supported by an action plan agreed with their Work Coach, peer support and opportunities to build their skills.

JETS will provide employment support to Universal Credit claimants in the all work related requirements group and New Style Jobseekers Allowance claimants who have been unemployed for at least 13 weeks. More information can be found at

[GOV.UK](#).

Work and Pensions Committee Oral evidence: DWP's response to the coronavirus outbreak Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 30 September 2020.



Evidence session before the Work and Pensions Committee - about the [Department's response to the coronavirus outbreak](#)

Evidence included:

'We do want to have a multi-channel service that works across all our benefits. As the Secretary of State said, employment and support allowance (ESA) went online. That has worked really well. Most claims for contributory ESA are now done online. PIP is also going through that process. The online service has been quite limited, but it will extend this month.

For video, Centre for Health and Disability Assessments has started trialling how to do fit for work decisions via video. We are starting that now. For PIP, we are also trying to test doing video assessments for around 500 customers, so we can understand whether that improves the healthcare professional's capacity to ensure a positive experience for the customer and be able to get more evidence to support a recommendation on a functional assessment, so we are pushing on video, with audio for telephony.'

The transcript of the [evidence session before the Work and Pensions Committee](#)

Poverty in Scotland 2020

5th Oct 2020

Work, social security and housing costs are vital to solving poverty in Scotland, as the coronavirus storm is sweeping many people into poverty and others deeper into poverty

[Independent annual report](#)

JRF
JOSEPH
ROWNTREE
FOUNDATION

Loan sharks look to take advantage of people in a financial crisis.
There's always another option

Find organisations who can help

tsscot.co.uk/illegal-lending

0800 074 0878



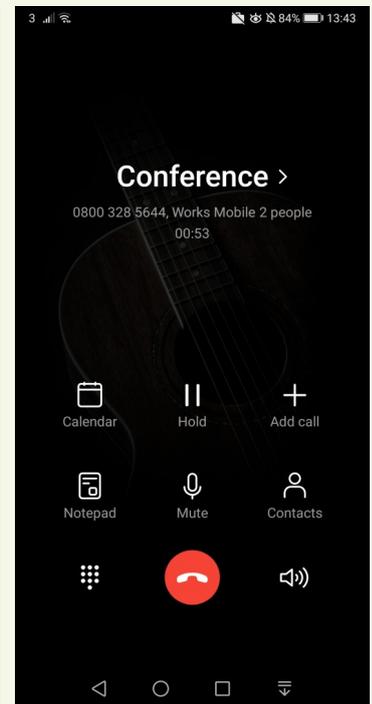
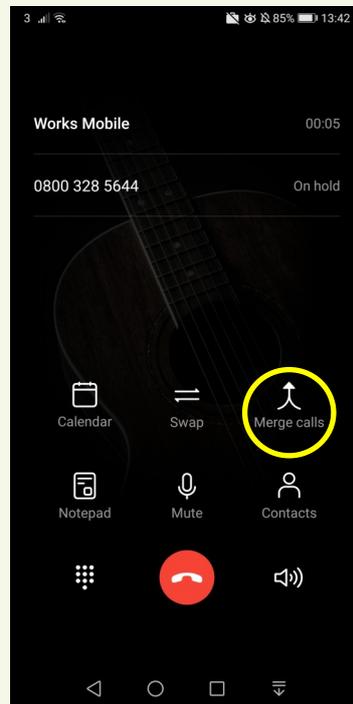
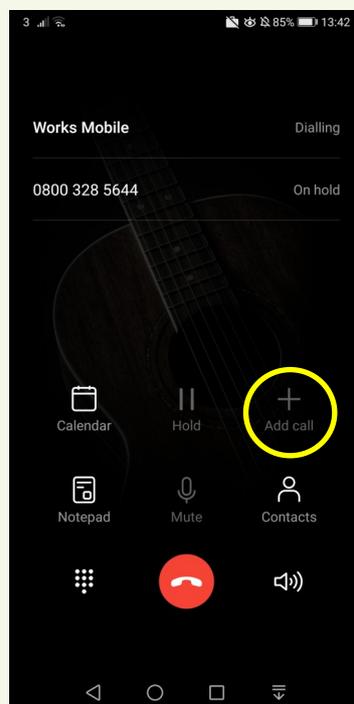
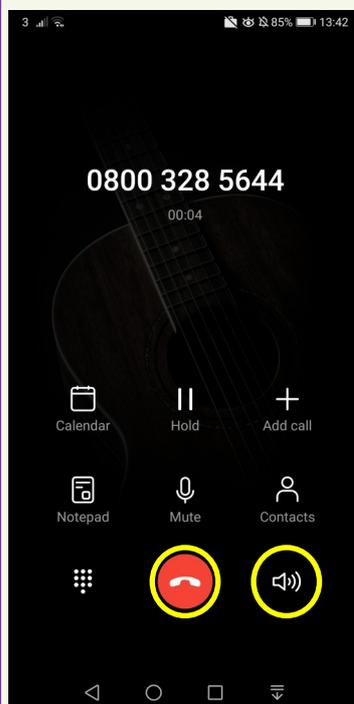
Assisting clients to call Universal Credit (or whoever) in a 3-way Teleconference

This will only work if your phone has the '+call' and 'merge call' options.

Found it best if on 'speaker'

- ⇒ Call UC 0800 328 5644 (figure 1)...(or any number...PIP, HMRC, HMCTS etc)
- ⇒ When they answer advise you are going to connect with your client
- ⇒ Press '+ call' (figure 2)
- ⇒ Call 2nd number....(your client)
- ⇒ Press 'merge call' (figure 3)
- ⇒ Conference call is now in progress (figure 4)

In this example I called UC on my personal AND 'Works Mobile' :)



New research considers government's options for temporary COVID-19-related benefit increases beyond 2020/2021

In [The Temporary benefit increases beyond 2020/2021](#) - part of its annual [Green Budget](#) that for this year analyses the economic and fiscal outlook since the last Budget in March 2020 - the IFS examines key policies in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak that have expanded the working-age means-tested social security system, including -

- the £1,000 annual increase to the standard allowance of universal credit (and the equivalent increase in working tax credit);
- suspension of the 'minimum income floor' (MIF), that has boosted universal credit entitlement for low-earning self-employed workers; and
- increased LHA rates, that govern the maximum amount of support that low-income private renters can receive for housing costs.

For more information, see [Tough choices ahead as spending on working-age benefits set to hit record levels](#) from ifs.org.uk

Recording for PIP assessments



Face-to-face consultations have been replaced by telephone and paper-based assessments due to Covid-19 from 21 September and will continue until further notice.

This was based on evidence that Therese Coffey, secretary of state for work and pensions, gave the Work and Pensions Committee on 30 September.

The DWP insists that assessments are only recorded following an explicit request from the claimant themselves and that IAS only started a "focused pilot" on September 21.

However, the DWP have now informed them that claimants must ask to have their assessment recorded, it will not be done automatically.

You are likely to need to arrange this in advance. The earlier you request a recording the better, as a new appointment may need to be arranged.

Another change made to telephone assessments is the ability for third party callers to dial in and offer support to the claimant.

Ms Coffey explained: "We've now made it possible, as far as I'm aware, that third parties can join the PIP assessments to kind of help people."

A DWP spokesperson told us *"This is not a pilot and is something that will eventually be rolled out nationally. The process is just not yet live in areas covered by Capita but will be shortly."*



Why expanding free public transport must be part of building a wellbeing economy

[October 10, 2020](#)

Families on Universal Credit face a 'cold, hard winter' with 26% already cutting back on heating

[8th October 2020](#)

Scotland's Faith Leaders Call for Social Security Reforms to Ease the Pressure of Poverty

[October 11, 2020](#)

World Homeless Day 2020: Pandemic through the eyes of vendors

[October 10, 2020](#)

Tough choices ahead as spending on working-age benefits set to hit record levels

[09 Oct 2020](#)

DWP splashes £120m fighting disability benefit appeals despite record claimant success rates

[2nd September 2020](#)

Benefits misery sees charities help families feed kids

[9th October 2020](#)

If PIP assessments are now being audio recorded, can claimants have copies?

[10 Oct 2020](#)