



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice,
Scottish Government

7 November 2024

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Scottish Welfare Fund

At a time when people are facing significant increases to their cost of living, the Committee is aware that the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) can play an important role in supporting households' incomes. The Committee understands delivery of the 22 actions contained within the [Scottish Welfare Fund: action plan](#) were due to be completed by the end of Summer 2024.

Work carried out by the Committee has underscored the importance of the SWF and Crisis Grants in particular. Testimony heard during the Committee's inquiry into parental employment emphasised the financial concerns of families and research the Committee commissioned on the [extra costs of living with a disability](#) indicated disabled households are more vulnerable to rising energy and food prices.

The Committee's work around homelessness has also persuaded Members that the SWF is an important aspect of social security in Scotland, given the ability of the Community Care Grant in helping people work towards more stable accommodation.

Given these aspects, the Committee requests an update on whether the specific actions being taken are having the intended impact. The Committee is especially interested in the following action points:

- *Action 5*: Provide clearer definitions on eligibility and what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances'.
- *Action 14*: Restructure to improve accessibility and ease of use.
- *Action 15*: Review income thresholds for applicant eligibility.

If delivery has not yet concluded the Committee seeks an update on the progress made so far and an expected completion date.

A response by 9 December 2024 would be appreciated to inform consideration of the Committee's future work programme.

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

A similar letter has been sent to COSLA, also requesting an update on the extent to which the action plan has been completed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Doris". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Bob Doris MSP
Deputy Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee**