



**WHO
CARES?**
SCOTLAND

EQUALITY | RESPECT | LOVE



Scottish Care Leaver Payment

Response to the Scottish Government's public
consultation

February 2024

www.whocarescotland.org

Who We Are

[Who Cares? Scotland](#) is Scotland's only national independent membership organisation for Care Experienced people. Our mission is to secure a lifetime of equality, respect, and love for Care Experienced people in Scotland and we currently have just over 4,100 members.

At the heart of our work are the rights of Care Experienced people, and the power of their voices to bring about positive change. We provide individual relationship-based independent advocacy and a range of participation and connection opportunities for Care Experienced people across Scotland.

We work alongside Corporate Parents and various communities to broaden understanding and challenge the stigma faced by Care Experienced people. We work with policy makers, leaders, and elected representatives locally and nationally to shape legislation, policy and practice. We do this collaboratively to build on the aspirations of [The Promise](#) and secure positive change.

Response to the consultation questions

Purpose of the proposed Care Leaver Payment

1. How well do you think the name of the payment represents its purpose and intention?

- Name of the payment represents the purpose and intention of the payment
- Name of the payment somewhat represents the purpose and intention of the payment
- Name of the payment does not represent the purpose and intention of the payment.

Please explain your reasoning and include any alternative names you think we should consider.

We believe the name Care Leaver Payment reflects the intention of the payment. However, we note our disappointment that the eligibility has been narrowed to Care Leavers from Care Experienced young people as it was intended when the commitment was announced in the [2021 SNP Manifesto](#) (p31).

'Care Leaver' is a specific and age-restricted legal definition, written a decade ago as per [Section 66](#) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. It does not capture the full community of Care Experienced young people facing additional challenges in life and its use has unintended consequences for many young people in need of support. If you leave care before your 16th birthday, you are not a 'Care Leaver' and therefore not eligible for aftercare (further support from social work). Aftercare is only available for people who leave care on or after the 16th birthday and is potentially available up to age 26. This creates further inequality for Care Experienced people who face the same challenges with the same lack of support networks as Care Leavers, as evidenced by Jasmin-Kasaya Pilling (on behalf of Who Cares? Scotland), 'Petitioner submission: Extend aftercare for previously looked after young people, and remove the continuing care age gap,' PE1958/B, 24 October 2022.

The Who Cares? Scotland National Advocacy Helpline offers independent advocacy and information about rights and entitlements to Care Experienced people of all ages. The largest proportion of callers are aged over 26, when they are no longer eligible for statutory support but are still struggling with the lifelong impact and discrimination that comes with being in care. The second largest group of callers are from young people aged 16-25. These young people tend to be Care Experienced and facing the same outcomes set out in [the Independent Care](#)

[Review's The Money report](#) (2020, p10) but are not entitled to the same supports as Care Leavers.

For example, a young person may have been in informal kinship care all their life and face the same challenges moving on to live independently as a young person in formal kinship care but will not be eligible for support due to a bureaucratic decision not to formalise their care arrangement that was outside of their control. A young person looked after at home often has significantly less support than a young person looked after and accommodated who has carers to ask for advice and support. This is reflected in the [worse education outcomes](#) between these two groups, as one example.

This inequality in support contributes to the inequality in outcomes for this population highlighted in the Promise that the Scottish Government have committed to address by 2030.

We are therefore in favour of a Care Experienced Young Person's Grant which supports all Care Experienced Young People aged 15-26 at the point of leaving care. This extension to 15-year-olds would provide protection to this group who are frequently removed from their order shortly before their sixteenth birthday and therefore not eligible for aftercare despite facing the same challenges.

This grant must be in line with the Promise's scope of Care Experience and accessible to all young people with experience of formal and informal kinship care without an order, foster care, residential care, secure care, experience of adoption and those who are looked after at home. It must also support young people leaving care who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

2. Do you think the payment can fulfil the purpose set out above?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please explain your answer.

Unsure.

Rising tides of poverty are exacerbating the existing inequalities Care Experienced people face with regards to housing, employment and income. Who Cares? Scotland welcomes the Scottish Government delivering on the commitment made by the SNP in 2020 to provide further financial support to Care Experienced young people. The purpose of the initial Care Leaver Grant was to "support around [50,000 young Care Experienced people between the ages of 16-26](#) – who often do not have access to the 'bank of mum and dad'" (pg.31). With the increasing pressure of the rising cost of living we are concerned that a one-off payment of £2000 will not make a substantial difference to the challenges facing Care Experienced young people. However, we are concerned that the payment will not fulfil its purpose at its current level of £2000.

Within Aberlour's 2021 report 'Cash Now Families Always', Aberlour stated "those who choose to move on from their care placements into independent living should be able to depend on a certain level of financial security" (p.5). We support the calls within this report, which includes the call for Scottish Government to introduce a minimum income guarantee for care leavers. We urge the Scottish Government to consider a MIG or UBI initiative, similar to that undertaken in Wales. [Part 9 of the 2014 Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act](#), which outlines the duties of Corporate Parents, requires statutory bodies to develop and promote Care Experienced young people's physical, psychological, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing. These areas are all interconnected and cannot be fully realised without addressing the barriers that poverty creates within each of these areas.

However, if the Scottish Government proceeds with the implementation of a single care leaver payment, then the value must be significantly increased to have the desired impact. Our National Advocacy Helpline data show us that, between the January 1st, 2022, to December 31st, 2023, the most popular requests we received were related to finances (47%). As mentioned in question one, the largest proportion of our callers are aged 26+, highlighting that there is a need for financial support beyond the age of 26. In 2023, research by the [Trussell Trust and Ipsos Hunger in Scotland](#) found that Care Experienced people were twenty times more likely to be using foodbanks.

Additionally, this commitment from the Scottish Government might not be implemented until 2026 – six years after the initial commitment was made. Young people currently moving on from care have been made promises but are falling through implementation cracks. Extending the eligibility of the payment to include adults who were recently 'legal care leavers' would help address the overall aims of the payment and offset the consequences of delayed implementation that Care Experienced people are incurring. Our recommendation to the Scottish Government would be to implement a sunrise clause, if not a permanent extension, to allow those who had left care before the payment was in place but after the commitment was made in 2020 to have access to the same support.

Payment amount and processes

3. What are your views on the revised approach proposed by the Scottish Government?

We support the move to a lump sum payment over an annual payment across 10 years to enable Care Experienced people to have more choice over their future and how they spend the grant. In 2023, Barnardo's report '[No Bank of Mum and Dad](#)' highlighted the financial difficulties of Care Experienced young people in England, particularly as a result of the Cost-of-Living Crisis. Within the report it was highlighted that, in England, Care Experienced young people often struggle at the point of moving on from care due to the high costs of setting up independent living and that rising prices are making it difficult for care-experienced young people to afford essentials (p.7).

However, leaving care grants already exist in councils under section 29 of the 1995 Children Act, at varying rates across the country. In some areas they exceed £2000. Scottish Borders Council pay £2600 and Glasgow City Council £2500. There is a risk, as seen with the Care Experienced Bursary, that following implementation of this new grant, that Councils will reduce or remove this funding. For many young people, this will therefore leave them financially worse off. The grant must come with clear guidance that is it to be received in addition to current financial support and is not intended to replace any other existing benefit or grant.

Leaving care grants have also been at this level of around £2000 for over a decade, despite rising inflation and cost of living. The [ILF Transition Fund grant for disabled young people leaving school is up to £4000](#). We believe the level of financial support for care leavers should at least match this.

To combat the impact of inflation on the support received by Care Experienced young people, Barnardo's recommended that The Department for Education should commit to uprating existing care leaver support in line with inflation (p.21). We would echo this recommendation in terms of the Scottish Government's approach to the Leaving Care Grant.

4. What is your view on who the duties in the Bill should apply to?

- Not at all
- Somewhat helpful
- Helpful
- Very helpful

Please explain your answer.

Somewhat helpful. Please refer to question 3.

5. Would it be beneficial for applicants to have a choice in how their payment is made? For example, having the payment made in instalments of smaller amounts over a period of time rather than a lump sum.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please explain your answer and provide any suggestions you have.

We recognise that some people may prefer this and therefore this option should be available as well as the option to receive the payment in a lump sum to give people choice about what works best for them.

6. At what point would it be most helpful for care leavers to receive the payment?

- In preparation of moving on from care
- At the point of moving on from care
- Within 18 months of moving on from care
- Other

Please explain your answer.

We believe Care Experienced people should have choice to receive the payment at a time that works best for them. However, we expect it would be most often useful for young people to receive it in preparation of moving on from care. This would help them to plan and budget for the household essentials they will need to purchase, such as cooking equipment and bedding, allowing them to have a less stressful transition than if they were to have to wait until after they had left care to receive the money. An earlier payment date also mitigates against the risk of bureaucratic delays.

There is an argument that receiving the payment after moving on from care, during a period in which they might be struggling, would be more helpful. We believe we must be more aspirational than just expecting that they will struggle to afford necessities shortly after leaving

care. To combat this, we urge the Scottish Government to consider other financial initiatives for older Care Experienced people living with the lifelong impact of time in a care system Scotland is striving to move away from, in addition to the leaving care payment.

This could include:

- Removing restrictions on the Scottish Welfare Fund for Care Experienced people.
- Ringfenced discretionary housing payments.
- Mitigating the young parent penalty for Care Experienced people.
- Expansion of the council tax reduction.
- Writing off student debt accrued before the implementation of the Care Experienced Bursary.
- Establishing a scheme to support Care Experienced people with debt and arrears which were accumulated while they should have still been receiving support from their Corporate Parents.
- Expanding the scope of the Care Experienced Bursary to include apprenticeships.
- Ensuring the amount of local authority financial support to Care Experienced young people who are living independently aged 16 and 17 is at least as much as the universal credit they are not able to claim.

Impact of the proposed Care Leaver Payment

7. What might this payment help young people achieve when they are moving on from care?

For many young people, this grant will support individuals to buy the essential items and cover the decorating costs for their first tenancy that many young people rely on parents to support with. For others, they may find it most helpful to use it on travel or digital devices to keep connected with loved ones. Some may spend it on training and equipment such as chef knives, creative arts materials or driving lessons to advance in a career. It might also be used as a lifeline that covers basic living costs as they learn to live independently and manage their own finances in a rising cost of living crisis without a family safety net, removing an enormous burden on their mental health.

Our National Advocacy Helpline is frequently contacted by young people, carers and professionals regarding funding for formal ID such as passports, driving lessons and private counselling. Many young people do not have a form of formal identification when leaving care, which can prevent them from opening bank accounts, accessing tenancies, jobs, and training schemes, as well as the ability to travel or begin driving lessons.

In 2021 Who Cares? Scotland ran a [participation research project on mental health](#) in which 100% of participants said they felt care had negatively impacted on their mental health and 70% said they had been unable to access support. Waiting lists for free mental health support mean that many people often wait months if not years to get support, and only qualify for help when they have reached a crisis point. During the COVID-19 pandemic Who Cares? Scotland received funding from the Scottish Government to match Care Experienced young people with a private counsellor of their choice for a minimum of 8 sessions of therapy. The uptake of this offer from our members was huge, and the success marked by the drastic reduction in the average CORE-10 score of recipients from 32/40 before the support to just 7/40. [Scores between 6-10 are interpreted as 'low level' distress and all scores over 25 as 'severe psychological distress'.](#)

Deputy First Minister John Swinney wrote that the Care Experienced Bursary was intended to enhance Care Experienced People's quality of life, and this grant should be no different. It can support them to feel like they can thrive and to enjoy a financial sense of safety currently out of reach for many, rather than living with a constant level of stress and anxiety about money.

We believe in the old slogan ‘bread for all and roses too.’ Care Experienced people should not have to feel like they need to ‘make do’ and should be free to spend the grant as they wish. This includes using it to be able to participate in typical activities young people of that age do often thanks to the cushioning of parental financial support. This could include travelling, meals out, driving lessons, trips to the cinema, gym subscriptions, beauty treatments, arts materials, cars, and pets. The grant must follow the Welsh UBI model and that of the Future Pathways fund and be unconditional with no restrictions on its usage. This will allow Care Experienced people the choice and independence to choose what will most improve their quality of life and wellbeing. [Care Experienced young people may choose to spend some of the grant on things that will increase the joy in their life, as well as covering more basic needs and utility bills. Those who are financially healthy enough to be able to take these things for granted should reserve judgement on how individuals choose to spend their grant.](#)

Anecdotally we heard of concerns from some professionals, such as social workers, regarding how Care Experienced people may or may not choose to use the Care Experienced Bursary, and sharing concerns that Care Experienced people may not spend it responsibly. We are concerned these sentiments may rise again regarding this grant. These generalised assumptions against the whole Care Experienced population, without evidence, continue to promote the stigmatisation of the Care Experienced community. The Independent Care Review reported that Care Experienced people are [twenty times more likely to have been removed from a home](#) in a SIMD 1 postcode than SIMD 10 (p.20). They are more aware of the challenges of poverty and the need to budget than most young people receiving large student loans. It is important to ensure Care Experienced people are treated with respect and given independence and financial freedom.

8. Do you think this payment could have any negative impact on young people leaving care?

For the payment to fulfil the intended purpose, the Scottish Government must ensure that the grant does not negatively impact on social security benefits and result in sanctions for some young people. We recommend that the Scottish Government ensures that the Care Leaver Payment would be disregarded and secure this commitment from the Department for Work and Pensions before the payment scheme is launched.

We are aware that the Welsh Universal Basic Income Scheme was not able to secure exemption from the DWP, however the UBI pilot gave most young people a better net income after tax than if they had remained with social security. The one-off Scottish payment would not give the same protection but could cause universal credit to be suspended. If this cannot be resolved, we recommend the money is distributed to local authority social work departments to pay via BACS transfer, as is currently done with section 29 monies and living allowances for young care leavers.

Receipt of this payment cannot be allowed to impact on other financial support. The payment is intended as additional support to reduce unequal outcomes, and in many areas the current leaving care financial support from local authorities exceeds £2000. Therefore, if this grant replaces local authority leaving care grants, it will negatively impact on many young people who live in council areas that previously paid more than £2000.

When the Care Experienced Bursary was launched our advocacy workers received many cases where a young person had other financial support stopped from their local authority or carers. We also had cases where young people were asked to contribute to their carer’s living costs or pay rent while still in care ‘to help learn to budget.’ This was largely resolved the following year after the [Deputy First Minister in collaboration with COSLA and CELCIS issued a practice note and letter to Council Chief Executives](#) to clarify that this payment was not

intended to act as a replacement for any other financial support received by this group. Guidance making this clear with regards to the payment must be issued at the time of launch.

Finally, there is a risk of widening inequality within the Care Experienced community and creating a further marginalised group if the payment is only provided to legally defined care leavers.

Eligibility criteria for applicants

The Scottish Government proposes that people leaving care from the age of 16 will be eligible to apply for the payment if they are looked after by a local authority in Scotland at the point of moving on from care.

The care settings and placement types which would be considered eligible include:

- foster care
- residential care
- formal kinship care
- informal kinship care where a Kinship Care Order is in place (as per section 72 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014)
- secure care, and
- those in receipt of Continuing Care, which is where a young person born after 1 April 1999 who is looked after in foster, kinship or residential care is eligible to remain in their current care placement until they turn 21.

9. What are your views on the proposed eligibility criteria for applicants of the payment?

As set out in our response to Question 1, we note our disappointment the eligibility has been narrowed to Care Leavers from Care Experienced young people, as it was promised in the [2021 SNP Manifesto](#) (p31). We are in favour of a Care Experienced Young Person's Grant which supports all Care Experienced Young People aged 15-26 at the point of leaving care. This extension to 15-year-olds would provide protection to this group who are frequently removed from their order shortly before their sixteenth birthday and therefore not eligible for aftercare despite facing the same challenges.

We welcome the inclusion listed by the Scottish Government on informal kinship care where a kinship care order is in place, however, urge them to widen this to include informal care without a section 11.

We are also concerned to note the omission of those who are Looked After at Home from the proposed eligibility criteria. These young people have been taken into the care of a local authority and are considered to be legal care leavers if their order ends after their 16th birthday. They are less likely to have the support network of professionals and carers young people who are looked after and accommodated can lean on and must not be prevented from receiving this grant that may enable them to leave home and create the life they aspire to. Those with experience of adoption should also be included within the eligibility criteria.

This grant must be in line with the Promise's scope of [Care Experience \(2020, p.119\)](#) and accessible to all young people with experience of formal and informal kinship care without an order, foster care, residential care, secure care and those who are looked after at home. It

must also support young people leaving care who were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

We also believe the Scottish Government must give consideration to ensure unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors can benefit from the grant despite complications with no recourse to public funds. NRPF does not apply to children, under Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 which places an imperative on local authorities to promote the welfare of all children in need. Therefore, we recommend that for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors who may have issues receiving the grant due to NRPF that the grant is proactively paid in full before they turn 18 or leave care, whichever comes first. This will ensure they do not suffer additional disadvantage.

10. Is there anything else you think the Scottish Government should take into considerations related to eligibility criteria for the Care Leaver Payment?

We would prefer young people not to need to apply for the payment, and instead have a duty on social workers to arrange this for them as they prepare to leave care.

However, in the event that young people do need to complete an application to receive the grant, the process of certifying eligibility - particularly for young people who were in informal kinship care - should be easy and in-line with the process for the Care Experienced Bursary, which states that professionals can certify informal kinship care arrangements. The criteria of professionals should remain the same as the [Care Experienced Bursary](#):

- social worker
- teacher
- careers advisor
- college or university student advisor
- widening participation officer
- representative or employee from an advocacy group
- member of the children's panel
- child contact centre representative
- family mediation worker
- lawyer or solicitor
- notary public
- counsellor
- police officer
- minister of religion
- doctor
- nurse

Age requirements for applicants

The Scottish Government proposes that young people moving on from care, aged 16 to 25, will be eligible to apply for and receive the payment.

The reasoning for the age range proposed is that it will include the cohort of young people with care experience that the Scottish Government thinks should receive a Care Leaver Payment. This age range includes individuals leaving care from the age of 16 and individuals potentially in receipt of Aftercare support, which care leavers are eligible to access until they reach their 26th birthday.

11. What are your views on the proposed age requirements for applicants of the payment?

As set out in numerous inquiries, such as the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, Kerelaw Inquiry and National Confidential Forum, there is a need to recognise that in many care placements in Scotland Care Experienced adults experienced abuse, neglect, and significant harm. There is a lifelong impact of care affecting many people's ability to work. This is reflected in the findings of The Independent Care Review's report *The Money* that Care Experienced people are 1.5 times more likely to experience severe and multiple disadvantages and earn 75% of their peers, on average [\(p.10\)](#).

Since 2020, Future Pathways funding has supported 2,437 Care Experienced people over the age of 18 who have experienced abuse while in care. The fund has supported accessing mental health support, hobbies, and interests, increasing participation, increasing independence, and home improvements. Between July and September 2023, the average age of those supported by the service was 47 [\(p.13\)](#), and the largest category within discretionary fund usage was for home improvements (41% of funding). Within the same period, 81.5% of those who registered with Future Pathways were over the age of 29. Through this service, we are able to clearly see the need for lifelong financial support for those with experience of care. Whilst the work of Future Pathways is valuable, the service is not open to anyone under the age of 18 and, throughout the process, applicants are required to relive and describe the abuse they endured whilst in care and the direct impact it has had. This is understandably a traumatic process for Care Experienced people to engage with. The funding programme is also only open for those who experienced care within foster care, children's homes, boarding schools, long-term stays in hospitals, and young offender's institutions which leaves gaps in its provision.

Therefore, we call for a ringfenced fund, similar to the Scottish Welfare Fund, for Care Experienced adults of any age to be able to demonstrate financial need and apply to, up to the same level of money as the leaving care grant. This fund would not be dependent on being able to evidence abuse occurring during care, would be inclusive of all types of care placements, and would be less prescriptive regarding what awards could be spent on.

We then propose that the Leaving Care Grant operates with an age range of 15-26, for the reasons set out in questions 1 and 9 regarding the gaps in support for young people who do not meet the legal definition of care leaver.

As set out in question 2, we also recommend the Scottish Government implement a sunrise clause to support young people who have aged out of support in the likely six years between the commitment to this grant being made and implementation.

Income requirements for applicants

The Scottish Government proposes that an individual's income should not impact their eligibility for the payment.

The Scottish Government also proposes that the receipt of this payment should not negatively impact an individual's entitlement to other support.

12. What are your views on an applicant's income impacting their eligibility for the payment?

We support the proposal that this grant is not means tested.

13. What are your views on this payment impacting an individual's entitlement to other support?

We believe the payment should not impact on an individual's entitlement to receive any other payments. In particular, it must not replace current [section 29](#) money provided by local authorities as this is often at a higher rate than £2000. Please see question 8 for more information.

The application process

The Scottish Government is considering which body or organisation could deliver the proposed Care Leaver Payment.

To help inform this decision, consideration is being given to how the application process and receipt of the payment will be experienced by applicants.

14. What should the experience of applying for and receiving the proposed Care Leaver Payment look and feel like for the applicants?

For this question please consider what you think may be important for a young person leaving care who is applying for this payment. Some things to consider includes but is not limited to:

- **how supportive the process is**
- **how the applicant experiences interactions with those delivering the payment**
- **how the applicant is communicated with**
- **how personalised the service is**

The onus should not be on the young person to know about and navigate the application process for the payment. Previously, there have been [issues with initiatives](#), such as the Council Tax Exemption scheme, in which young people were required to know about their right to this exemption and navigate the process on their own. As a result, many young people will be paying council tax unnecessarily.

The question asks how an applicant should be communicated with and experience interacting with the organisation administering the payment. We believe that the process should be automatically initiated by social work so that young people are not having to be in ongoing communication with a public body regarding the payment. Social work knows when a young person is leaving care and would ideally be able to apply on behalf of the young person with their consent and bank details.

If an application process is required, then they must proactively support the young person to apply and receive the bursary if applying on their behalf is not possible. This includes ensuring they have access to a private bank account, especially for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. We know each year how many young people leave care, and we should therefore know how many receive the payment, which would allow us to see gaps in provisions.

There should be no need for Care Experienced people to submit paperwork proving eligibility. Any application process must be as simple as possible. Young people who, for some reason, did not receive the bursary at the point of leaving care but become aware of the scheme later on must still be able to receive the payment. Proving their care experience should also be simple and trauma informed, mirroring CE Bursary process where professional can certify rather than requiring young people to provide paperwork. This often creates digital barrier and

need for some to request their care records, which can have a detrimental impact on mental health.

We also hear from our members that often services such as Citizen's Advice, Foodbanks and Job Centres are unaware of the particular rights and supports available to Care Experienced people, such as the Job Seeker's Grant, Council Tax Exemption, and free childcare for 2-year-olds. Training for staff in services people often contact for financial advice on these particular schemes is required.

15. Do you think young people should have support to apply for the payment?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please see answer to Q14.

16. What support might a young person need when applying for the payment?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please see answer to Q14.

17. How should this support be provided?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please see answer to Q14.

Support for those who have received a payment

The Scottish Government is considering what further support, such as financial management support, may be required for those who receive the payment.

Types of support under consideration includes but is not limited to:

- Financial management support
- Budgeting advice
- Debt advice, and
- Support for applicants making decisions around what to spend their payment on.

The support provided could be delivered by various people and organisations. We are currently considering support which could be delivered by the Scottish Government, through signposting to existing services, by local authorities, and by people who already work with young people, carers and families.

18. What support might a young person need once they have received the payment?

We welcome the suggestions above.

As mentioned in Question 2, from January 1st, 2022, to December 31st, 2023, 47% of the requests we received through our National Advocacy Helpline were related to Finances. These requests included, but were not limited to:

- Applying for benefits
- Needing help with paperwork
- Care Experienced bursary support
- Support with managing debt
- Accessing services to help.

The level of requests we receive through our National Advocacy Helpline from those aged 26+ (see breakdown by age in question 1) indicates a need for continued, lifelong support and further indicates that financial support and advice should be embedded within the care system well before the point of accessing the payment.

In Barnardo's 'No Bank of Mum and Dad' report from October 2023, it was highlighted that Care Experienced young people in England were [resorting to high-cost loans \(p.8\)](#) to support them financially, and found themselves in a cycle of debt, further impacting their access to affordable credit. Support in understanding high interest loans, debt, managing money, the impact of finances on mental health, and an understanding of set-up costs for moving towards independence should also be highlighted in preparation of applying for the Care Leaver Payment, as well as at the point of application in preparation for receiving the payment. However, it is important that these resources remain optional and are not a requirement for accessing the payment to ensure that there are no barriers to receiving funding.

Additional support for individuals and clear national guidance may also be required for Care Experienced young people without an ID and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers to open a bank account to ensure that there are no gaps in provision.

We would like to consult with our members to hear what financial support and advice they feel is needed and at which stages in their journey they feel it would be most useful.

19. What support might a young person need once they have received the payment?

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 names 26 Corporate Parents who have six statutory duties in respect of Care Experienced people. [Section 60](#) of the Act requires all Corporate Parents, as far as reasonably practicable, collaborate with each other when exercising their Corporate Parenting responsibilities, including sharing information and providing advice and assistance.

To support Corporate Parentings in fulfilling statutory obligations, there should be clear guidelines and equitable access to resources to ensure a consistent approach across all 32 local authorities. Financial advice and support should be available as part of a pathway plan, as well as through national services such as Citizen's Advice and Money Advice Scotland, as well as more bespoke information services, such as the Who Cares? Scotland's National Advocacy Helpline. This information should be required training.

Our Helpline data, referenced in questions 1 and 18, shows that there is a need for financial advice and that support should be provided to Care Experienced people of all ages, not just up to the age of 26. As referenced in question 14, services such as Citizen's Advice, Foodbanks and Job Centres are often unaware of the particular rights and supports available to Care Experienced people, such as the Job Seeker's Grant, Council Tax Exemption and free childcare for 2-year-olds. Within The Promise Oversight Report Two, it was highlighted that ["the levels of lifelong support are inconsistent across the country \(p.15\)."](#) A national approach to training for staff in services people often contact for financial advice on these particular

schemes should be implemented and include guidance on the payment to ensure a consistent approach for Care Experienced people of all ages.

Independent advocacy must also be available for young people experiencing barriers to accessing this right.

Awareness and publicity

The Scottish Government wants to ensure that as many people as possible who may be eligible for the payment know about it and have the opportunity to apply.

In order this information is widely shared and understood, we will use a variety of methods of communication including but not limited to:

- public awareness campaigns
- social media
- community hubs
- healthcare practices
- educational establishments, and
- key workers in the lives of children, young people and their families.

20. Are there any other communication channels you think we should consider which have not been set out?

Please refer to our answer to question 14.

It must not be left to chance that young people eligible for this grant who may be struggling financially happen to come across information about the grant and recognise it as something they are able to apply for. Social work has a responsibility to these young people to ensure their needs are met, this would include informing them of grants and financial support available. A duty on social work to inform their young people leaving care and those who have recently left care and are eligible would be the most comprehensive way to ensure the maximum number of people are aware of the grant and have the support they need to apply and receive it.

Future consideration of financial assistance for people with care experience

Legislation is required to deliver the proposed Care Leaver Payment. A provision has been included in the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill which will allow Scottish Ministers to provide financial assistance to people with experience of the care system. The proposed Care Leaver Payment would be delivered using this legislation.

A further consultation will be conducted on the details of the payment and its administration in advance of the power in the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill being exercised.

21. Is there anything else you think the Scottish Government should consider in the development and delivery of the payment?

As development of the Leaving Care Grant progresses, it is vital that Care Experienced people have meaningful opportunities to contribute to the design and rollout of the scheme and the accompanying support, this participation should be meaningful and at scale.

This should also include reviewing the success of the scheme with Care Experienced people after a year to evaluate if the grant is meeting its intended purpose and make any improvements needed. Evaluation should also include using the annual National Social Work statistics to understand the gap between the number of young people leaving care and the number who receive the payment that year, to identify how many are failing to receive this support they are entitled to and why.

We also urge the Scottish Government to consider other measures they could take to support the financial wellbeing of Care Experienced adults as set out in Q6 and implementing the grant with a sunrise clause to mitigate against implementation delay, as described in Q2.

22. What other financial assistance might those with care experience benefit from in the future?

Please refer to our answers to questions 2 and 6.

Should you wish to discuss the contents of this response, please contact:

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