



EAS Response to Response to Scottish Government's Consultation on Disability Assistance in Scotland

May 2019

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Energy Action Scotland (EAS) is the Scottish charity dedicated to ending fuel poverty. EAS has been working with this remit since its inception in 1983 and has campaigned on the issue of ending fuel poverty and delivered many practical as well as research projects to tackle the problems of cold, damp homes. EAS works with both the Scottish and the UK Governments on energy efficiency programme design and implementation.

EAS welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Given its remit, EAS’s response focuses on those areas that it considers may impact most on fuel poor and vulnerable consumers.

Question 48. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to make a £200 Winter Heating Assistance payment to families in receipt of the highest rate care component of Disability Assistance for Children and Young People (DACYP)?

Disagree

Question 49. If you disagreed, please could you explain why?

Technically EAS is pleased at the Scottish Government’s intention to provide Winter Heating Assistance payment to families in receipt of the highest rate care component of DACYP however there are a few issues we are concerned about.

Winter Heating Assistance is a wave 2 benefit and, as such, is not expected to be fully devolved until 2024. It is imperative that this extension of winter heating assistance doesn’t slip down the Scottish Government’s agenda.

The Scottish Government ¹ says that from April 2020 any family living in Scotland with a child who is in receipt of the higher rate component of DACYP will be eligible for Winter Heating Assistance. However it appears that DACYP will only start to be delivered from summer 2020 so it could be a few years later before it becomes fully operational.

The aim of the Scottish Government is for winter heating assistance to be extended to families with severely disabled children². In this case, “severely disabled” is taken to mean the higher rate of the care component, however we would argue that those in receipt of the middle rate of the care component are also quite disabled. The middle rate of the care component applies where a child or young person requires frequent help or supervision during the day or night, or they may require prolonged or repeated attention in connection with bodily functions from another person. They may also require a person to be awake during the night for a prolonged period or at frequent intervals to watch over them in order to avoid substantial danger to themselves or others. The middle rate of the care component is described ³ as being also payable to those children or young people who undergo the following treatment at home at least twice a week: • haemodialysis – (a treatment for kidney

¹ Scottish Government, Cold Spell and Winter Heating Assistance: policy position paper, February 2019

² Scottish Government, A Plan for Scotland, The Government’s Programme for Scotland 2016 – 2017, September 2016

³ Scottish Government, Disability assistance in Scotland: consultation, April 2019

failure which uses a machine to filter blood outside the body); or • intermittent peritoneal dialysis – (a form of peritoneal dialysis in which dialysis solution is infused into the peritoneal cavity, allowed to equilibrate for 10 to 20 minutes, and then drained out).

In addition, eligibility should be extended to children on the higher rate of the mobility component due to the high likelihood that these children remain relatively immobile at home all day and are therefore much more prone to feeling the cold. The higher rate of the mobility component is payable where the child or young person is unable to walk, can only walk a short distance without severe discomfort, could become very ill if they try to walk, or have severe mental or visual disabilities.

Conclusion

EAS has no further points to make in relation to this consultation.