

# Macmillan Cancer Support Scotland submission of 8 March 2022

## PE1913/D - Fast-track future Adult Disability Payment applications for people undergoing cancer treatment

Thank you very much for offering Macmillan Cancer Support the opportunity to contribute to your Committee's assessment of this newly devolved social security matter and the very real issues raised by the Petitioner Wendy Swain.

As a brief background, Macmillan Cancer Support has long experience of dealing with the welfare system across the UK on a practical level. Macmillan employ staff across the UK as Benefits Advisers to support cancer patients through the social security system – and we have thousands of nurses and support staff who sign-post patients to our benefits advisers and those of Citizens Advice and other organisations.

On a policy level, we regularly engage with UK Ministers and the DWP – and since the beginning of devolution of welfare powers to Holyrood we have worked with the civil service, Scottish Government Ministers, MSPs and the new Scottish Social Security Agency (SSSA) to help them with our understanding of the cancer patient journey through the benefits system, and to lobby for faster benefit application times.

On the back of this petition, Macmillan would like the Committee to urge the Scottish Government to ensure the new system of Adult Disability Payment in Scotland has the following principles:

- 1) Processing times for benefits applications are published regularly by the new SSSA so that we can all clearly monitor any delays – broken down by condition to help understand the situation raised by the Petitioner
- 2) Processing times for special rules cases (those with a Terminal Illness) are kept to the bare minimum of around a few days that we currently see from the DWP
- 3) The processing times for applications for normal rules (non-terminal patients) are far too long as the Petitioner explains. Clear targets should be set to reduce these to 11 weeks or less.

4) Where possible, the system should maximise the use of paper-based assessments and make greater use of evidence from medical professionals, in order to avoid unnecessary face to face assessments. We welcome SSSA's emphasis on limiting face to face assessments.