



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

John Swinney MSP
Deputy First Minister and
Cabinet Secretary for Covid
Recovery
Scottish Government

Social Justice and Social Security Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Via email only

Email: SJSS.committee@parliament.scot

20 September 2022

Dear Deputy First Minister,

Public Sector Pay and Emergency Budget Review

During its work programme consideration on [8 September](#), the Committee agreed to write to you regarding your statement to the Chamber on Wednesday 7 September on [Public Sector Pay and Emergency Budget Review](#), which focused on the impact of the cost of living crisis on public finances and the steps the Scottish Government will take to balance its budget.

During your statement you referred to a letter to the Finance and Public Administration Committee sent on [7 September](#) where you set out the detail of what would make up around £500 million in reductions in planned spending.

The Committee has identified that some of the cuts may be relevant to the Scottish Government child poverty agenda and the policy of maximising benefit take-up. These include:

- £3m removed from the Education Maintenance Allowance, due to lower than forecast demand.

- £20m removed from Scottish Funding Council due to lower forecast requirement in FE student support, national transition training fund and additional European structural funds income
- £53m removed from employability. “Work to be undertaken with local authorities and delivery partners now to learn the lessons from Phase 2 of No One Left Behind and to further strengthen our approach to the design and delivery of employability services.”
- £37.6m removed from concessionary travel. Forecast reduction in patronage and fares.
- £82m Barnett consequentials “utilisation of funding provided by UKG as part of cost of living announcements in spring 2022 on child poverty action plan”
- £20m employee costs savings in social justice, housing and local government from “enhanced recruitment controls.”

As such the Committee is seeking further detail on the specifics of what is being planned and how the Scottish Government has considered the impact of these proposed spending reductions on the child poverty agenda, equalities, disability employability, and on social security.

Committee clerks will be in touch to organise an evidence session to explore these issues further. It would be helpful if a response to this letter is available in advance of this session. Clerks will liaise with your office on timescales.

I am copying this letter to Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government and to Kenneth Gibson, Convener of the Finance and Public Administration Committee.

Yours sincerely



Elena Whitham MSP
Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee