



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Shona Robison MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for Social
Justice, Housing and Local
Government
Scottish Government

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

Via email only

Email: SJSS.committee@parliament.scot

06 February 2023

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Robbing Peter to pay Paul: low income and the debt trap

Thank you for [responding](#) to the conclusions and recommendations made in the Committee's [report](#) on low income and debt.

As part of the Committee's strategic aims, we intend to monitor and track progress against these recommendations throughout the session and we look forward to discussing these with you again in future.

We have now received a response to our inquiry from [COSLA](#) and the [UK Government](#) and have had an opportunity to consider all three responses collectively. Amid the cost crisis there are some areas where the Committee considers quicker progress could be made to help people on low incomes.

Earnings and Arrestment

In response to our recommendations that earnings arrestments take account of people's circumstances, we note the Scottish Government is "currently exploring the impact of introducing greater flexibility to the amount of money

taken in an earnings arrestment and any further action that may be taken.” We further understand that there is a potential legislative opportunity this year for any legislative changes that might be required. As such we would find it helpful if you could confirm what action the Scottish Government intends to take in this area.

Scottish Welfare Fund Review

We note that the slip in timescale for the completion of the review beyond the end of 2022 was not explained. We would welcome an explanation and a commitment that it will be published no later than end February 2023.

Mental Health Evidence Form

From your response we note that a range of health and social care professionals can complete the Mental Health Evidence Form. We ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to promote these options and ensure that both health and social care professionals and individuals are aware of the range of people who may be able to complete the form without charge.

It would be helpful to receive a response to the above points by 27 February 2023.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Don', written in a cursive style.

Natalie Don MSP
Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee