



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
Scottish Government

27 November 2025

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Job Start Payment and Funeral Expenses Payment: Request for Information

I write on behalf of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee to request information and an update on two important benefits administered by Social Security Scotland: the Job Start Payment and the Funeral Expenses Payment.

Job Start Payment

The Committee notes that uptake of the Job Start Payment has remained consistently low. In 2024-25, only 19% of eligible individuals accessed the benefit, with 1,860 applications processed and 39% authorised. Given the importance of this support for young people entering the workforce, we would welcome further detail on:

- What are currently understood to be the main barriers to take-up and delivery?
- What steps are the Scottish Government currently taking or planning to take to improve uptake ahead of the new Job Start Payment take-up strategy, which is due in October 2026?
- What measures are being considered to better support eligible young people in accessing this benefit?

Funeral Expenses Payment

This benefit provides vital support to households on low incomes who face the financial burden of funeral costs. In 2024-25, there were 8,540 applications for Funeral Expenses Payment, with a reported take-up rate of 61%.

The Committee understands that Social Security Scotland has been working to improve uptake, including involving stakeholders in shaping promotional resources. We would be grateful if you would provide information on:

Contact: Social Justice and Social Security Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email SJSS.committee@parliament.scot. We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

- What are currently understood to be the main barriers to take-up and delivery of this benefit?
- What steps are the Scottish Government currently taking or planning to take to improve uptake ahead of the new Funeral Expenses Payment?
- What measures are being considered to better support people in accessing this benefit?
- What analysis has been undertaken of the impact of Social Security Scotland's engagement with stakeholders involved in funeral provision?

The Committee is aware of the [East Ayrshire Respectful Funeral Service model](#), where the local authority works with local funeral directors to increase awareness of the benefit and simplify the application journey for eligible households. We would welcome your views on how models such as this are influencing the Scottish Government's approach to enhancing awareness and uptake.

Additionally, any information or data the Scottish Government can provide in relation to fraud or misuse of funds associated with both benefits would be much appreciated.

We would be grateful to receive your response to the above by **Friday 8th January**.

Yours sincerely,



Bob Doris MSP
Deputy Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee