



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Màiri McAllan MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Housing  
Scottish Government  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Sent by email

**29 January 2026**

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

### Discretionary Housing Payments

The Committee is writing to seek further information following its [evidence session](#) on 8<sup>th</sup> January, which focused on issues relating to Local Housing Allowance (LHA). During that session, Members also heard evidence on the operation of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) in Scotland, specifically in relation to their role in mitigating shortfalls where LHA does not meet rental costs.

Evidence provided to the Committee highlighted that the current Scottish Government budget for DHPs is insufficient to meet demand, with local authorities covering the resulting shortfall from their own budgets. The Committee also heard suggestions that the effectiveness of DHPs could be improved by providing greater flexibility to local authorities in how these funds may be used. Further evidence indicated that DHPs, as a discretionary and short-term mechanism, may not be well suited to addressing longer-term structural issues such as gaps between LHA rates and rents, or the ongoing mitigation of the bedroom tax and the benefit cap.

In light of this evidence, the Committee would welcome further clarification on:

- Whether the Scottish Government intends to review the current DHP budget in response to evidence that demand exceeds available funding.
- Whether the Scottish Government is considering changes to the guidance or framework governing DHPs to provide local authorities with greater flexibility.
- How the Scottish Government assesses the long-term suitability of using DHPs to mitigate gaps between LHA rates and actual rents.
- Whether the Scottish Government intends to review how DHPs are used in light of the recent UK Government announcement to introduce a new Crisis and Resilience Fund in England to replace the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) from April 2026.

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

The Committee would be grateful for a response by Friday, **27<sup>th</sup> February**, to help support its ongoing scrutiny and the preparation of its legacy report.

I am copying this letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Stevenson', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

**Collette Stevenson MSP**  
**Convener**  
**Social Justice and Social Security Committee**