



Social Justice and Social Security Committee
Thursday 19 February 2026
7th Meeting, 2026 (Session 6)

Up-rating Social Security Benefits

The Committee will hear from:

- Shirley-Anne Somerville, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
- Kyle Murray, Procedural and International Policy Team Leader, Social Security Policy
- Fiona Bowen, Lawyer, Scottish Government

Introduction

These two sets of subordinate legislation up-rate devolved social security benefits in line with the policy announced to the Scottish Parliament on 13 January as part of the Scottish Government Budget 2026-27.

The [Social Security \(Up-rating\) \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2026](#) (the regulations) were laid on 28 January 2026. They up-rate the benefits administered by Social Security Scotland and makes minor technical amendments.

The [Social Security Up-rating \(Scotland\) Order](#) was laid on 20 January 2026. It up-rates devolved benefits administered by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

Background

What the regulations do

Both the regulations and the order up-rate devolved social security benefits by 3.8%, being the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) in September 2025. The exceptions are:

- Industrial Death Benefit widow's and widower's pension – administered by DWP, are increased by the triple lock, increasing 4.8% in line with earnings.
- The earnings limits for Carer Support Payment and Carer's Allowance are increased from £196 to £204 per week to keep track with 16 hours at National Minimum Wage.

The regulations also make minor and technical amendments to Social Security Scotland benefits including:

- In Carer Support Payment, when an individual dies, the award of CSP ends on the first day of the following week.
- Correcting an error in up-rating the transitional rate of Adult Disability Payment for 2025-26.

Scottish Commission on Social Security (SCOSS)

[SCOSS reported](#) on 19th January making no recommendations, but commenting that:

“For the future, we recognise that a multi-criteria decision analysis of up-rating options was completed in 2024 and would like to reiterate our view that this process should be repeated in due course.”

The [2024 multi-criteria analysis](#) considered different options for measuring inflation (such as CPIH, household costs index or using different reference months for CPI). These were scored against robustness, relevance, delivery and transparency. The analysis concluded that September CPI remained the best measure to use.

Scottish Government up-rating report

The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 requires the Scottish Government to publish a report setting out their policy on up-rating and the inflation-adjusted figures. As in previous years, the policy is to up-rate on the basis of CPI inflation in the previous September. The report states that:

“The Scottish Government is committed to keep its up-rating policy under review and will consider alternative approaches if there is a material change to inflation measures.”

There is a statutory duty to up-rate all Social Security Scotland benefits except for Best Start Foods. This is because Best Start Foods is legislated for by regulations made under the Social Security Act 1988 rather than the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018. However, it is Scottish Government policy to up-rate all devolved benefits, so Best Start Foods is included in the up-rating regulations.

Benefit rates 2026-27

Benefit rates for Social Security Scotland benefits for 2026-27 are given in the tables below for weekly, one-off and annual payments.

Table 1: Regular payments, weekly rates 2026-27, £

	lower rate	middle rate	higher rate
Adult Disability Payment			
Daily Living	£76.70		£114.60
Mobility component	£30.30		£80.00
Pension Age Disability Payment	£76.70		£114.60
Carer Support			
Carer Support Payment	£86.45		
Additional Person Payment	£10.40		
Scottish Carer Supplement	£11.70		
Child Disability Payment			
Care component	£30.30	£76.70	£114.60
Mobility component	£30.30		£80.00
Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance			
Care component	£30.30	£76.60	£114.60
Mobility component	£30.30		£80.00
Scottish Child Payment	£28.20		
Best Start Foods	£5.60		£11.20

Table 2: One-off payments, 2026-27 rates, £

	lower rate	higher rate
Funeral Support Payment	£162.05	£1,327.75
medical device removal	£26.80	
Job Start Payment	£331.95	£531.10
Best Start Grant		
Pregnancy and baby	£398.35	£796.65
Early learning	£331.95	
School age	£331.95	

Table 3: Annual payments, 2026-27 rates, £

Child Winter Heating Payment	£265.50	
Winter Heating Payment	£62.00	
Young Carer Grant	£405.10	
Pension Age Winter Heating	shared rate	full rate
under 80	£105.55	£211.15
80+	£158.35	£316.70

Cost of up-rating

Most of the cost of up-rating is matched by increases to the Block Grant Adjustment. Table 4 below shows how inflation adds just over £1 billion to the spend on social security in 2030-31, but that most of this (£888m) is covered by the Block Grant Adjustment.

Table 4: Cumulative effect of inflation from 2025-26

£ million	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Effect of up-rating payments, of which:	263	447	619	816	1,019
BGA attributable to up-rating	225	382	533	705	888
Up-rating not covered by BGAs	39	64	87	111	131

Source: Scottish Fiscal Commission

Compared with the SFC's December 2024 forecast, higher-than-expected inflation during 2025 has increased the spending forecast by approximately £80 million a year from 2026-27 onwards. (SFC January 2026 forecast, para 5.22).

Because benefit rates are based on the previous September's CPI, the impact of inflation on the 2026-27 social security budget is already factored in. However, if inflation varies from forecasts from 2027-28 onwards, this would affect the medium-term outlook for social security spending. As there is a statutory duty to up-rate, the Scottish Government has limited options for controlling this spending.

Suggested themes for discussion

Members may wish to discuss:

- 1. Will the Scottish Government change the legislative basis of Best Start Foods so that it is covered by the statutory duty to up-rate for inflation?**
- 2. The Scottish Commission on Social Security noted the analysis of up-rating options that was completed in 2024. They suggest that this should be repeated 'in due course'. What is the Scottish Government's view on how often this type of analysis should be undertaken?**
- 3. When considering medium term financial planning, how does the Scottish Government take account of the possibility that inflation might differ from forecasts and the impact this could have on social security spending?**

Camilla Kidner, Senior Researcher, SPICe

Date: 10 February 2026

Note: Committee briefing papers are provided by SPICe for the use of Scottish Parliament committees and clerking staff. They provide focused information or respond to specific questions or areas of interest to committees and are not intended to offer comprehensive coverage of a subject area.

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP www.parliament.scot