

New Cost of Living Payments

The UK Government is making some additional Cost of Living Payments to households who receive benefits. All payments are exempt from tax, do not count towards the benefit cap, and will not have any impact on existing benefit awards.

Here is a summary of **the eligibility criteria** and payment **dates** in the following table. Note that these payments can be **paid together** if you are eligible.



	Eligibility	When will it be paid?
£650 cost of living payment	Being in receipt of universal credit (UC), income-based jobseeker's allowance (JSA), income-related employment and support allowance (ESA), income support, working tax credit, child tax credit or pension credit, by 25th May.	This will be paid in two lump sums of £325, directly into your bank account. One payment will be made in July 2022 and the second in the autumn.
£300 pensioner payment	Being a pensioner (a person is aged 66 or over between 19-25 September 2022)	A top-up will be paid as part of the annual winter fuel payment in November/December 2022.
£150 disability cost of living payment	Being in receipt of disability living allowance DLA, personal independence payment PIP, attendance allowance, Scottish disability benefits, armed forces independence payment, constant attendance allowance or war pension mobility supplement, by 25th May.	This will be paid directly to eligible people from September 2022.

Summer
Edition



Welcome to our **Summer** edition!

This newsletter includes information on benefits and housing news, and money tips to help maximise your income.

Our **Advice Team** provides advice and assistance with benefits, housing and debt issues & employability.

To make an appointment: 0131 442 2100 or
chai@chaiedinburgh.org.uk

Local Assistance & Help with Fuel Bills

Another £150 Payment from the Council

The City of Edinburgh Council are giving out an additional one-off payment of £150 to low-income households, called the Council Low Income Household Payment (CLIHP). This is in addition to the £150 cost of living crisis award that has already been paid through council tax accounts. **To qualify** you need to be in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or Second Adult Rebate on 1 April 2022.

The payment will be made **automatically** to those who qualify. For any enquiries, fill in this form on the council's website www.edinburgh.gov.uk/CLIHP

Energy Support: A £400 grant

The UK Chancellor Mr Sunak announced that the £200 support announced on 3 February 2022 is being replaced with a £400 energy bills support scheme payment which will be paid as a grant and not recovered.

The £400 grant will be delivered by energy suppliers to households with a domestic electricity meter over 6 months from October 2022. Direct debit and credit customers will have the money credited to their account, while customers with pre-payment meters will have the money applied to their meter or paid via a voucher.

Changes to Fuel Deductions from Benefits

New regulations came into force to restrict how much money energy suppliers can take from claimants' benefits if they have gas or electricity arrears.

For one year until 6 April 2023, the DWP will **no longer accept requests for ongoing consumption payments** from **energy suppliers**. These are payments for your actual consumption of gas or electricity which is averaged out based on your meter readings.



It will still be possible for energy suppliers to obtain direct deductions from claimants' benefits for gas and electricity arrears but this is capped to £3.70 per week, and no additional amount for your ongoing consumption will be added to this.

There are a few things to note, however:

- Existing arrangements that were in place before 26 April 2022 are allowed to continue as they are, but cannot be increased further (even though fuel prices are going up).
- Claimants can still request ongoing consumption payments or ask to alter any existing repayment plans already in place, if they want to.

Support for Ukrainian Families

40 Ukrainian families and individuals are arriving in Edinburgh a day and more than a 1300 are here already.

Benefit Entitlement

In response to the war in Ukraine, and the UK's obligation to support refugees, the UK Government brought in emergency regulations that has afforded Ukrainians full rights in the UK, including access to benefits, housing and public sector support.

To qualify for benefits, Ukrainians must have entered the UK through one of three visa schemes - Super Sponsor (Scottish Government), Homes for Ukraine or Family Sponsor. As part of the Universal Credit process, DWP will apply for the person's National Insurance number which will enable them to apply for further benefits and support including from Social Security Scotland for Scottish benefits.

In addition to supporting Ukrainians, the UK and Scottish Governments have amended tax credit income and council tax regulations to support sponsors so that the monthly £350 payments made to sponsors under the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme does not impact any tax credits or discounts that hosts may currently receive.

Other Support & Interpretation Services

To ensure that Ukrainians needs are fully met, The City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh FUSE and the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain have established 3 support hubs in the city centre that are open throughout the week to support Ukrainians.

Hub 1 - Advice & Benefits—run by The City of Edinburgh Council - Tuesday & Thursday (10:00-12:00 & 14:00-16:00) - Providing access to council services at their 249 High Street Advice Shop location. Please phone 0131 200 2360 before visiting.



Hub 2 - Wellbeing and Culture - run by The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain - Tuesday (10:00-13:00) and every second Thursday (11:00-15:00) - Providing a programme of social gatherings, cultural events and information sessions at the Ukrainian Community Centre at 14 Royal Terrace.

Hub 3 - Employability - run by Edinburgh FUSE - Tuesday (13:00-16:00) - Providing employability supporting including 1:1 sessions, CV & interview support and support to apply for jobs.

All 3 locations have access to interpretation in Ukrainian and Russian to support Ukrainians to fully access services which will support their integration into society.

The City of Edinburgh Council has also established a welcome hub at RBS Gogarburn which is the first point of introduction to Scotland for Ukrainians arriving. Here, Ukrainians receive their initial support payment as well as information on the services they initially need to access when arriving.

Useful information is available on the Council's website which is translated into Ukrainian. See: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/emergencies-safety-crime/supporting-ukraine-people

Scottish Benefits: What's to Come?



The Public Spending Framework

The Scottish Government has published details on how they will distribute additional investment of £180 billion. The Resource Spending Review, which is not a budget, outlines how the Scottish Government will focus public finances in the coming years. The Government has pledged the following:

- Increase the Scottish child payment from £10 to £25 and expand its eligibility to the under 16's by the end of 2022;
- Provide universal free school meals to primary school children in P1-5 and expand provision beyond that;
- Uprate devolved benefits;
- Invest £73.1 billion in health and social care including developing a National Care Service; and

- Invest £46 million to introduce the community bus fund and an increase in funding for concessionary travel schemes.

Scottish Carer's Assistance

Scottish carer's assistance will be rolled by the end of 2023 before full national introduction in Spring 2024. This will replace both the UK benefit carer's allowance and the Scottish carer's supplement, all into one benefit. The eligibility criteria for this new benefit will remain the same as those for carer's allowance.

Low Income Winter Heating Assistance

The Scottish Government will roll out the low income winter heating assistance in February 2023. This new benefit will replace the UK cold weather payments with guaranteed payments of £50 a year to be made to around 400,000 low-income households in Scotland.

Cold weather payments involve a £25 payment when a 'cold spell' requirement is met and temperatures fall below zero degrees Celsius for seven days in a row in a certain place. Instead, the Scottish Government will provide a reliable payment of £50 every winter to help with energy bills.

The Adult Disability Payment (ADP)

Social Security Scotland's next benefit, Adult Disability Payment or ADP will replace DLA and PIP for adults of working age. The benefit opened for new applications in pilot areas on 21 March 2022.

Edinburgh is NOT in any of the pilots so new claims will only be accepted in Edinburgh **from 29 August 2022**.

Case transfer (whereby PIP claims move over to the ADP) will begin on **13 June** for claimants whose PIP award is due to end before February 2023 living in any local authority. From **29 August 2022**, case transfer will also apply to claimants living in any local authority who report a change in circumstances to the DWP, who are due a review of their award, or who have a terminal illness.

Under the Adult Disability Payment (ADP), the **eligibility conditions and assessment descriptors** will initially remain the same as those for PIP Personal Independence Payment. When your case is transferred from PIP to ADP, you will also keep the exact same award and will not be re-assessed.

The ADP will however be different from PIP in some respects:

- New claims for ADP can be made online, by post, phone or face-to-face.

- For the claim assessment, only one piece of supporting information from a professional will be required, such as a social care assessment, medical report or prescription list.
- The onus will be on Social Security Scotland to gather information on people's behalf.
- Equal consideration will be given to all sources of information available, including that given by family, friends and unpaid carers.
- A team of in-house health and social care professionals will ask the right questions to save clients and staff time when making a decision.
- Reviews will be light-touch and will take place less frequently than in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) system.
- Indefinite awards will also be possible for disabled people on the highest components of the new benefit whose needs are highly unlikely to change.



Parents: What to Watch Out For!

Free School Meals

Since January this year, all children from P1-P5 in Scotland are now eligible for Free School Meals. Because of this universal support, many families forget to submit a Free School Meals/Clothing Grant application.

If you don't formally apply for Free School Meals, however, you will miss out of the School Uniform Grant (£120 per primary school child and £150 per secondary school child), **and you will also miss out on a whole range of other supplementary payments** that the Scottish Government brought in during the pandemic, including lunch payments during the school holidays. In 2022, **a further £520 is due to be paid to families** who are entitled to Free School Meals over 4 instalments.

So don't forget to apply for Free School Meals even if your P1-P5 children are now getting free lunches automatically. You can do so here:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/xfp/form/261 and

www.mygov.scot/scottish-child-bridging-payments

If Your Child is Over 16

If your child is aged 16 to 20 and staying in non-advanced education (below HNC level), you must phone the **Child Benefit Office 0300 200 3100** and the **Tax Credits Office 0345 300 3900** every August to report what course your child is enrolled on for the new academic year. If you don't, your child elements will be stopped!

If you claim the child element of **Universal Credit (UC)** instead of Child Tax Credits, report the change online through your UC journal www.gov.uk/sign-in-universal-credit or phone **0800 328 5644**.



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FUNDED BY:



We are also funded by :
ARCHIE (Association of Registered Community Housing in Edinburgh), CRH Trust, Dunedin Canmore Housing Association, Melville Housing Association, National Lottery Awards for All.