

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Dear First Minister,

We are writing to urge the Scottish Government to uprate devolved social security benefits in April 2023 at least in line with inflation, measured using the most recent CPI rate.

These are worrying times for many millions of people across Scotland and the United Kingdom, but particularly for those living with long term health conditions, including those who are terminally ill.

We welcomed the decision by Minister Ben Macpherson last April to uprate eight Scottish benefits by 6%, which was significantly higher than the 3.1% CPI, as well as increasing the Scottish Child Payment.

However, with inflation registering a double-digit annual increase this year for the first time in over forty years, we need action.

This is in addition to the cost of energy being almost double what it was last winter and the cost of food spiralling as producers are affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine as well as other factors, leading many people across Scotland to struggle to make ends meet.

In Scotland, we already know that 8,200 people die in poverty at the end of life every year, equating to one in four working age people and one in eight pensioners.

If social security payments are not included in line with the most recent CPI rate, many more people and families will fall into poverty. They will be unable to afford rent, food, and heating bills. There will also be those who are forced to cut back on additional treatments.

It is intolerable that people with long term health conditions and their unpaid carers continue to be unable to afford to pay for living essentials. The Scottish Government must do more to support those most at risk and must not turn its back on those most in need by making a real terms cut to lifeline social security benefits Holyrood is responsible for.

Mental health issues on top of an existing significant health burden must also be factored in.

The short and long term impact of not uplifting benefits aligned to inflation, would be nothing short of catastrophic.

We strongly urge you to act now by committing to increase social security benefits administered by the Scottish Government at least in line with inflation and by ensuring there is further support for those most at risk.

This is a request we are also making to the UK Government around reserved social security benefits.

Yours sincerely,

*Age Scotland, ALLIANCE Scotland, Ataxia UK, Carers Scotland, Cerebral Palsy Scotland, Disability Equality Scotland, Epilepsy Scotland, Genetic Alliance, Marie Curie, ME Association, MND Scotland, MS Society, Muscular Dystrophy, Neurological Alliance of Scotland, The Oxygen Works, Parkinson's UK Scotland, Revive MS, Scottish Autism, Scottish Huntington's Association.*



cerebral palsy scotland



Disability Equality Scotland  
Working towards Equality, Inclusion and Participation for Disabled People in Scotland



Herald News article on malnutrition

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/homenews/23055687.malnutrition-prevalence-unknown-scottish-government-admits/>

Marie Curie and Loughborough University; Dying in Poverty at the End of Life

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/globalassets/media/documents/policy/dying-in-poverty/h420-dying-in-poverty-5th-pp.pdf>

MS Society; 'Breaking Point' report findings

[https://www.mssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/MS\\_REPORT2022\\_84pp\\_DIGITAL.pdf](https://www.mssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-09/MS_REPORT2022_84pp_DIGITAL.pdf)