

# Scottish passported benefits: Consultation on changes required as a result of the introduction of Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment



## RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

### 1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Title Mr  Ms  Mrs  Miss  Dr  *Please tick as appropriate*

Surname

Burr

Forename

Malcolm

### 2. Postal Address

Postcode	Phone	Email

### 3. Permissions - I am responding as...

**Individual** /  **Group/Organisation**  
*Please tick as appropriate*

(a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

*Please tick as appropriate*  Yes  No

(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

*Please tick ONE of the following boxes*

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

(c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

*Please tick as appropriate* X  Yes  No

(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

*Please tick as appropriate*  Yes  No

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

**Q1** The principles identified by the Social Security Advisory Committee to underpin the reform of passported benefits are: simplification, auto-entitlement, information transfer and making work pay. Do you think that these principles are helpful in the Scottish context?

Yes  No  To an extent

These principles are helpful and a good basis to start any reform. Auto-entitlement especially we would consider as important to ensure people who are entitled to benefits are in receipt of them. The logistics of the transfer of information would need to be considered in detail to ensure compliance with data protection legislation.

**Q2** What other principles would you like to see underpin any reform of passported benefits in Scotland?

Timeous nature of processing applications and receipt of benefits.  
Ensuring that there are clear and accessible routes to appeals for claimants.

**Q3** Do you feel that it would be desirable to replace benefits in kind (i.e. providing the goods or services directly) with a cash alternative for some passported benefits?

Yes  No  To an extent

Benefits in-kind ensure that the benefit is not subsumed into other areas of need and are delivering the benefit to the correct person. Cash payments can be easily lost into a bigger household budget which can be extremely pressurised and not controlled by the person who is in need of the benefit.

**Q4** Do you feel that it would be desirable to roll existing cash payments for passported benefits into the Universal Credit payment, to create a single income stream?

Yes  No  To an extent

Though this might simplify administration from the initial end of payments, as described above cash payments into a single benefit payment may easily be subsumed into the wider household budget. Claimants may be unaware of what elements make up their single benefit payment and may lose out on benefits to which they are entitled.

**Q5 Do you think that the welfare system (i.e. receipt of Universal Credit or Personal Independence Payment) should form the basis for access to passported benefits?**

Yes  No  for some entitlements only (please specify which)

For ease of administration and compliance the welfare system should form the basis of access to passported benefits for working age population. For people outside this age grouping there requires to be further consideration as to how passported benefits are assessed. For example access to Concessionary travel based on age rather than benefit entitlement gives older people often much needed access to services and activities within rural areas from which otherwise they would be isolated. People who may qualify for the Blue Badge Scheme but choose not to claim benefits need also to be considered.

**Q6 If yes, what existing alternative mechanisms can you suggest to identify recipients and verify claims?**

Pensionable age is currently identified through the pension service. Disability criteria could be identified through GP referral.

**Q7 What could be done to make it easier for people to find out what benefits they are entitled to?**

Funding for local authorities with local third sector partners to ensure signposting is clear and to support initiatives such as the successful Claim It Campaigns.

**Q8 Do you wish to highlight any of the groups protected under the Equality Act as being particularly at risk in the reform of passported benefits?**

Young people, Older people and those with disability. Some women also might be at risk if they are not controlling the household budget.

**Q9 What robust sources of evidence with regards to impact on protected equality groups should we draw on when considering the impact of future proposals?**

Numbers claiming benefits fluctuating  
National travel data

**Q10 Over the longer term, should the Scottish Government aspire to a move to a more coherent system of eligibility criteria for low-income benefits, such as linking income thresholds to one of the measures of poverty?**

Yes  No  To an extent

To have a more coherent system will benefit both the claimants and those administering it, but if a measure of poverty was to be used then detailed consultation on a coherent and relevant measure of poverty would need to take place, taking into account factors such as the differences between causes of rural and urban poverty.

**Q11 Should the Scottish Government assess income:**

At household level

At individual level

It should vary according to the entitlement being applied for

As currently seems sensible

**Q12 Should the Scottish Government adopt a savings limit for some or all benefits?**

All  None  Some (please specify which)

For some passported benefits it would be appropriate to adopt a savings limit

**Q13 If you answered None, please suggest how we could identify those who do not qualify for Universal Credit because they have more than £16,000 savings.**

N/A

**Q14 Should the Scottish Government adopt the same savings limit as the Department for Work and Pensions – i.e. that no one with savings (excluding equity in your home) of more than £16,000 should receive any passported benefit?**

Yes  No

The savings limit cannot apply to all the Passported benefits as items such as Blue badge Scheme, National travel concessions, ILA's and Student Loan repayment are not related to income or savings but to state of health and other factors and this should continue.

**Q15 Do you have any other comments within scope?**

N/A

Please send your response to [passportbenefitsconsultation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:passportbenefitsconsultation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) by Friday 28 September 2012.

An Easy Read version of the consultation is also available at [www.scotland.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gsi.gov.uk)