



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Keith Brown MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for Justice
and Veterans
Scottish Government

Social Justice and Social Security Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Via email only

Email: SJSS.committee@parliament.scot

6 February 2023

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Utility warrants in Scotland

The Social Justice and Social Security Committee is undertaking some work around applications for utility warrants in Scotland to establish how the process works and what protections there might be for customers who are struggling to pay their bills.

The Committee is aware Ofgem (the British energy regulator) has recently ordered all suppliers to suspend the practice of forcibly installing prepayment meters.

We have written to a range of stakeholders including Ofgem, Energy UK, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, the Scottish Justices Association, as well as seeking information from the Scottish Legal Aid Board, to scope the extent of the issue and what current protections are in place.

The Committee would be grateful for any information the Scottish Government can provide on:

- the number of warrants to enter a customer's home to disconnect supply or install a prepayment meter which are applied for in Scotland each year, for the past five years
- what the current processes are for making an application and for judicial consideration of that application
- how the process operates to protect vulnerable customers – for example, those for whom a prepayment meter is inappropriate and those for whom the requirement to pay via a prepayment might be disproportionate
- what opportunities and support are available to someone who wishes to oppose a warrant application.

It would also be helpful to know whether the Scottish Government is undertaking any work in this area. A response by 27 February would assist the Committee with its work programme deliberations. This letter is copied to Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government for information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Don', written in a cursive style.

Natalie Don MSP
Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee