

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
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Collette Stevenson MSP
Convenor
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The Scottish Parliament
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21 October 2024

Dear Collette,

I am writing to provide an update on the launch of Pension Age Disability Payment.

From today, Social Security Scotland will start accepting new applications for Pension Age Disability Payment in Argyll and Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney and Shetland. This will be followed by the addition of thirteen local authority areas during the pilot as set out below:

Local authority area	Date which Social Security Scotland will begin accepting new applications for Pension Age Disability Payment
Argyll and Bute Highland Aberdeen City Orkney Shetland	21 October 2024
Moray Aberdeenshire East Ayrshire North Ayrshire South Ayrshire Na h-Eileanan Siar Stirling Clackmannanshire Falkirk	24 March 2025

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Fife Angus City of Dundee Perth and Kinross	
All remaining Scottish local authority areas	22 April 2025

The pilot areas have been chosen in order to provide us with the opportunity to deliver Pension Age Disability Payment in a mixture of urban, rural and island communities. Social Security Scotland's local delivery staff will provide people with one-to-one support and help them understand which devolved benefits they may be entitled to. They can help clients complete their application forms, support them practically with the process, and take forward any follow up actions relating to the application.

We know from the successful rollout of Child and Adult Disability Payment that a pilot-driven approach allows us to ensure the safe and secure delivery of a new service, by ensuring that our systems and processes work for the people who rely on our payments. In particular, this approach means that we can manage risks carefully, whilst providing operational assurance of delivery. This will be integral to the successful delivery of Pension Age Disability Payment, by ensuring that we can take a phased, controlled approach to delivery at scale.

We will continue to listen and respond to feedback from individuals interacting with the social security system, as well as their representatives and stakeholders. The pilot will provide us with invaluable information, ensuring that our new processes, systems and links with other services work for disabled people throughout all aspects of the client journey.

People already receiving Attendance Allowance do not need to apply for Pension Age Disability Payment. From early 2025, we will begin to safely and securely transfer Attendance Allowance awards to Pension Age Disability Payment. We aim to complete transfer for everyone by the end of 2025. People do not need to do anything; awards will be selected for transfer automatically in batches. People will receive the same amount of Pension Age Disability Payment as they received for Attendance Allowance, with no gap in their payments. We will communicate clearly with people throughout the process so they know what is happening with their award and when.

We have made improvements that will provide older disabled people with a different experience when accessing the support they are entitled to. We have built on positive feedback from Child and Adult Disability Payment in which we have been told that the application process is clear and reassuring, with individuals being treated with fairness and respect throughout.

I continue to be grateful for the constructive discussions with Committee members, and for the role the Committee has played in scrutinising the necessary legislation. I'm sure you'll agree that the introduction of Pension Age Disability Payment marks a

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significant milestone this being the last of our age related forms of Disability Assistance for new applicants. It will ensure that disabled people of all ages in Scotland are receiving support from a social security system based on dignity, fairness and respect.



SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE

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