

The Promise Scotland's response to the Scottish Government's 'Care Leaver Payment' Consultation

January 2024

The Promise Scotland is the organisation set up to support Scotland in its delivery of the implementation of the findings of the Independent Care Review, the promise. This response to the Scottish Government's consultation on proposing a care leavers payment is informed by the conclusions of the Independent Care Review and the views and experiences of care experienced children, adults and families heard by the Independent Care Review and through The Promise Scotland's joint work programme with Staf on 'moving on'.

Purpose of the proposed Care Leaver Payment

The purpose of the payment is to help reduce some of the financial barriers which young people face whilst moving on from care into adulthood and more independent living.

Question 1: How well do you think the name of the payment represents its purpose and intention?

- Name of the payment represents the purpose and intention of the payment
- **Name of the payment somewhat represents the purpose and intention of the payment**
- Name of the payment does not represent the purpose and intention of the payment

Please explain why you think this and what you would call the payment instead.

The Promise Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Care experienced young people experience disproportionate levels of financial vulnerability and are one and a half times more likely to have financial difficulties, whilst experiencing poorer outcomes in health, education and employment.¹ The rising cost of living and increasing levels of poverty increases the likelihood of financial insecurity and challenges as a young person moves into adult life. Therefore, measures that can be taken to address financial insecurity and ensure those with care experience can realise their full potential are much needed. This response raises several questions informed by what the promise concluded, which requires thoughtful consideration by Scottish Government as this policy development progresses.

[The promise](#) was clear that those with care experience must have a right to access supportive and caring services for as long as they are required, which mirrors the type of support many families provide for their children (p.92), and it is important that this right is upheld. When leaving home most people need additional care and support to

¹ Independent Care Review (2020) [Follow the money](#)

navigate the complexities and challenges of adult life. The Care Review heard that care experienced young people can face particular challenges, including homelessness, stigma, poverty and employment issues. If the transition from care is not safe, loving, and respectful with options for returning to a place of safety and other financial and emotional supports, care experienced young people and adults can feel vulnerable and alone. The promise states that Scotland should act like a good parent that supports young people as they enter adulthood, encouraging young people towards a life of independence and stability, but one that takes cognisance of the ongoing support and responsibility required throughout a care experienced person's life (p.92).

In order to determine how well the name 'care leaver payment' represents its purpose and intention, and what unintended consequences could exist, there must be a careful assessment, based on the views and experiences of care experienced young people and adults, of what support young people leaving care require. There must also be a clear assessment of which young people are included by using the term 'care leaver' and which young people will not be.

The use of the term 'care leaver' may exclude some young people from receiving the payment. Care must be taken to ensure that those who leave care prior to turning 16 and those who have experienced adoption or informal kinship care arrangements are not excluded from this payment and other linked entitlements.

The Scottish Government's commitment to consulting on the definition of 'care experience' in spring 2024 to inform the development of the Promise Bill is welcome.² However, thoughtful consideration should be given to how the name of this payment, and the use of the term 'care leaver' can be reconciled with that commitment. There must be a clear understanding and rationale of why the term 'care leaver' is being used for this payment while the term 'care experience' is being consulted on at a later date—and the option to perhaps change the name of this payment (and consequently the eligibility) if required after the consultation has taken place. There must not be confusion about the two terms, particularly for those trying to understand what they are and are not entitled to.

Keeping the promise by 2030 requires Scotland to transition to a new model of care that keeps more families together with support, and the definitions for rights and entitlements will likely change. That change must reflect the ongoing responsibility Scotland has for the children for whom it has had parenting responsibility for and whose family life has been disrupted by the decisions of the State.

Having a clear, universally understood definition of 'care experience' is important to address the conclusions of the promise. The promise concluded that there lacks a cohesive, universally understood definition of the term 'care experience' which encapsulates the totality of a person's experience and relates to rights and entitlements (p.118). The term 'care experience' will resonate differently for each person, with some embracing this definition, whilst others do not. However, not everyone who could

² Natalie Don MSP, Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise (November 2023) Meeting of the Parliament: Promise Oversight Board <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-23-11-2023?meeting=15565&iob=132821#16213>

identify as care experienced chooses to do so. For some, it is a term which feels stigmatising. These issues are discussed in the later question about accessing this payment.

Scottish Government must therefore ensure that definitions that act as an access point for rights and entitlements are inclusive to ensure **all** young people for whom Scotland has had parenting responsibility can receive the support they are entitled to.

As The Promise Scotland sets out in response to further questions in this response, the policy development of this payment should ensure that it does not exist in isolation as the only financial support targeted at alleviating some of the financial challenges of moving into independent living. It should be part of a broader package of care and support for those who have experienced care and are entitled to further support as they move into adult life. Those with lived experience of care should be firmly involved in discussions about this broader package of care—including financial support—and in the name of the payment to ensure it is as inclusive and accessible as possible.

Question 2: Do you think the payment can fulfill the purpose set out above?

- Yes
- No
- **Unsure**

The Independent Care Review heard that many care experienced young adults had expressed they felt abandoned and ill prepared as they moved on from care into independent living and were often faced with challenges during that transition, including stress around financial instability, having limited knowledge of budgeting and managing household bills, and experience high levels of debt which can escalate to many other challenges such as experiencing poor mental health and homelessness.

The financial worries and concerns of care leavers were highlighted in the evidence framework of the Independent Care Review, which recognised that a lack of financial support was a key stressor when leaving care.³ Care experienced young people experience disproportionate levels of financial vulnerability and are one and a half times more likely to have financial difficulties and on average earn three quarters of the salaries of their peers.⁴ Additionally, The Promise Scotland—through our partnership work with Staf on the [100 Days of Listening Project](#)—have heard directly from care experienced young people that they feel other young people do not have the same money worries that they do for example, paying bills or buying food due to living with parents. Young care experienced people may not have financial support from family like many others would, particularly when faced with a financial challenge such as a sudden

³ Independent Care Review (2020) [Evidence Framework](#)

⁴ Independent Care Review (2020) [Follow the money](#)

increase in their outgoings – this makes those with care experience more susceptible to adverse financial experiences.⁵

As young people leave care and move into independent living, navigating the multitude of financial challenges - often without sufficient support- can place them at risk of poverty. The Promise concluded that there must be significant, ongoing, and persistent commitment to ending poverty, and mitigating its impacts for Scotland's children, families, and communities (p.18). Tackling poverty in Scotland is fundamental in realising the ambition of the promise and ensuring children grow up loved, safe and respected.

The Promise Scotland therefore welcomes the intent and aspirations of this payment in aiming to alleviate some of the financial stress experienced by young people when leaving care. The Promise Scotland also welcomes the acknowledgement from Scottish Government that this payment should not exist in isolation, but within a broader package of support. However, The Promise Scotland's response, and the response of others working directly alongside care experienced young people, reflect some important points that should be carefully considered when determining whether this payment can and will fulfil its purpose.

In particular, it is important to ensure the eligibility for this payment does not exclude certain care experienced people (see answer to q.1 above) and that the potential unintended consequences set out in answer to q. 3 and 8 are considered and addressed. Crucially, the payment must be considered an additional level of financial support rather than to replicate or replace existing benefits or supports that a care experienced person is entitled to receive.

Finally, The Promise Scotland is supportive of continuing to explore the opportunities around the development of a Minimum Income Guarantee for care experienced people in Scotland. The Promise Scotland understands that this work is still ongoing amidst learning from the Welsh Basic Income for Care Leavers pilot scheme. Throughout the '[Moving on: The 100 Days of Listening](#)' programme, colleagues heard directly from care experienced young people about the positive impact this could have. It is important, therefore, that work to progress a 'care leaver payment' does not pause or curtail the ambition of a Minimum Income Guarantee in Scotland. It would be helpful to understand from the Scottish Government how the work to implement the payment interrelates with the consideration of a Minimum Income Guarantee in Scotland. Any efforts to ensure a bolder approach to ensuring financial security for care experienced people should be welcomed and advanced in line with the conclusions of the promise.

Payment amount and processes

Previous commitments made by the Scottish Government indicated that the Care Experience Grant (now known as the Care Leaver Payment) would be an annual payment of £200 for 10 years.

⁵ Barnardo's (2023) No Bank of Mum and Dad: The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on care-experienced young people. <https://cms.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/report-cost-living-crisis-care-experienced-young-people-bank-mum-dad-.pdf>

Based on stakeholder feedback and early user testing, the Scottish Government has revised its approach to the Care Leaver Payment.

The Scottish Government now proposes the Care Leaver Payment is a one-off lump sum payment of £2000.

This change reflects views on the current cost of living and the potential limited impact of yearly payments of £200. It has also been highlighted that it could be challenging to deliver annual payments over 10 years without a re-application process.

Question 3: What are your views on the revised approach proposed by the Scottish Government?

The Promise Scotland acknowledges that the Scottish Government's revised approach is informed by stakeholders and takes into account the current cost of living challenges. However, careful consideration should be given to ensure care experienced young people do not become more vulnerable due to receiving this one-off payment.

The current landscape of support available to those with care experience can make those leaving care more susceptible to financial vulnerability. Throughout the 100 Days of Listening project in partnership with Staf, colleagues have heard that the current system of support does not teach financial literacy or how to make informed financial choices, and the young people they spoke with noted that they require help navigating how to manage their money and knowing how best to say 'no' to those around them who may want to 'borrow' from them. It is particularly important to ensure that there is consideration of how to safeguard vulnerable young care leavers from criminal exploitation and to ensure that their payment comes hand in hand with appropriate emotional and financial help and support—this is discussed in more detail in response to questions below.

The Promise Scotland acknowledges other organisations responding to this consultation have also raised this concern, and it would be helpful to see Scottish Government take clear and measurable steps to put in place safeguarding measures for care experienced young people, so they do not become financially vulnerable when in receipt of this payment.

Consideration should also be given to ensuring there are no unintended financial consequences from receiving a larger lump sum payment. For example, it is crucially important this change does not have a knock-on negative effect on the eligibility and amount of benefits care experienced individuals have a right to receive. The Promise Scotland would welcome a commitment from Scottish Government and—where appropriate—from the UK Government in this regard.

As stated in answer to previous questions, the development of policy relating to this payment should also be linked to consideration of a Minimum Income Guarantee for care leavers in Scotland. This should not be a barrier or a blockage to those discussions or a pilot progressing.

Question 4: How helpful would a payment of £2000 be at the point of moving on from care?

- Not at all helpful
- **Somewhat helpful**
- Helpful
- Very helpful

Please refer to the answer provided in question 2 which answers both how helpful the payment could be, and whether it can fulfil the intended purpose and ambition.

In terms of the amount, it is important that the £2,000 regularly increases in line with inflation so that it is future-proofed for future generations. It is also important that there is clarity that this amount can rise if it is found to be working effectively and making a significant impact for care experienced young people.

Question 5: Would it be beneficial for applicants to have a choice in how their payment is made?

Yes

It would be beneficial for applicants to have a choice in how they receive their payment. Having an option to receive a lump sum or smaller instalments will allow those applying to the payment to make an assessment of their own financial needs. Having choice about how the payment is made will also increase dignity and is likely to reduce stigma around accessing financial support for care experienced people.

However, Scottish Government should be mindful of ensuring parity across the roll out of this payment. If applicants are given a choice on how to receive their payment, those receiving instalments must receive the same amount and funding must be committed to for that period.

As discussed in answer to questions relating to support, there should also be choices about what support care experienced people may require to effectively manage their finances, such as accessing a bank account, if appropriate and learning how to maximise income.

Question 6: At what point would it be most helpful for care leavers to receive the payment?

- In preparation of moving on from care
- At the point of moving on from care
- Within one year of moving on from care
- Within 18 months of moving on from care
- **Other**

Consideration should be given to allowing young care experienced people to decide for themselves at which point receiving this payment would be most beneficial.

Organisations such as Aberlour, Staf and Who Cares? Scotland who have direct

experience of working alongside those with care experience will have helpful views in response to this question.

Question 7: What might this payment help young people achieve when they are moving on from care?

Please refer to the answer provided in question 2.

Question 8: Do you think this payment could have any negative impact on young people leaving care?

Please refer to the answers provided in q. 3 around the risk of those receiving the payment becoming more vulnerable and ensuring safeguarding measures are in place to mitigate this and to ensuring there are no unintended financial consequences from receiving a larger lump sum payment. For example, it is crucially important this change does not have a knock-on negative effect on the eligibility and amount of benefits care experienced individuals have a right to receive. The Promise Scotland would welcome a commitment from Scottish Government, Local Government and—where appropriate—from the UK Government in this regard. This reinforces the importance of this payment existing in conjunction with a broad package of support which ensures those leaving care can grow up safe, loved and respected, as concluded by the promise.

As stated in The Promise Scotland's response to q.2, the payment must be considered an additional level of financial support rather than to replicate or replace existing benefits or supports that a care experienced person is entitled to receive. Other financial support available to care experienced young people must not reduce as a result of this payment. Particular attention should be given to this on a local level, ensuring this payment does not become a rationale for removing other forms of financial support that care leavers are already entitled to. Additionally, it is important to ensure that this payment does not become a financial incentive for local authorities to end Compulsory Supervision Orders in advance of a child turning 16. It must also not be used as rationale to cut back on other important forms of financial support or entitlements for care experienced people—for example leaving care grants provided under existing legislation.

Eligibility criteria for applicants

The Scottish Government proposes that people leaving care from the age of 16 will be eligible to apply for the payment if they are looked after by a local authority in Scotland at the point of moving on from care.

The care settings and placement types which would be considered eligible include:

- foster care
- residential care
- formal kinship care

- informal kinship care where a Kinship Care Order is in place (as per section 72 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014)
- secure care, and
- those in receipt of Continuing Care, which is where a young person born after April 1999 who is looked after in foster, kinship or residential care is eligible to remain in their current care placement until they turn 21.

Question 9: What are your views on the proposed eligibility criteria for applicants of the payment?

The Promise Scotland refers to our previous response to q.1 which discusses the Scottish Government commitment to consulting on a definition of 'care experience'.

The promise concluded that as Scotland enters a new model of care that keeps families together with support, definitions for rights and entitlements will likely change (p.118). That change however must reflect the ongoing responsibility Scotland has for the children for whom it has had parenting responsibility for and whose family life has been disrupted by the decisions of the state (p.118). There must be ongoing consideration of these changes when assessing eligibility for this payment, both within policy development and implementation.

The Promise Scotland's view is that care must be taken to ensure that those who leave care prior to turning 16 and those who have experienced adoption or informal kinship care arrangements are not excluded from this payment and other linked entitlements.

The proposal states that those leaving care from the age of 16 will be eligible to apply for this payment, however, some children leave care before their sixteenth birthday. As referenced in the answer to question 1, current definitions at present do not ensure that those who leave care prior to turning 16 are able to access certain legal entitlements.

The eligibility of this payment also does not include those who have been looked after at home. A person can experience care while living with a parent, for example, if a child or young person is on a Compulsory Supervision Order when residing at home, and the local authority has legal duties and responsibilities for that individual.⁶ The Promise Scotland would welcome inclusion of this group of young people in the eligibility criteria for this payment.

The promise concluded that Scotland has a responsibility to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and that they must have access to all that would be expected for any other child or young person (p.65). The rights of all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children must be upheld, and this includes ensuring their eligibility for this payment and access to a broader package of financial support.

Question 10: Is there anything else you think the Scottish Government should take into consideration related to eligibility criteria for the Care Leaver Payment?

⁶ The Promise Scotland <https://thepromise.scot/what-is-the-promise/care-experienced-people>

As set out in our responses to previous questions, the Scottish Government should consider the broader implications for the consultation on the definition of 'care experience' and the links between this payment and the discussions around Minimum Income. Additionally, the policy approach should ensure ongoing adaptations can be made to administering this payment to take into account changes to other benefits that care experienced people may be entitled to and to ensure there is flexibility to increase the payment if appropriate.

There must also be mechanisms in place to robustly monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and consideration of how this should be reported.

Age requirements for applicants

The Scottish Government proposes that young people moving on from care, aged 16 to 25, will be eligible to apply for and receive the payment.

The reasoning for the age range proposed is that it will include the cohort of young people with care experience that the Scottish Government thinks should receive a Care Leaver Payment.

This age range includes individuals leaving care from the age of 16 and individuals potentially in receipt of Aftercare support, which care leavers are eligible to access until they reach their 26th birthday.

Question 11: What are your views on the proposed age requirements for applicants of the payment?

In Scotland, the average age for leaving care is between 16 and 18 years old, in comparison to the average age of young people leaving home being aged 25.⁷ This is a stark reminder that those with care experience are often expected to leave care whether they feel ready or not due to their age and are expected to manage a multitude of challenges and financial demands of living independently much earlier than their peers.

The Independent Care Review highlighted the need for lifelong support, with many the Review heard from speaking about the need to reconsider the age criteria applied to support and formal interventions, with some feeling that the age criteria were too arbitrary and often removed at an unrealistic and unhelpful point in life.

The Promise Scotland welcomes the intention within this payment to widen access to support for those leaving care, however, as referred to in response to q. 2 & 9, it is important that the age cut off for this payment does not compound the existing experiences of 'cliff-edge' support. Care must be taken to ensure that those who leave care prior to turning 16 are not excluded from this payment and other linked entitlements. Furthermore, Scottish Government should consider how this payment could be made available to those who do not meet the current definitions of a 'care

⁷ CELCIS (2023) Leaving care <https://www.celcis.org/our-work/key-areas/throughcare-and-aftercare/our-throughcare-and-aftercare-work>

leaver' but have care experience and are navigating the multitude of financial challenges that come with living independently into early adulthood.

Income requirements for applicants

The Scottish Government proposes that an individual's income should not impact their eligibility for the payment.

The Scottish Government also proposes that the receipt of this payment should not negatively impact an individual's entitlement to other support.

Question 12: What are your views on an applicant's income impacting their eligibility for the payment?

The Promise Scotland's agrees with the Scottish Government that an individual's income should not impact their eligibility for this payment.

Question 13: What are your views on this payment impacting an individual's entitlement to other support?

The Promise Scotland's agrees with the Scottish Government that this payment should not impact an individual's entitlement to any other support. As set out in our response to previous questions, unintended consequences—including any knock-on negative impact on accessing other benefits—should be mitigated against. The payment must be considered an additional level of financial support rather than to replicate or replace existing benefits or supports that a care experienced person is entitled to receive.

The Promise Scotland has responded in further detail in response to q. 16 and 17 relating to support.

The application process

The Scottish Government is considering which body or organisation could deliver the proposed Care Leaver Payment.

To help inform this decision, consideration is being given to how the application process and receipt of the payment will be experienced by applicants.

Question 14: What should the experience of applying for and receiving the proposed Care Leaver Payment look and feel like for applicants?

The Promise Scotland supports those organisations responding to this consultation who have advocated for automating the delivery of this payment. Members of the workforce working directly alongside those leaving care have heard that application processes are just one of the many barriers which limit those with entitlements from receiving them. The Scottish Government should be cognisant of this when designing and developing this payment to ensure parity for all when administering the payment.

Although there may be challenges around identifying those eligible and delivering this payment in a way which ensures equity for all with care experience, it is likely that these challenges can be overcome. Indeed, the upcoming consultation on the definition of 'care experience' can also be an opportunity to discuss issues relating to ensuring those people with care experience are able to be informed of and understand their rights and entitlements.

The Promise Scotland would therefore welcome some clarity from the Scottish Government around the proposal for 'applying' to this payment, rather than an automatic entitlement and encourages consideration of an alternative approach.

It is crucially important that there are no barriers to applying for and receiving this payment, and given the proposal of an application, there are a number of points Scottish Government should consider when assessing and developing the need for support. Throughout the policy development of this proposed payment, Scottish Government should be mindful of mitigating any risks of preventing or limiting the rights of care experienced individuals' being upheld.

There should also be careful thought given to ensuring the delivery of this payment does not stigmatise those eligible. A consistent message highlighted from those who spoke with the Independent Care Review was the experience of stigmatisation. Many articulated that many people fail to understand the vast variety of care experiences, 'lumping' all those different experiences into a single idea of what 'care' means, thus, resulting in many forms of stigmatisation.⁸ Scottish Government should carefully consider throughout the development of this policy about how each aspect of this payment could possibly compound existing feelings of stigmatisation, and taking steps to ensure this does not prevail when administering this payment would be welcome.

Further views on the need for this support to apply is within the answer to q. 16.

Support to apply for the payment

The Scottish Government proposes that support is provided to those who require it when applying for the payment.

Question 15: Do you think young people should have support to apply for the payment?

Yes

Question 16: What support might a young person need when applying for the payment?

The Independent Care Review heard that there is a strong sense of inconsistency, unfairness and inequity in relation to the provision of information about what rights

⁸ Independent Care Review (2020) [Evidence Framework](#).

individuals have, and what financial support they are eligible for.⁹ As part of keeping the promise, it is not only important those with care experience receive a broad package of appropriate support, but crucially, are aware of their rights and know where to access the support and services offered.

Through direct engagement with people with care experience, Staf (Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum) heard that the current system of support can be complex and confusing.¹⁰ In addition, a lack of clear guidance in relation to rights and entitlements for care experienced young people has resulted in inconsistencies in practice and rights not being upheld.¹¹

In consideration of this and the proposal of an application to receive this payment, Scottish Government should consider outlining what steps will be taken to ensure there is a clear point of access for this payment, how it will be clearly communicated to those eligible, and that those eligible do receive the payment.

The Independent Care Review said that the discretion exercised by local authorities when making or changing payments due to unclear or opaque guidance was felt to be unfair. Those who work alongside care experienced children and young people expressed their concerns over the level of support being a 'postcode lottery'.¹² Hearing directly from care experienced young people through the 100 Days of Listening project, it was clear that many care experienced young people do not always know what support they are entitled to, and it is felt that receiving support can be a fight, which is often compounded by the difficulties experienced of moving between local authority areas. In both the delivery of this payment, and the support offered to applicants, there must be parity across all areas applicants reside in, particularly if this is provided by local authorities.

Young people leaving care are likely to require comprehensive and intensive financial support. Those the Independent Care Review heard from recognised that care experienced young people often receive limited financial education, and experience difficulties in accessing bank accounts or formal identification documents. Access to a bank account is necessary for a multitude of reasons, but especially for receiving benefits and other financial support payments such as this proposed care leaver payment. It is acknowledged that this can be a challenging and often complex issue linked to a lack of identification documents, but it is crucial this does not become a barrier for eligible individuals receiving this payment. The Promise Scotland would be keen to ascertain what steps Scottish Government plan to take to address this.

Those with care experience are also nearly twice as likely to have no internet at home,¹³ and experience a disproportionate level of digital exclusion. Cognisance must be had of the support many applicants will require at the point of completing an application for this payment, and it is crucially important that Scottish Government consider what steps

⁹ Independent Care Review (2020) [Evidence Framework](#).

¹⁰ Staf (2021) Is Universal Basic Income the key to tackling care leaver poverty? <https://www.staf.scot/news/is-universal-basic-income-the-key-to-tackling-care-leaver-poverty>

¹¹ Independent Care Review (2020) [Evidence Framework](#).

¹² Independent Care Review (2020) [Evidence Framework](#).

¹³ Independent Care Review (2020) [Follow the money](#).

can be taken to ensure applicants will have easy access to a digital device and the internet.

The Promise Scotland recognises the pivotal role the third sector play in supporting care experienced individuals to navigate often complex and challenging forms or applications to receive support, and often those eligible are only made aware of their eligibility from these organisations.¹⁴ However, the Scottish Government should carefully consider what measures can be taken to ensure accessing support is not dependent on access to third sector services, but that within the clear point of access to this payment, it is accompanied by comprehensive support in completing the application form. The Independent Care Review concluded that the need for this intensive support for those who have recently left care is often centred on the 'cliff-edge' experience of support stopping in early adulthood, and the impact of not knowing where to access support at this point. This must be addressed as this policy develops further.

Question 17: How should this support be provided?

See answer to q. 16.

Support for those who have received a payment

The Scottish Government is considering what further support, such as financial management support, may be required for those who receive the payment.

Question 18: What support might a young person need once they have received the payment?

As stated previously in The Promise Scotland's response, care experienced adults bear the lifelong cost of care and are almost twice as likely to have poor health, more than twice as likely to have experienced homelessness, over one and a half times more likely to have financial difficulties, over three times as likely to have not had a full time job by age 26, on average earn three quarters of the salaries of their peers, almost twice as likely to have no internet at home and over one and a half times more likely to experience severe multiple disadvantage.¹⁵ This reinforces the importance of ensuring this payment does not exist in isolation, but that it sits within a broader package of support, if required. This includes with respect to housing, debt and financial management, employability, emotional help and support and other importance support services.

The promise concluded that it is crucially important those with care experience are able to access services and supportive people to nurture them for as long as they require (p.92). Care experienced young people have sometimes found it hard to access the right

¹⁴ The Scottish Government (2021) Social security experience panels – seldom heard programme of research: Carers and care experienced. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-security-experience-panels-seldom-heard-programme-research-carers-care-experienced/documents/>

¹⁵ Independent Care Review (2020) [Follow the money](#).

support and have found they have to be in an acute crisis before support is available (p.51). The provision of this payment must therefore be part of a holistic range of support services for those transitioning from care and into adulthood.

Throughout the 100 Days of Listening project, it was highlighted that if care leavers were to receive money from Scottish Government, for some, this may be spent on therapeutic services to address the trauma experienced as a child. It would be helpful for the Scottish Government to be clear that accessing this payment will not impact an individual's entitlement to other support and that this will be part of a broader range of support, including the right to aftercare, continuing care and the support from corporate parents.

The transition from care to living independently can be sudden and scary for young people, and they can find difficulty in navigating very quickly a range of complex responsibilities, such as managing a tenancy and household bills. Parallel to this, young people leaving care regularly experience a significant reduction in the level of support provided to them.

There is evidence that without financial literacy and education, many care experienced young people have little knowledge of how to budget and manage household bills when leaving care,¹⁶ which can have a detrimental impact on their transition into independent living. Care experienced young people have shared directly with those working on the 100 Days of Listening project how incredibly important it is to be taught how to handle and manage money. The support that is provided alongside the payment, therefore, must include access to comprehensive and intensive financial support and learning.

Awareness and publicity

The Scottish Government wants to ensure that as many people as possible who may be eligible for the payment know about it and have the opportunity to apply.

In order this information is widely shared and understood, we will use a variety of methods of communication including but not limited to:

- public awareness campaigns
- social media
- community hubs
- healthcare practices
- educational establishments, and
- key workers in the lives of children, young people and their families.

¹⁶ Barnardo's (2023) No Bank of Mum and Dad: The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on care-experienced young people. <https://cms.barnardos.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/report-cost-living-crisis-care-experienced-young-people-bank-mum-dad-.pdf>

Question 20: Are there any other communication channels you think we should consider which have not been set out above?

The Promise Scotland recommends carefully reviewing the responses of those organisations working directly alongside care experienced people and the responses of care experienced people in response to this question.

The Scottish Government should also consider how to clearly communicate the purpose and benefit of this additional payment so that care experienced individuals, members of the public and the media have a clear understanding of the rationale behind it.

Future consideration of financial assistance for people with care experience

Legislation is required to deliver the proposed Care Leaver Payment. A provision has been included in the [Social Security \(Amendment\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) which will allow Scottish Ministers to provide financial assistance to people with experience of the care system. The proposed Care Leaver Payment would be delivered using this legislation.

A further consultation will be conducted on the details of the payment and its administration in advance of the power in the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill being exercised.

Question 21: Is there anything else you think the Scottish Government should consider in the development and delivery of the payment?

As stated in our response to q.4, the Scottish Government should be mindful of ensuring any positive impact experienced by those receiving this payment is not diminished over time due to rising inflation and current cost of living challenges. Consideration should be given to which measures could be taken to prevent this, such as an automatic uprating of the payment which increases in line with inflation. In conjunction with this, as stated in our response to q.10, Scottish Government should also recognise the need to monitor the ongoing effectiveness and impact of the payment to truly evaluate whether the payment is fulfilling its purpose and ambition. There should be clear reporting requirements and an understanding of how this information should be shared and learned from when it is gathered.

Question 22: What other financial assistance might those with care experience benefit from in the future?

The promise concluded that parenting does not stop at the age of 18, and Scotland must continue to consider how to create greater equity and opportunity for care experienced young people (p.93). The Independent Care Review heard that for too many care experienced children and young people, there are ripple effects from the experience of care and if they do not get a range of opportunities, they will likely have a narrower set of options as an adult.¹⁷

¹⁷ Independent Care Review (2020) [The money](#)

As referred to in q. 2, careful consideration should be taken to ensure this payment does not exist in isolation, and to take steps towards keeping the promise, this should exist within a wider package of financial support which is aligned with the needs and experiences of care experienced individuals. The promise concluded that it is crucially important those with care experience are able to access services and supportive people to nurture them for as long as they require, and Scottish Government should consider how access to employment, training, education, transport, stable housing and therapeutic services can be guaranteed in alongside this payment.

For any questions or comments please get in touch with The Promise Scotland's Policy Officer, Emma Young, via emma@thepromise.scot.