




Social Security Scotland  
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Second Floor  
Dundee House  
50 North Lindsay Street  
Dundee DD1 1QE

0800 029 4794  
[www.socialsecurity.gov.scot](http://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot)

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 Social Security Scotland

30 May 2019

Dear Chief Executive,

### **Best Start Grant School Age Payment**

Further to my earlier letter of 29 April I wanted to highlight to you that from Monday 3 June the Best Start Grant School Age Payment will be open for applications and to ask for your help in raising awareness of this new payment through your communication channels and services.

The Best Start Grant School Age Payment is a one off payment of £250 available around the time a child would normally start Primary 1. The first application window for the School Age Payment will run from 3 June 2019 to 29 Feb 2020, children who were born from 1 March 2014 to 28 Feb 2015 inclusive will be the right age to claim.

The School Age Payment is the third in our Best Start Grant package of payments that is providing extra money to families in Scotland who are on a low income to help support their child during their early years. Best Start Grant is another tool to support our collective efforts to tackle child poverty. For that reason we will work to make sure that all eligible families are aware of their entitlement and know how to apply. The assistance you and your teams have already provided in helping promote the Best Start Grant has been of enormous benefit. For instance within the first week of the Early Learning Payment being launched more than 11,000 applications were received. We want to build on this and, with nurseries and schools in particular having direct contact with families who may be eligible, the help your authority can provide in raising awareness of the payment and its uptake is invaluable.

To support your teams with this we have created a specific Best Start Grant School Age Payment toolkit containing materials for your use. This will be available from 3 June and includes fact sheets on eligibility and how and when to apply, posters, articles that can be used in local newsletters and staff updates and social media posts. These can all be accessed on our website at <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/what-we-do/stakeholder-resources>, along with our previous toolkits. It would be extremely helpful if you could share

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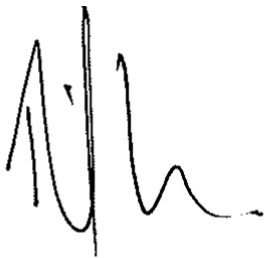
this with the teams in your local authority. We will also make sure that the local contacts we have in your area have copies of these.

We have also developed a Local Authority toolkit for Best Start Grant with the help of COSLA and local government officers. The toolkit is intended to provide some ideas of how different areas of local government could help to raise awareness of Best Start Grant and build this work into your local Child Poverty Action Plans. This toolkit will also be added to our website and shared with our local contacts in each area.

Our Local Delivery Relationship Leads are also happy to meet with your teams and provide more information on the Best Start Grant and all of Social Security Scotland's services. I have enclosed a copy of their contact details with this letter. Our wider Local Delivery team can also be contacted at [localdelivery@socialsecurity.gov.scot](mailto:localdelivery@socialsecurity.gov.scot). We are particularly keen to do some targeted engagement during the school summer holidays and our Local Delivery team will be in contact to discuss this.

In continuing our awareness of Best Start Grant Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People, is writing to Local Authority Leaders and I have circulated this letter directly to your Head of Education, Chief Social Work Officers, Heads of Finance, Heads of Housing and Welfare Reform Leads.

I will be back in touch with more information on Funeral Support Assistance and the Young Carer Grant as we start to deliver them later this year. In the meantime I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for your continued help. I can assure you that the collective support you are providing in raising awareness of the Best Start Grant is making a real difference by giving valuable extra support to families across Scotland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DW', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**David Wallace**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Social Security Scotland**

Cc: Head of Education, Chief Social Work Officers, Heads of Finance, Heads of Housing, Welfare Reform Leads

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