

Welfare Rights Conference 2026

Carer support – a practical update

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Introduction

Carer support payment (CSP) first launched in parts of Scotland on 20 November 2023. This benefit has fully replaced carer's allowance in Scotland. Many of the rules are the same as carer's allowance, but there are some differences – particularly for students, and for people returning to the UK from abroad.

Further changes to Scottish carer benefits took effect from 15 March 2026, in particular the introduction of carer additional person payment. These and some other recent changes are important to know about in order to maximise income for carers and their households.

The main regulations are the Carer's Assistance (Carer Support Payment) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 SSI 302

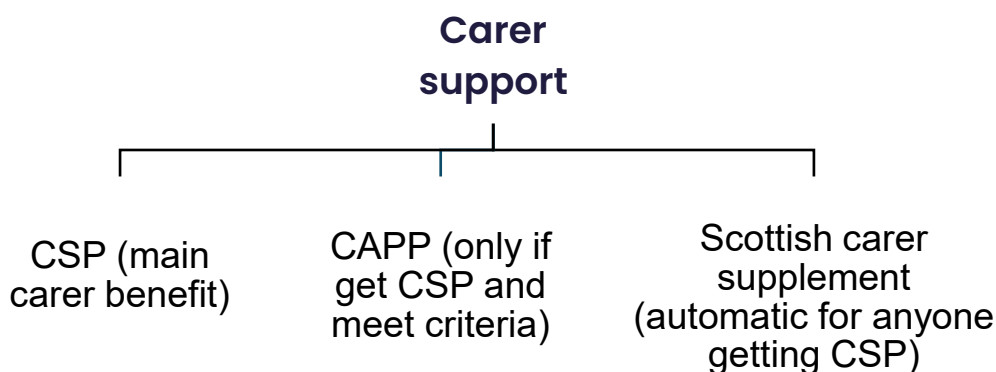
Social Security Scotland recently published decision making guidance at socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications/2017/07/carers-support-payment-decision-making-guide

CPAG in Scotland's website has useful pages on benefits for carers in Scotland at cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights/benefits-scotland/scottish-benefits/benefits-carers

There is a resource on students and carer support payment at cpag.org.uk/welfare-rights/benefits-scotland/more-info/benefits-students-factsheets/students-and-carer-support-payment

Carer support

From 15/3/26 carer support is a new term that encompasses carer support payment (CSP) and two new components: Scottish carer supplement, and carer additional person payment (CAPP). Scottish carer supplement and CAPP are not separate benefits in their own right, but are additional payments that can be made together with CSP.



Carer support payment (CSP) is £86.45 per week (April 2026). To qualify, you must care for someone in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit – ie, the daily living component of adult disability payment (ADP) or personal independence payment (PIP); disability living allowance (DLA), Scottish adult DLA or child disability payment (CDP) care component at the middle or highest rate, attendance allowance, pension age disability payment or certain armed forces disability payments

Scottish carer supplement

Carers in Scotland who get CSP were entitled to a carer's allowance supplement, paid twice per year in a lump sum.

From 15/3/26 this has changed, and carer's allowance supplement is renamed Scottish carer supplement. It is £11.70 per week (April 2026) and is paid along with CSP. Scottish carer supplement does not count as income for UC and other means-tested benefits. If you only have underlying entitlement to CSP you cannot get Scottish carer supplement.

Carer additional person payment

A new carer additional person payment (CAPP) provides extra income for those on CSP who care for more than one disabled person. It was introduced on 15/3/26. CAPP is £10.40 per week (April 2026). If you get CSP you can get this extra money for each additional person that you care for. CAPP does not count as income for UC and other means-tested benefits.

If you do not get CSP you cannot get CAPP. If you only have underlying entitlement to CSP you cannot get CAPP.

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Applications for CAPP can be made from 16/3/26 and the earliest awards can start from 15/3/26. A CAPP application form will be available for 6 months from 16/3/26. After that, carers will need to report a change of circumstances.

CAPP can be backdated for 13 weeks, or longer if you apply within 13 weeks of an award of a qualifying benefit, or you have good reason for applying late.

Carers can add up to 3 additional cared-for people on an online application. If they want to add on more than 3 additional cared-for people, Social Security Scotland ask the carer to call them.

A notification will also go out to any new cared-for person to say that a carer has requested CAPP for them. Social Security Scotland also complete a check to ensure each requested additional cared-for person receives a relevant qualifying disability benefit. When someone requests 4 or more CAPP awards, Social Security Scotland say they may seek further information on the care being provided than they normally do.

To get CAPP you must care for each additional person for at least 20 hours a week. The hours of care can run concurrently – eg, you may be providing care to the additional person at the same time as caring for the person for whom you get CSP. Each person you care for must get a qualifying disability benefit (same as for CSP – see p3).

You can get CAPP even if someone else gets CSP, carer's allowance, the carer element of universal credit (UC) or a young carer grant (YCG) for caring for the same disabled person. However, only one person can get CAPP for an individual. If more than one person applies for CAPP for the same disabled person, and you cannot agree who should get it, Social Security Scotland decides who is entitled.

Note: if CSP stops, CAPP stops as well. However, CAPP may stop while CSP continues if, for example, the additional cared-for person temporarily goes abroad.

Example

Louis gets CSP for caring for his partner and CAPP for caring for his 28-year-old daughter. His partner and daughter visit family abroad. His partner is away for three weeks, so he has a three-week break in caring. CSP can continue as the break is less than four weeks. His daughter is away for five weeks, so CAPP stops. Note: if Louis' partner was away for five weeks and his daughter for three, then both CSP and CAPP would stop (as CAPP is only paid if you also get CSP).

Other changes

If the person you care for dies, you get CSP/ Scottish carer supplement /CAPP for a further 12 weeks (this changed from 8 weeks from 15/3/26).

You can have a break in caring - eg, a 4-week break in a 26-week period, or up to 12 weeks if you or the cared-for person go into hospital. From 15/3/26 you no longer need to have already provided care for 14/22 weeks before you can get CSP/ Scottish carer supplement /CAPP during such a break. Your earnings are ignored during a break in caring.

CSP can be backdated:

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- up to 13 weeks, if you met the conditions during that time; from 15/3/26 backdating should be requested within 13 weeks of the determination of the CSP award (or later where it is considered you had a good reason for not making a request within 13 weeks);
- back to the date you met the conditions for CSP if you claim within 13 weeks of the cared-for person getting an award of a qualifying benefit

Moving to and from Scotland

Where someone living in Scotland and getting CSP moves to another part of the UK, CSP can continue for up to 13 weeks. You should apply for carer's allowance in the part of the UK that you move to.

If someone moves to Scotland and is getting carer's allowance, it continues for 13 weeks. You should apply for CSP within 26 weeks of moving to Scotland, in order to not have a gap in carer benefit entitlement. If you apply more than 26 weeks after you move to Scotland, and it is accepted that you had good reason for applying late, you can still get CSP from the day after your carer's allowance ended. If this doesn't apply, CSP starts in line with the normal rules for claims and backdating.

If you move to Scotland from elsewhere in the UK while getting carer's allowance, and you claim CSP and, if applicable, CAPP, within 26 weeks of moving, you can be paid a higher amount to cover the amount of Scottish carer supplement and CAPP you would have received during the 13-week period that carer's allowance continues after your move.

How carer support payment interacts with other benefits

Carer support payment is treated similarly to carer's allowance in terms of its interaction with other benefits. There are similar overlapping benefit rules to carer's allowance, so that, for example, you cannot get both carer support payment and state retirement pension, but instead will have underlying entitlement to carer support payment. If this applies, the amount of your CSP is reduced by the amount of the other benefit. If the other benefit is higher, you are not paid CSP.

CSP counts as income for UC and other means-tested benefits, but it allows you to get a carer element in your UC (or a carer premium/addition in other means-tested benefits). Note however that the rules do not currently align backdating of a carer element in UC, etc, to when CSP is backdated.

The Universal Credit etc (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations 2013 (SI 2013/381) Schedule 1 paragraph 31 allows backdating of a carer element in universal credit if you get a 'relevant benefit' or a 'Scottish disability benefit'. Scottish disability benefits are currently ADP, CDP and pension age disability payment. 'Relevant benefit' has the same meaning as the Social Security Act 1998 pt1 ch2 - that lists various benefits, and includes carer's allowance, not directly, but via a reference to benefits under parts II - V Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992. Carer support payment is not currently a 'relevant benefit' or a 'Scottish disability benefit' for these purposes. We understand that DWP are planning to rectify this oversight shortly.

There's a similar issue for pension credit, which again DWP plan to sort shortly.

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You should check if the person you're caring for gets a benefit with a severe disability premium (SDP) or addition. The person you're caring for cannot keep getting the premium or addition while you're getting CSP. They should contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and/or their local council to let them know you're getting CSP. Note that getting CAPP for someone does not affect their entitlement to a SDP or addition.

Carer gaining LCWRA element

The case of *SSWP v MJ (UC) [2025] UKUT 035 (AAC)* was a challenge by a claimant (represented by CPAG) who was in receipt of the carer element and transitional SDP element and was later found to have limited capability for work-related activity (LCWRA). Her transitional SDP element was eroded by the full amount of the LCWRA element. The Upper Tribunal allowed the SSWP's appeal and re-made the First-tier Tribunal decision in MJ's favour, finding that she had been unlawfully discriminated against.

The outcome was that MJ's transitional SDP element was eroded by the difference between the carer element and the LCWRA element, rather than by the full amount of the LCWRA element.

In cases where a transitional element has been reduced by more than the difference between the carer element and the LCWRA element, it should be challenged. In some cases the Decision Maker cannot revise the decision, but at appeal the First-tier Tribunal can in fact put things right (and the Decision Maker should ask them to). Therefore, whether the transitional element was reduced by the full amount of the LCWRA element before or after 29 January 2025, there is a remedy.

Not eligible if you are 'gainfully employed'

You cannot qualify for CSP for a week if you are 'gainfully employed'. You count as gainfully employed in a week if your earnings from employment and/or self-employment in that week are more than £204 per week (from April 2026) after subtracting tax, National Insurance and certain other deductions.

From 15/3/26 earnings in any given week affect entitlement to CSP in the following week (it previously said 'in the same week'; this was a drafting error).

Rules are similar to carer's allowance, although Social Security Scotland has an additional discretion about how to average your earnings over a period of up to 26 weeks, if they vary in different weeks and you have provided payslips.

If you are an employee, Social Security Scotland should normally be able to get information about your earnings from HMRC. However, you should not rely on this and should tell Social Security Scotland if your earnings increase, as otherwise you may be overpaid. For those who are self-employed, there will be scheduled reviews of income.

Young carer grant

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This grant is for 16, 17, 18 and 19-year-old carers who don't get CSP. It is £405.10 per year (2026 rate), paid as a one-off lump sum. It was previously only for 16-18-year-olds, but was extended to 19-year-olds from 16 November 2025.

You can get a young carer grant if:

- you normally live in Scotland
- you are aged 16, 17, 18 or 19
- you are not entitled to CSP
- you are caring for someone, or for more than one person, who has a disability
- you are providing care for at least 16 hours a week on average
- no-one else has received a young carer grant in respect of the person you care for in the last year

To get a young carer grant the person you provide care for must be getting either the daily living component of PIP or ADP, DLA, Scottish adult DLA or child disability payment care component at the middle or highest rate, or attendance allowance/pension age disability payment.

'Care' means something that involves an activity which promotes the physical, mental or emotional wellbeing of the person you are caring for. You must not be providing the care under a contract or as voluntary work.

In the 13-week period before you claim you must have provided 208 hours of care and you must have provided it in at least 10 of the 13 weeks. The hours of care can be made up of the time you spend caring for up to three people who have disabilities.