



Sent by email:
Baroness Lister
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5 March 2021

Dear Ruth,

PROVISION OF LOCAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES

At Committee on the Domestic Abuse Bill on Monday 1 February, I undertook to write to you about the provision of local welfare assistance schemes by local authorities. As you will be aware, the Welfare Reform Act 2012 allowed for the delivery of new local provision to replace Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants to vulnerable people; and since April 2013, new arrangements, which are commonly referred to as 'local welfare assistance', have been administered by upper tier local authorities in England and devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales.

Local welfare assistance is an umbrella term used to describe local authority provision for people who are in need of urgent help. The ability of local authorities to act in this area are provided under various powers, for example, section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables local authorities to provide financial assistance to any individual.

Provision of local welfare assistance is entirely the responsibility of local authorities. As such, no new statutory duties were placed on local government to provide assistance and funding was passed over on a non-ringfenced basis with no monitoring requirements attached – recognising local authorities are best placed to decide how to provide support to their most vulnerable and deprived residents. Since 2015-16 local welfare funding has been rolled into Revenue Support Grant included in the Local Government Finance Settlement. This decision was made to further simplify and decentralise funding. The Settlement for 2020-21 identified a notional amount relating to welfare provision in each upper-tier and unitary authority's general grant, totalling £131.7 million for England.

I am copying this letter to Lord Polak, The Lord Bishop of Derby, Lord Rosser, Lord Russell of Liverpool, Baroness Hodgson of Abinger, Lord Dodds of Duncairn, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, Baroness Bertin, Baroness Benjamin, Baroness Uddin, Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb, Baroness Sanderson of Welton, Baroness Eaton and Baroness Finlay of Llandaff; I am also placing a copy in the library of the House.

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

Baroness Williams of Trafford