

**The Highland Council**  
**Resources Committee – 25 May 2016**

Agenda Item	11a
Report No	RES 27/16

**Welfare Reform Update**

**Joint report by Director of Finance and Director of Community Services**

**Summary**

This report provides information on the current status of Universal Credit and other Welfare initiatives. It also makes available financial monitoring information, covering the Council's considerable involvement in this area of work.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 This report forms part of a regular update on issues relating to Welfare Reform. The latest statistics are outlined in Appendix 1 and budget monitoring is set out in Appendix 2.

**2. Jobseeker's Allowance Sanctions - Early Warning Trial**

- 2.1 DWP launched a new 'Early Warning' trial in Scotland within the JSA sanctions process. The trial will give jobseekers an extra 14 days to provide further evidence of reasons for non-compliance when a sanction is likely to be imposed. The trial began for claimants on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The trial will run in three of the four Scottish Jobcentre Plus Districts. The exception will be the Jobcentres in the North of Scotland District as they will provide the control data for the trial evaluation. The trial will include JSA claimants only and cover both Jobcentre Plus referrals and Work Programme referrals.
- 2.2 During the trial, claimants who are referred for a decision will have their case considered just as it is at the moment. Decision Makers may still contact claimants to request information or clarification at this stage. If the Decision Maker determines that a sanction is not appropriate, the current process will apply.
- 2.3 However, if a Decision Maker thinks, based on the initial evidence, that the claimant should be subject to a sanction, they will send a letter, warning the claimant that there is good case for a sanction to be applied, and encouraging the claimant to send in any more information or evidence that they have of good reason for their failure to comply.
- 2.4 The Decision Maker will allow 14 days for this new evidence to be produced, giving claimants an additional opportunity to present information, and allowing more vulnerable claimants to access support services to assist them. After the 14 day period has ended, a Decision Maker will reconsider the case in light of any new or additional evidence provided and will decide whether the claimant

should be sanctioned.

2.5 The process for Mandatory Reconsiderations and appeals will remain the same. The trial will end in summer 2016 and initial evaluation will be available in the autumn, with full evaluation available from early 2017. This evaluation will inform decisions on national rollout.

2.6 The following table details the number of Jobseekers Allowance Sanction decisions by Jobcentre Plus offices from October 2014 to September 2015.

	Great Britain	Scotland	North of Scotland District	Jobcentres in The Highland Council area
Decision to apply a sanction	654,978	61,322	10,313	1,148

### 3. Universal Credit

3.1 In the published official Universal Credit statistics for March 2016, the Highland Council area has had approximately 2,608 claimants who have completed the Universal Credit claim process and accepted their Claimant Commitment. In the Highland Council area 1,414 claimants are still claiming Universal Credit of which approximately 537 are in some form of employment.

#### 3.2 Universal Credit Full Service

3.2.1 At the previous Resources Committee it was reported the DWP would be rolling out the enhanced digital service. The DWP has now changed the name to *Universal Credit Full Service*.

3.2.2 In February 2016, the DWP announced the transition to the UC Full Service would take place in phases, beginning in May 2016 with roll-out complete by mid 2018. The new Full Service is planned to 'go-live' in Highland during this financial year 2016/17 with Inverness Jobcentre selected first in Highland for Full Service implementation during June 2016. Thereafter, we are advised the current plans are to roll-out to the remaining Highland Jobcentres by November 2016.

3.2.3 The introduction of the new Full Service will replace the current system being used for Universal Credit. Once introduced the Full Service will:

- enable claimants to make a claim, check details of payments, notify changes of circumstance and search for a job through a single account.
- the existing qualifying conditions for Universal Credit will be amended to enable all claimant groups to make a new claim.
- from the go-live date, qualifying claimants will no longer make new claims for Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support and income-based Job Seekers Allowance - instead they will claim Universal Credit.

- 3.2.4 Members should also note, when Full Service is introduced all Universal Credit claimants including those who are in-work will be subject to conditionality. Previously claimants in receipt of Working Tax Credits were not required to undertake activities to try to increase the amount of hours they work.
- 3.2.5 In-work Universal Credit claimants who earn below the conditionality earnings threshold, which is individually set, up to a maximum of the equivalent of 35 hours work at the National Minimum Wage, will be required to engage with the Jobcentre and agree to look at ways to increase the number of hours they work.
- 3.2.6 Full Service will reduce the number of Housing Benefit claims due to greater volumes of working age people claiming Universal Credit. However, the new arrangements will only apply to new claims and to those claimants who report a change in circumstances that will trigger a claim for Universal Credit. Claimants on legacy benefits including Housing Benefit, that do not experience a relevant change in circumstances, will remain on their existing benefits until a migration exercise is undertaken to transfer them onto Universal Credit. The DWP advise this is likely to take place at some point between 2018 – 2021.
- 3.2.7 Universal Credit is not available to those that are non-working age. At present, the Council has 5,448 non-working age Housing Benefit recipients. This represents approximately 38% of the overall caseload. These customers will continue to claim Housing Benefit after the work-age claimants have been migrated across to Universal Credit. Senior Officers within the Council understand there are no current plans to move non-working age claimants onto Universal Credit or a replacement housing cost benefit.
- 3.2.8 The introduction of the Full Service will impact on rent arrears. Although concerns remain about the impact on rent arrears, trusted partner status may provide some mitigation. There are also concerns as to how some tenants will manage their Universal Credit claim through online digital services. DWP's trusted partners will have applications for alternative payment arrangements triggered with immediate effect and in good faith. More information regarding trusted partners is provided in paragraph 3.5.1 below.
- 3.2.9 As Full Service will increase the Universal Credit caseload, there is likely to be an increased demand for some welfare services, including on-line and welfare support services.
- 3.2.10 The Head of Revenues and Business Support has agreed and signed the 2016/17 Delivery Partnership Agreement (DPA) with the DWP to support the delivery of Universal Credit in the Highlands. This agreement includes the Council's commitment to support claimants with on-line and welfare support services as well as provision for responding to DWP enquiries relating to Housing Benefit.
- 3.2.11 The Highland Council continues to work with DWP to assess and mitigate the impact of the introduction of the Full Service within the Highland Council area.

### 3.3 Childcare costs

3.3.1 From April 2016 parents claiming Universal Credit can claim back 85% of their childcare costs when they move into work; this is an increase of 15% from 70%. This change means a working family with 2 children can now receive up to £13,000 a year in childcare support under Universal Credit dependent on their circumstances.

### 3.4 Universal Credit and Council Tenants

3.4.1 At 30 March 2016, the percentage of Universal Credit cases in arrears has remained static at 80%. Although the percentage of cases in arrears has not changed the average rent arrear for mainstream tenancies has reduced from £730 per household in quarter 3 (2015/16) to £695 in quarter 4 of 2015/16. The table below details the breakdown of Universal Credit cases and arrears values by accommodation type.

<b>Impact on the Highland Council's Housing Rent Arrears: Live cases</b>					
<b>30 Mar 2016</b>	<b>Number of UC cases</b>	<b>Number of cases in arrears</b>	<b>Percentage of cases in arrears (%)</b>	<b>Cumulative rent arrears £</b>	<b>Average rent arrears per household £</b>
<b>All Highland Council Universal Credit Cases</b>	307 (241)	246 (195)	80% (80%)	£171,183 (£142,366)	£695.00 (£730.08)
<b>Mainstream Tenancies</b>	293 (235)	234 (189)	80% (80%)	£151,972 (£129,855)	£649.45 (£687.06)
<b>Temporary Accommodation</b>	14 (6)	12 (6)	85% (100%)	£19,211 (£12,510)	£1,600.94 (£2,085.09)

(figures in brackets denote 15/16 position as at **30 December 2015**)

3.4.2 The Council received 120 Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA's) during March 2016 which represents 39% of the Universal Credit cases.

3.4.3 The table below details the number of APA applications and awards during 2015/16.

<b>Period</b>	<b>APA Applications</b>	<b>APAs Awarded</b>	<b>% of APAs Awarded</b>
Q1 2015/16	28	26	93%
Q2 2015/16	45	38	84%
Q3 2015/16	52	31	59%
Q4 2015/16	51	38	74%
<b>Cumulative</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>75%</b>

3.4.4 The number of APAs awarded is determined by the claimant's circumstances

and entitlement to Universal Credit at the time of the application. Although a tenant may present as vulnerable or have a level of arrears that would qualify them for an APA payment, there are a number of reasons as to why an APA payment may not be made. Examples include: a change in their personal circumstances or cases where the tenant has not applied/does not qualify for the housing cost element. Therefore, there are no guarantees that all APA applications will be approved.

3.4.5 DWP has very recently implemented an arrangement with the Scottish Government that means APA requests for Scottish residents will be awarded for a 24 month period. 24 month extensions will also be applied where the outcome of a review means that the APA should remain in place.

### 3.5 DWP Project – Universal Credit Trusted Partner Pilot Update

3.5.1 The Council commenced participation in the Trusted Partner Pilot on 14 March 2016. The purpose of the six month pilot is;

- To evaluate the reasons that social landlords make a recommendation to DWP that an alternative payment arrangement (APA) is appropriate for one of their tenants.
- For the DWP to implement in good faith (without challenge), any social landlord's recommendation that an APA should be paid in respect of a tenant.
- As a Trusted Partner, the Council will carry out reviews and recommend to the DWP when a claimant is ready to receive their standard monthly UC payment and stop the APA.
- Understand whether the trusted partner approach adds value to the process of Universal Credit and offers a better experience for the claimant.
- To understand how the approach impacts on social landlords.
- To evaluate whether the process works for landlords and tenants.

As part of the Trusted Partner process, mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that all Council tenants subject to an APA application are referred to the in-house Welfare Team for Personal Budgeting Support. Progress of the pilot will be reported to future Committee Meetings.

### 3.6 Universal Credit in Temporary Accommodation

3.6.1 The impact of the Welfare Reform changes, particularly Universal Credit, continues to be a concern in relation to the affordability of temporary accommodation.

3.6.2 The policy and charging arrangements in relation to temporary accommodation are currently being considered by the Community Services Committee.

3.6.3 In the meantime, Community Services has allocated a dedicated Housing

Options Officer to oversee all Universal Credit cases in temporary accommodation. This approach will ensure that all tenants have correctly claimed the housing cost element of Universal Credit, that APAs are applied for as and when required and robust policies and procedures are put in place for the management of rent accounts in temporary accommodation ahead of the roll-out of Universal Credit Full Service from June 2016 (Inverness Jobcentre).

- 3.6.4 All Universal Credit cases are closely monitored with advice and assistance provided to tenants on a case by case basis.

#### **4. Devolution of Social Security Benefits**

- 4.1 On Tuesday 23rd February the Scottish and UK governments agreed a new fiscal framework for the Scottish government as recommended by the Smith Commission and underpinned by the devolution of powers in the Scotland Bill
- 4.2 The governments have agreed that any new benefits or discretionary payments introduced by the Scottish government must provide additional income for a recipient and not result in an automatic offsetting reduction by the UK government in their entitlement elsewhere in the UK benefits system. Any new benefits or discretionary payments introduced by the Scottish government will not be deemed to be income for tax purposes, unless topping up a benefit which is deemed taxable, for example, Carer's Allowance.
- 4.3 Both governments also agreed that the UK government's Benefit Cap will be adjusted to accommodate any additional benefit payments introduced by the Scottish government.
- 4.4 Social Justice Secretary Alex Neil has confirmed there will be a phased transition of the administration of powers over the next few years.
- 4.5 The Scottish government has outlined that its new social security powers will be founded on treating people with dignity and respect. Within the system, there is the potential for local authorities to deliver a single point of contact service which can provide information, holistic support and benefit delivery for claimants.
- 4.6 For over 30 years, local authorities have demonstrated, through the processing of Housing Benefit and associated Council Tax schemes, the ability to provide and deliver effective local administration and decision making functions. More recently, following the abolition of specific parts of the Regulated Social Fund, Councils in Scotland have played a pivotal role in the successful implementation and delivery of the replacement scheme - the Scottish Welfare Fund.
- 4.7 As also reported within this agenda, the "*Finance Service Performance Report to 31 March 2016*" evidences further improvements at Highland Council in processing times over the last 2 years - both in terms of speed and efficiency. Delivering improvements in both effectiveness and efficiency are important.

- 4.8 Members may also recall that as reported to November 2015 Resources Committee within the *“Audit Scotland Benefits Administration – Performance Audit Annual Update”*, it included other major changes in the service delivery model for other financial assessments that the Council is responsible for.

In 2014, Revenues staff administered:

- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Reduction
- Council Tax
- Scottish Welfare Fund

Over the past 2 years, a phased approach has been undertaken and Revenues staff also undertake the following financial assessments:

- Educational Maintenance Allowance
- Music Tuition Fees
- Inverness Winter Fuel Payments
- School Clothing Grants
- Free School Meals

- 4.9 This single team provides a single point of contact for Highland Council customers and ensures information sharing for their various entitlements meaning the customer only has to provide the relevant information once wherever possible. This also maximises benefit take-up and minimises fraud. Managed by the Service Delivery Manager (located in Portree), this service delivery model also provides efficiencies in financial assessments and improved service delivery resilience.
- 4.10 The Head of Revenues & Business Support is a member of COSLA’s Welfare Reform Advisory Group which promotes local authorities and seeks to influence the formulation of national policy.

## **5. Foodbanks**

- 5.1 The Trussell Trust had a 2% increase in foodbank use during the financial year 2015/16. In total, 1,109,309 three-day emergency food supplies were issued to people in crisis throughout the UK network of 424 foodbanks in 2015/16, compared to 1,084,604 in 2014/15.
- 5.2 The Highland Council area experienced a 5% increase in foodbank use during 2015 compared to 2014. During 2015, 5,536 people including 1,590 children received a three day emergency food parcel compared to 5,254 people including 1,340 children during 2014.
- 5.3 The UK statistics detail benefit delays and changes as the biggest causes of foodbank usage, accounting for 42 percent of all referrals. This is consistent with local figures which also show benefit delays being the main reason for a foodbank referral.
- 5.4 During the first 3 month period of 2016 1,509 people including 397 children have received a three day emergency food parcel. The same 3 month period in

2015 saw 1,476 including 425 children being supported by the Trussell Trust foodbanks in the highlands.

- 5.5 In addition, the Scottish Welfare Fund has seen an 11% increase in payments towards food in the first 3 months of 2016 (£43,346) compared to the same period in 2015 (£38,423).

## 6. The national Living Wage

- 6.1 From 1 April 2016, the UK government introduced a new mandatory national living wage (NLW) for workers aged 25 and above. Initially set at £7.20, this is equivalent to the current National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate. The National Minimum wage will still apply for workers aged 24 and under

- 6.2 The current rates for the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage from 1 April 2016:

Year	25 and over	21 to 24	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
April 2016	£7.20	£6.70	£5.30	£3.87	£3.30

National Minimum Wage rates change every October. National Living Wage rates change every April.

- 6.3 The following rates applied to the National Minimum Wage. These rates were usually updated every October:

Year	21 and over	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
2015	£6.70	£5.30	£3.87	£3.30
2014	£6.50	£5.13	£3.79	£2.73
2013	£6.31	£5.03	£3.72	£2.68
2012	£6.19	£4.98	£3.68	£2.65
2011	£6.08	£4.98	£3.68	£2.60
2010	£5.93	£4.92	£3.64	£2.50

- 6.4 The UK government has asked the Low Pay Commission to recommend the level of the path for the national living wage going forward, with the target of the total wage reaching 60% of median earnings by 2020. Based on the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts a full-time NMW worker will earn over £4,400 more by 2020 from the NLW in cash terms.

- 6.5 Members will note the Council introduced the Scottish Living Wage in April 2015. The Council took a decision at the time to pay the Scottish Living Wage to all staff at the appropriate grade, including apprentices. The 2016/17 Scottish Living Wage hourly rate is £8.33 and does not have any age restriction applied to it.

## 7. Housing Benefit backdates (temporary absence cases)

- 7.1 In the February 2016 committee report, it was highlighted that new rules, restricting housing benefit and pension credit entitlement from the current 13



weeks to 4 weeks in the event of temporary absence from Great Britain were changing from April 2016.

- 7.2 The new rules were originally due to be introduced in April 2016, and were then delayed to May 2016. The DWP has recently announced a further delay until summer 2016.

## **8. Changes to Pension Credit Assessed Income Periods**

- 8.1 Assessed Income Periods (AIP) had the effect of limiting the change of circumstances that a claimant needed to report with respect to their Pension Credit claim. In effect the DWP set a period of time in which a claimant did not need to report a change in their capital or private pension. However, for all new claims made to Pension Credit after 6 April 2016 no new AIPs will be set.
- 8.2 If a customer already has an AIP that is due to end between April 2016 and March 2019 it will end either on the original date shown on the customer's Pension Credit award letter, or earlier if their household circumstances change.
- 8.3 If a customer already has an AIP that is due to end on or after April 2019, it will end early and will not be renewed. Customers will be sent a letter telling them the new end date six months before the current end date. For people who are aged 75 or over and have an AIP with no end date, the AIP will remain in place until the household circumstances change.
- 8.4 When the AIP ends the customer must notify DWP about any change in their circumstances. If they do not they could be fined or face prosecution.

## **9. DWP's Benefit Cap**

- 9.1 Benefit cap rules set a maximum amount of benefit that working-age households can receive. The UK Government's policy intention is to ensure that most individuals, aged 16-64 years, do not receive more money when they are out of work than they could reasonably expect to earn from working.
- 9.2 The Benefit Cap applies to the combined income from the main out of work benefits, plus Housing Benefit, Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits. Households are exempt from the cap where any member of the household qualifies for Working Tax Credit or is in receipt of a range of specified benefits, including those relating to the additional costs of disability or war widow's and widower's pension.
- 9.3 Appendix 1 to this report includes information relating to the number of households in the Highlands who are subject to the **current** cap levels and shows that as at 12 April 2016, 12 households are subject to the cap. The cap is applied by reducing entitlement to Universal Credit or housing benefit. Housing benefit reductions are applied by the Council's Operations Team and can mean that a household's housing benefit award can be reduced to £0.50 per week.

- 9.4 As part of his summer budget, the Chancellor announced a reduction in the cap which will mean an increased number of households will be subject to a reduction in their combined income from benefits from Autumn 2016.
- 9.5 From Autumn, there are different rates for those living in London than for those living elsewhere in the country. The cap rates applicable in the Highlands from Autumn are detailed in the table below:

<b>Rates applicable in Highland</b>	<b>At present</b>	<b>Cap from Autumn 2016</b>
Couples with or without children and single parents with children	<b>£500.00 per week</b> <b>(£26,000 per annum)</b>	<b>£384.62 per week</b> <b>(£20,000 per annum)</b>
Single person or a single parent whose children does not live with them	<b>£350.00 per week</b> <b>(£18,200 per annum)</b>	<b>£257.69 per week</b> <b>(£13,400 per annum)</b>

- 9.6 The DWP's Benefit Cap Changes Project Director wrote to local authority Chief Executives on 6 May 2016 setting out their proposed timetable for notifying benefit claimants who may be impacted by this change and confirming that local authorities will be provided with scans detailing the amount of potential cap for each household that may be impacted by the reduced cap.
- 9.7 The Project Director also set out DWP's plans to offer additional employment assistance in Jobcentres for those claimants who are not already fully supported in looking for work. DWP will publish a revised benefit cap calculator on their website at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) after claimants are notified about the potential change to their combined income from benefits.
- 9.8 Building on the experience of the effective implementation of the benefit cap during 2013, the Council's *single point of contact* from the Benefits and Welfare Team will continue to liaise with the DWP; Revenues staff will apply the cap to housing benefit, landlords and other stakeholders.

## **10. Financial Monitoring Report**

- 10.1 The financial monitoring report can be found at Appendix 2. This presents the near final monitoring and reports an overall position of £761k underspend; the major underspends are explained below.
- 10.2 The major variance reported is CTR (£612k underspend). Members are reminded that the main reason for the reducing CTR expenditure relates to the way in which the DWP has increased benefits and other components used to calculate CTR entitlement. The impact of these measures is therefore to reduce the qualifying amounts on which CTR is calculated.
- 10.3 The underspend (£94k) at Housing Benefits is primarily attributable to higher Housing Benefit overpayments collections reflecting the changes implemented during the year in respect of debt management and profiling.

10.4 The underspend (£46k) at Advice Services is attributable to: at Money Advice, 2 vacancies that were maintained in the knowledge that, as part of the budget process for 16/17, Members considered and approved a savings proposal reviewing the split of internal services and those provided by external providers; and at Advice and Information, higher than expected income in relation to those services funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

## 11. Implications

- 11.1 Resource and Risk implications are set out in the paper. There are no legal; climate change/Carbon Clever; or Gaelic implications.
- 11.2 Rural Implications – the report highlights a range of issues that particularly impact on rural areas.
- 11.3 Equalities – the whole report seeks to consider and address the issues arising from welfare reforms that impact on poverty and vulnerability.
- 11.4 Poverty – the whole report aims to acknowledge current welfare issues which exacerbate the causes of debt and poverty within the Highlands.

### Recommendation to

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the ongoing impact that Universal Credit is having on rent arrears
- Continue to support the Trust Partner pilot with DWP and note the increasing number of Alternative Payment Arrangements that have been implemented to support council tenants
- Support the work being undertaken by the Council and DWP to assist the implementation of Universal Credit Full Service, initially in Inverness Job Centre
- Note the ongoing concerns regarding the affordability of temporary accommodation for those in receipt of Universal Credit
- Note the changes to the National and Minimum Living Wage and be aware that the Council has implemented the Scottish Living Wage for all employees which provides a higher rate than the National rates.
- Note the management information and near final budget monitoring position for the Welfare Budget

Designation: Director of Finance and Director of Community Services

Date: 11 May 2016

Authors: Allan Gunn, Head of Revenues and Business Support; and David Goldie, Head of Housing

Background Papers:

**Welfare Reform Report – May 2016****Under occupation rules - 25/03/16**

<b>Summary – 14% reduction</b>	
	No of Properties
Council tenants	1,402 (67%)
HA tenants	685 (33%)
Total	2,087

<b>Summary – 25% reduction</b>	
	No of Properties
Council tenants	308 (76%)
HA tenants	95 (24%)
Total	403

<b>Summary – combined</b>	
	No of Properties
Council tenants	1,710 (69%)
HA tenants	780 (31%)
Total	2,490

<b>Number of transfer applicants affected and movement in quarterly periods – for Highland Housing Register: Apr 16</b>		
<b>Number of applicants</b>	<b>% Movement since Qtr. 4 14/15</b>	<b>Number +</b>
213	-7%	-15

### Benefit Cap at 12/04/16

Landlord type where cap has been implemented	HB reduction per week						
	£0 - £19.99	£20 – £39.99	£40 - £59.99	£60 - £79.99	£80 - £99.99	£100 - £119.99	£120 - £139.99
Local Authority	1	1		1	3		1
Housing Association	1	1					
Private rent	1	1					1

### Housing Benefit Appeals

Number of appeals received with a comparison to the previous financial year			
April 2014 Appeals/Reconsiderations	1 / 32	April 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 47
May 2014 Appeals/Reconsiderations	2 / 33	May 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 32
June 2014 Appeals/Reconsiderations	1 / 25	June 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 46
July 2014 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 29	July 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 49
August 2014 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 29	August 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 49
September 2014 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 29	September 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 46
October 2014 Appeals/Reconsiderations	1 / 33	October 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 34
November 2014 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 37	November 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 38
December 2014 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 41	December 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 40
January 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	1 / 31	January 2016 Appeals/Reconsiderations	1 / 47
February 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	1 / 36	February 2016 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 40
March 2015 Appeals/Reconsiderations	1 / 35	March 2016 Appeals/Reconsiderations	0 / 47

### Discretionary Housing Payments

	2015/16 spend
<b>Number of awards</b>	7,491
<b>Award Reasons</b>	
Under Occupation:	6,553
Benefit Cap:	15
Other:	923
<b>Total amount paid</b>	£1,886,913

### Scottish Welfare Fund

	2015/16
<b>Crisis Grant applications approved</b>	3,475
<b>Community Care Grant applications approved</b>	1,191
<b>Total spend</b>	£755,980

### FoodBank MI

Inverness & Nairn : Data taken from available Distributors' report 1 January – 31 March 2016

<b>Vouchers issued</b>	<b>Adults fed</b>	<b>Children fed</b>	<b>Total fed</b>
508	598	194	792
Top 3 reasons why voucher issued: 1. Benefit delay 2. Low income 3. Other			

Data taken from Distributor report 1 January 2016 - 31 March 2016

Highland foodbanks (exc Inverness & Nairn)

<b>Vouchers issued</b>	<b>Adults fed</b>	<b>Children fed</b>	<b>Total fed</b>
361	514	203	717
Top 3 reasons why voucher issued: 1. Benefit delay 2. Low income 3. Other			

## Appendix 2

### Appendix 2 Welfare Budget

<b>WELFARE BUDGET 1/4/15 to 31/3/16 (near final)</b>	<b>NET BUDGET</b>	<b>NEAR FINAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>NEAR FINAL INCOME</b>	<b>NEAR FINAL OUTTURN</b>
<b>Housing Benefits</b>	121	49,779	49,873	-94
<b>Council Tax Reduction Scheme</b>	12,287	11,675	12,287	-612
<b>Scottish Welfare Fund</b>				
- Community Care Grants	555	507	555	-48
- Crisis Grants	246	285	246	39
	<b>801</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>-9</b>
<b>Discretionary Housing Payments</b>	1,887	1,887	1,887	0
<b>Advice Services</b>				
- Money Advice	250	224	250	-26
- Income Maximisation	216	216	216	0
- Advice and Information	1,325	1,305	1,325	-20
	<b>1,791</b>	<b>1,745</b>	<b>1,791</b>	<b>-46</b>
<b>NEAR YEAR FINAL</b>	<b>16,887</b>	<b>65,878</b>	<b>66,639</b>	<b>-761</b>