

Public Services News

May 2019



The United Kingdom Parliament where the 2018 Budget was delivered in November.

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Budget 2018 – The Implications for Public Services

Phillip Hammond presented his 2018 budget on Monday 29th October. In it he announced the government's spending, tax and borrowing plans from 2019/20 to 2022/13. It is of even more interest than usual to those of us who are involved in public services.

In his introduction to the budget, Philip Hammond said that the budget reductions that have been made since 2010 were necessary and not ideologically driven and that:

“The era of austerity is finally coming to an end.”

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This budget is a reflationary budget that plans increased expenditure, reduced taxation and continued borrowing as shown below:

	2019/20 £million	2020/21 £million	2021/22 £million	2022/23 £million	2023/24 £million
Increased spending	10,905	13,370	17,880	23,650	30,520
Reduced taxation	4,180	1,025	280 -	125 -	40
Total	15,085	14,395	17,600	23,525	30,560

It also provides for increased expenditure as summarised below:

	2019/20 £billion	2020/21 £billion	2021/22 £billion	2022/23 £billion	2023/24 £billion
Current Expenditure	751.9	773.6	798.1	824.4	853.1
Net Investment	48.4	50.6	50.8	51.2	54.5
Total	800.3	824.2	848.9	875.6	907.6



HM Treasury in London

Councils were given greater control over the money they raise through the adult social care precept, business rates retention and abolishing the local authority housing ‘borrowing cap’. Funding for 2019/20 is included in the local government funding settlement. Longer-term decisions will be announced as part of the 2019 spending review (whenever that happens). However, the reduced funding that is already contained in the 2019/20 local government finance settlement will still be implemented and there are certainly no plans to restore local government funding to the level that existed in 2010.

Philip Hammond announced £650million of additional grant funding for adult social care (although £240million of this had already been announced), an additional £45million of disabled facilities grants, and an additional £84million for children’s social care programmes. The budget ‘red book’ states that:

“The Budget provides a further £410m in 2019-20 for adults and children’s social care. Where necessary, local councils should use this funding to ensure that adult social care pressures do not create additional demand on the NHS. Local councils can also use it to improve their social care offer for older people, people with disabilities and children.”

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The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy tweeted that:

“Public spending on adult social care fell from 2009/10 to 2016/17 by around 3%, reflecting the pressure on councils. An additional £1billion would be welcomed by local authorities, but this only a temporary fix - ageing population means longer term solutions are required.”

The government’s macro-economic policy appears to be based on running a permanent government deficit as a way of compensating for low levels of demand in the economy caused by low exports and investment; coupled by encouraging households to borrow and spend rather than to save.

Most of the planned increases in public expenditure are in the National Health Service. The increases for other public services including local government, housing, the police and welfare are more modest and are increases when compared with previous plans.

It must also be remembered that this is a time when there are significant budgetary pressures in most public services including health and social care, not least because of demographic changes. The planned increases in National Health Services budgets are considered by many in the sector to be insufficient to meet increasing need. The additional funds for local government are small when compared to the funding that has been lost since 2010, the funding gap that already exists and the service pressures that exist especially in adults’ and children’s social care. The details of how the lifting of the local authority housing ‘borrowing cap’ are still awaited. The planned reductions in welfare budgets of £17billion are apparently still to be implemented. Whether this represents an end to austerity is probably a matter of opinion rather than a matter of undisputed fact! What is an undisputed fact is that balancing the budget over the term of the economic cycle (which was the ‘Golden Rule’ of public finance from 1997 to 2008) is no longer an objective of the United Kingdom government. However, there are fears that continuing to accumulate public debt that is already at record levels is unsustainable.

The budget is also based on a series of assumptions that may not be borne out in practice. First, the international economy is showing signs of instability with ‘trade wars’ and fluctuating stock markets across the globe; and second, the budget assumes that Brexit will not have a significant negative effect. If these assumptions turn out to be incorrect there will be a further budget.

I have written a briefing paper that summarises the implications of the budget for public services, the reactions to it from the sector and to provide some commentary.

To view or download your copy, please click here: [https://awics.co.uk/files/module_document_pdfs/budget_2018 - the implications for public services - briefing paper.pdf](https://awics.co.uk/files/module_document_pdfs/budget_2018_-_the_implications_for_public_services_-_briefing_paper.pdf)

United Kingdom Public Finances and the Spending Review 2019

The Institute for Public Policy Research has published a report that makes interesting comparisons between the public finances in Britain and other European countries using data supplied by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The analysis found that United Kingdom government spending amounts to 40.8% of Gross Domestic Product but the average stands at 48.9% for similar European countries. The comparator countries include Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden.

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The biggest difference in spending was in social protection that accounts for 15.2% of Gross Domestic Product in Britain but that averaged 20.5% in the other countries. This is one of the reasons why provision for pensions is relatively poor in the Britain. The United Kingdom government also spends significantly less on Education; Recreation, Culture & Religion; Economic Affairs and Other Public Services. In contrast the United Kingdom government spends more than the other countries on Defence, Public Order and Safety.

Harry Quilter-Pinner, senior research fellow at the Institute for Public Policy Research, said:

“We must become ‘more European’. Our neighbours have consistently invested more in welfare and public services and consistently deliver better social outcomes than us. We need a fundamental shift in our approach to investment in this country to deliver high quality social and child care, a life-long education system, 21st century healthcare and a properly funded benefits system.”



Member States of the European Union - on average they spend more on public services than the United Kingdom, especially on social protection including pensions

Aligning the United Kingdom's public spending with similar countries would see total spend increase by £2,500 per person annually; and spending on health, education and social security would increase by £1,800 per person annually.

The Institute for Public Policy Research suggested spending increases could be supported by raising taxation levels to similar level seen in these countries. It said that the countries typically raise more through corporate taxation and income taxation – including employee contributions to social security.

However, Britain appears to be heading in the opposite direction – leaving the European Union in favour of an economic model more closely aligned with the United States where the public sector has a minimal role.

The United Kingdom Government manages its finances through a process of regular spending reviews that establish medium-term financial plans for public income, expenditure and borrowing. The next spending review is due in 2019.

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In February 2019, the Institute for Fiscal Studies warned that public services face years more of austerity unless the chancellor increases budgets by billions of extra pounds at the 2019 Spending Review. They calculate that government spending plans announced in the 2018 Budget will mean real terms reductions for public services other than health, defence and overseas aid; and that to avoid any reduction in real-terms expenditure per capita, unprotected government budgets (including those of the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government) would require an additional £5billion by 2023/24. Budgets for unprotected services have been reduced by 3% year on year since 2010, amounting to a loss of £40billion.

In his Spring statement, Philip Hammond, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that the Spending Review would be completed in the Summer of 2019. However, when he appeared before the Treasury select committee later, he appeared to suggest that this may be delayed because of 'Brexit', saying that:

"We will keep an open mind about how the process should unfold as we go through the next few months... If we are going to do a full three-year Spending Review then we need to formally start the process before the summer recess, carry it on through summer and bring it to a conclusion around the time of the autumn budget."

"My own view at the moment is that, if we had not clearly found a solution to the Brexit conundrum that put us on our way to delivering an outcome, it would probably not be appropriate to go ahead with a three-year spending review... That is a decision we will consider more carefully and make in final form over the coming months."

"It feels to me that making a three-year settlement in a world where we have not yet determined whether we will be leaving the European Union on a smooth trajectory through a transition period with a deal, or crashing out without a deal, is an unwise thing to do."

However, it is likely that the government will not be able to prepare a medium-term plan and will instead fall back to producing a budget for a single year.

The United Kingdom Government has already abandoned its objective of balancing the budget and is now about to abandon any attempt at medium-term financial planning. This deterioration in financial management is very worrying. No local authority or housing association, for example, would consider managing its finances in this way.

Political Engagement

The Hansard Society has published its 2019 audit of political engagement and it makes disturbing reading, attracting headings including one in the Guardian that said that Britain was 'poised to embrace authoritarianism'. The top three themes are:

- Opinions of the system of governing are at their lowest point in the 15-year Audit series – worse now than in the aftermath of the MPs' expenses scandal
- People are pessimistic about the country's problems and their possible solution, with sizeable numbers willing to entertain radical political changes
- Core indicators of political engagement remain stable but, beneath the surface, the strongest feelings of powerlessness and disengagement are intensifying

And key findings include:

- Well over half the public are downbeat about the state of Britain – 56% think Britain is in decline, 63% think Britain's system of government is rigged to advantage the rich and powerful, and 66% think most big issues facing the country today don't have clear solutions.
- 54% say Britain needs a strong leader who is willing to break the rules.
- 42% think many of the country's problems could be dealt with more effectively if the government didn't have to worry so much about votes in Parliament.
- 47% feel they have no influence at all over national decision-making – a new high for the Audit series.

Ruth Fox, Director of the Hansard Society, said that:

“Preferring a strong leader who is willing to break the rules or thinking that the government should be able to tackle the country's problems without worrying about the approval of parliament, would challenge core tenets of our democracy. The public feel strongly that the system of governing favours the rich and powerful and that political parties don't care about the average person. And people are not confident that politicians act in the public interest. Unless something changes, this is a potentially toxic recipe for the future of British politics.”



People demonstrating in favour of Brexit in March 2019

And Rosie Carter of 'Hope not Hate' told the Guardian that:

“We are facing a crisis of political mistrust. And when people do not trust traditional political systems, they look elsewhere. That's when support for political extremes grows.”

Information on the Hansard Society's audit of political engagement is available on their website at: <https://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/publications/reports/audit-of-political-engagement-16>

This situation has parallels with 1930s Europe where many people despaired of the potential of democracy to resolve their problems and turned instead to fascism or communism.

In this context, the observation by Will Self in a recent edition of the 'New European' may be significant:

"If Britain crashes out of the European Union, human rights legislation will no longer be incorporated in British law"

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Local Elections 2019

This year's local elections were held on 2nd May 2019. Elections were held for six directly elected Mayors in England, seats on 270 English councils and seats on all eleven councils in Northern Ireland.

One of the councils where all the seats were up for election was Eden District Council where I live. A comparison of the elections that were held in 2019 with those of 2015 is interesting.

There are 30 wards in Eden that elect 38 councillors. In 2015 there were nineteen wards in which there were no contested elections and in which 21 councillors were returned. The uncontested wards returned twelve Conservatives, six independents and three Liberal Democrats.

In the eleven contested wards 12,294 people turned out to vote out of an electorate of 19,097, a turnout of 64% reflecting the fact the elections were held on the same day as the general election. Of these, 44% voted Conservative, 26% Independent, 23% Liberal-Democrat, and 6% Labour. The councillors who were elected were nine Conservatives, four Liberal Democrats and four Independents. The full council therefore included 21 Conservatives, ten independents, seven Liberal-Democrats and no Labour councillors.

I am struck by the following:

- No elections took place in two thirds of the wards meaning that people there took no part in the elections.
- The party that won overall control of the Council won 44% of the votes in the third of the seats that were contested.
- The party that won 6% of the votes got no representation at all.



Penrith Town Hall where Eden District Council is based

Assuming that the voters in the contested wards were representative of all the voters, if seats had been distributed in proportion to votes there would have been four fewer Conservatives, two more Liberal-Democrats and two Labour councillors resulting in a council with no overall control.

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I am not making a party-political point here. I could quote other examples where the electoral system works against the Conservatives. However, I don't think that an electoral process that excludes voters in two thirds of wards and delivers councillors in different proportions to votes can be described as a good democratic exercise.

In contrast in 2019 only three wards were uncontested; meaning that (unusually) the composition of the Council would be determined by the electorate. This followed work by the Council and the political parties to encourage people to come forward as candidates.

However, across England there were 300 uncontested council seats in 2019 with just over a third of district councils having insufficient candidates to ensure that all seats were fully contested, begging the question why other authorities haven't done what Eden District Council has done to encourage people to stand in elections!

The result in 2019 was that the Conservatives lost overall control of the Council. The vote shares were as follows: Conservative 31% (-13%); Liberal-Democrat 28% (+5%); Labour 11% (+5%), Greens 10% (+10%), Independents & Others 20% (-7%). However, the first-past-the-post system, as usual, resulted in the composition of the Council not reflecting the shares of the votes. In a proportional system there would have been three fewer Conservatives, one more Liberal-Democrat, two more Labour, two more Greens and two fewer independents.

However, the first-past-the-post electoral system delivered even more perverse results in some other areas. For example:

- In Eastleigh, the Liberal Democrats won 92% of the seats up for election, despite receiving just over half of the votes. Overall, the Liberal Democrats hold 34 of the 39 councillors on Eastleigh Council.
- In Havant, the Conservatives won all eleven seats up for election, despite receiving fewer than half of the votes. Overall, the Conservatives hold 33 of the 38 councillors on Havant Council.
- In Sandwell, Labour won all 24 seats up for election, despite over 40% of votes going to other parties. This means Labour continues to hold all 72 council seats on Sandwell Council.

I think this raises two questions:

- Is it democratic to have an electoral system that results in councillors being elected in different proportions to the votes that have been cast? Even to the extent that one party can dominate a Council despite having received fewer than half the votes.
- As good governance in a local authority requires an effective opposition, is it consistent with good governance to have an electoral system that provides so few opposition councillors even when a significant number of people support opposition parties.

These problems have already been addressed in Northern Ireland and Scotland where the single transferable vote system is used in the election of councillors. The system works well, and I think it should also be used in England and Wales.

Wales, Devolution and the United Kingdom

In May 2019, Mark Drakeford, the Welsh First Minister addressed an Institute for Government event and expressed doubts about the future of a United Kingdom as a result of Brexit saying that there is a 'real prospect' that the United Kingdom may break up.

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He cited a potential second Scottish independence referendum and an Irish border poll as factors and said that:

“While devolution in Wales and Scotland has been transformative, Westminster has stood still... For the first time in my political life, there is real prospect of the United Kingdom not surviving as a four-way nation.”



The Welsh Assembly

In his speech marking twenty years of devolution, Mark Drakeford criticised the United Kingdom government for its deep and profound ambivalence to devolution. He said that the Welsh government is ‘fiercely devolutionist’ but that Westminster had taken a ‘grace and favour approach’ whereby powers are devolved as long as the nations do as Westminster wishes.

He said that evidence of this was provided by a recent speech by Michael Gove to the Scottish Conservative conference. In this speech Michael Gove outlined plans for Westminster to be allowed to spend Treasury funds in Scotland on traditionally devolved matters like education. Mark Drakeford compared these suggestions to the Scottish government announcing that they wanted to set up an army base in Hampshire.

Mark Drakeford said that the Whitehall of 2019 was unrecognisable compared to the Whitehall of 1999 that began the process of devolution. He called for a:

“Fundamental rethink and repositioning of the way Whitehall’s response to devolution is shaped in the future”.

Mark Drakeford mooted the idea of a common space for negotiation and agreement for the four countries and declared that the Welsh government must be in the room for any future trade negotiations that affect Welsh competencies. He warned that the point of devolution is not to enter into competition as to who can provide the best public services and complained that the United Kingdom government has often tried to portray the Welsh National Health Service as worse than that of England. He said that:

“I am allergic to the idea of devolution where England is set out as the gold standard.”

An Institute for Government report from March 2019 also warned that Brexit would have a huge impact on the devolution process with the process of handing down powers to the regions continuing for over twenty years.

The report concluded that ministers from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all showed dissatisfaction over their relationship with Westminster. Issues included United Kingdom ministers failing to brief devolved ministers on policy changes that primarily affected England but had some impact on devolved nations. The report also said that United Kingdom ministers often have discretion as to what information to share with the devolved governments that can be a further source of friction. Other interviewees claimed some English cabinet ministers were not greatly enamoured by the concept of devolution in general. Interviewees recalled feeling pressure to replicate policy decisions taken in Westminster.

The report concluded that:

“Brexit has already severely strained relations between central and devolved governments, and the process is far from over. Devolved ministers are currently having to negotiate with United Kingdom counterparts over the future of the devolution settlements and the constitution as a whole... Brexit will continue to have a huge impact on devolution and create new requirements for cooperation between central and devolved governments, for instance in areas where new United Kingdom ‘common frameworks’ will replace European Union law.”

Akash Paun, senior fellow at the Institute for Government and author of the report, said that:

“These interviews lay bare the extent to which decisions taken at Westminster impose constraints on the Scottish and Welsh Governments. Sometimes deliberately but sometimes just because the UK government is often bad at remembering the devolved nations. To be effective, Scottish and Welsh ministers need good relationships with their United Kingdom counterparts but must also learn to stand their ground to defend their interests.”

Further information about Mark Drakeford’s speech to the Institute for Government is available on their website at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/events/future-devolution-uk-after-brexit-keynote-speech-mark-drakeford>

Local Government Finance

In my work for the Local Government Association, providing financial briefing papers for peer review teams, I often find that Councils are having difficulty in resourcing effective children’s services within constrained budgets. There is significant service pressure around services for special educational needs.

I was therefore interested to read the speech made by Liz Truss MP, the Chief Secretary for the Treasury, as part of the Local Government Association’s debate on the spending review. She said that:

“We recognise that more funding is needed in special educational needs and children’s services, and I am looking at that in the spending review... Councils are spending more money on that, but I don’t want to see that squeezing the schools’ budget because we see that schools are under pressure... Those children with special educational needs are a real priority in the spending review.”

She said that consultations had found that education and health should be the main priorities for the spending review. She also made some encouraging comments about devolution and local autonomy, even describing a local income tax as an ‘interesting idea’.

She said that:

“I want to make sure that local government funding is sustainable. We are still a very centralised country. The next three years is going to be more of a transition about how we get there. But you need to be realistic about where we can get to in the next three years... Local authorities and local communities need to get more benefits of business success so if more houses are built and businesses started up, they need to see more of the proceeds.”

All this sounds very encouraging, but there is every likelihood that the planned three-year spending review will be downgraded to a single-year budget and that it may be more about further reductions in public expenditure than anything else (see above).

A survey by the Local Government Information Unit, published in February 2019, found that 97% of councils in England planned to raise council tax in 2019/20. Of these, three quarters increased it by more than 2.5%. As councils face ongoing financial difficulty, 53% planned to dip into their reserves in 2019/20 and 40% planned to do so two years running. A further 80% of councils said they are not confident in the sustainability of local government finance. Respondents expressed concern over their ability to deliver statutory services, with one in twenty (22 councils in England) suggesting they may not be able to deliver the legal minimum services for residents.

The survey found that 36% of councils said children’s services and education were the top immediate financial pressure; and adult social care is the top long-term financial pressure, according to 37% of councils. Despite this, 29% of local authorities planned to reduce activity in adult social care and 24% said they would cut children’s care services. Non-statutory services are also being cut, including libraries (32% of councils), arts and culture (46%), parks and leisure (45%), waste collection (22%), recycling (11%) and roads (38%).

Analysis by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy also found that up to 15% of councils in England are at risk of financial instability.

When challenged by the Treasury Select Committee about the Local Government Association’s analysis that showed the funding gap for local government in England reaching £8billion by 2025, Philip Hammond, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said that:

“I do accept there is a funding gap, but I don’t accept the numbers you just quoted from the Local Government Association... We will be – in the course of the Spending Review – setting forward budgets for local authorities... Obviously we are looking at local authority funding, and it will be one of the key areas that we need to look at.”

It is generally recognised that there is a crisis in the funding of adult social care. In my work preparing financial briefings for peer review teams for the Local Government Association, I often find myself reporting that councils are having trouble in managing adult social care services within budgets because of increasing need and constrained resources. Even more importantly than that, they are having trouble in providing the care that vulnerable people need.

However, Liz Truss does not envisage having to increase taxes to fund adult social care as she considers that efficiency savings can be found, especially in business support. She said that:

“We spend £18billion a year on supporting businesses – and some of them are large businesses. We could simplify that and get better value for money from it.”

The Department for Health & Social Care has long recognised the problem and has stated an intention to publish a social care green paper. The original deadline for its publication was in the summer of 2017 but this deadline has been extended five times and the latest deadline, at the end of March 2019 was also missed.

It is understood that the Green Paper will consult on policy ideas such as a more generous means-test, a cap on lifetime social care charges, an insurance contribution model, a care ISA and tax-free withdrawals from pension pots. However, it appears that some proposals are 'less well developed than others' and that the policy requires 'greater consideration'. It is also suggested that the publication has been delayed by 'Brexit' and by disagreement within government about the funding arrangements.

This simply is not good enough. As Glen Garrod, President of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, told the 'Public Finance' magazine:

"The longer the delay, the more pressing its publication becomes. The pressure on adult social care does not abate."

The sooner the Green Paper appears the better!

[For further information about my work with the Local Government Association on Peer Reviews, please click here.](#)

[For further information about my work with the Local Government Association on the Fair Funding Review, please click here.](#)

I made representations to Cumbria County Council and Eden District Council in response to their budget consultations in January 2019. To view or download these, please click the links below:

- Cumbria County Council – <https://awics.co.uk/cumbria-county-council-budget-consultation-2019>
- Eden District Council - <https://awics.co.uk/eden-district-council-budget-consultation-2019-20>

Brexit and Economic Development

The European Union has always had a regional development programme that aims to raise living standards in the poorest regions, and these have always included some regions within Britain. As a local government officer, I have worked on European programmes in the West Midlands and West Cumbria and in my view, these would not have happened if they had been dependent on the United Kingdom government. In fact, the United Kingdom government was often obstructive. As a Management Consultant I have worked with the Hebridean Housing Partnership and was told by an elderly resident of the Isle of Lewis that ALL the infrastructure on the island had been built through European programmes and that NO United Kingdom government prior to Britain joining the European Union had ever invested anything!

An interesting piece appeared in 'i-news' in January 2019. It revealed that Britain will lose around £11.4billion in regional funding from the European Union after Brexit. Regions such as Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland would have been entitled to a 22% increase in support from the European Union under the budget plans for 2021-2027, up from the £9.3billion that the United Kingdom receives in the current 2014-2020 budget.

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The increase in funding would have been because many areas of the United Kingdom are falling behind the European Union average in terms of regional income. This has been exacerbated in recent years by Britain's widening wealth gap between Greater London that is the European Union's richest region and places including Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and North-east England that are among Europe's poorest regions.

While this regional inequality is currently being addressed by the European Union, an interesting piece in the 'Guardian' today illustrates the approach of the United Kingdom government. A report by 'Centre for Cities' finds that deprived northern regions have been the worst hit by the austerity that has been imposed by the United Kingdom government and states that:

"Austerity cuts have fallen hardest on deprived communities in the north of England, which are enduring the highest poverty rates and weakest economies... The poorest areas have borne the brunt of council spending cuts. Local authority spending has fallen nationally by half since 2010, with areas such as Liverpool, Blackburn and Barnsley facing average cuts twice that of their counterparts in the more affluent south."

It appears to me that the policy of successive United Kingdom governments has been to increase geographical inequalities in wealth, income and power; whereas it has always been the policy of the European Union to reduce them!

To view or download briefing papers on European issues, please click here: <https://awics.co.uk/InternationalIssues>

Social Security Scotland

The progress made in building Scotland's new public service – Social Security Scotland - was outlined in April 2019, a year since the Social Security (Scotland) Bill was passed in Parliament (April 2018). Over the past year Social Security Scotland has established a Head Office in Dundee and a second major site in Glasgow, with around 400 people employed across both sites and local delivery leads, building a local service in communities across the country.

Social Security Secretary, Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, said that the £197million in benefit payments made by the Scottish Government to over 77,000 people in the past year showed that social security was an investment in people – a core principle of the Bill. The payments that have been made since Social Security Scotland launched last September, cover the Carer's Allowance Supplement and Best Start Grant, Pregnancy and Baby Payment. It also includes Carer's Allowance payments that are funded by Social Security Scotland.

Shirley-Anne Somerville also hailed the publication of the Social Security Charter as a clear example of how another principle was being met - that Scotland's social security system would be designed together with the people of Scotland. She said that:

"Over the past year we have put the biggest transfer of powers since devolution into practice. Progress has been swift, and I am delighted within a year we have both the legislation and infrastructure of Scotland's newest public service."

"We can be pleased with the success we have achieved so far and that Social Security Scotland is now delivering for the people of Scotland every day with much more to come. There are challenges ahead, and also many opportunities. To increase the financial support to those who need it and to ensure our social security system treats people with respect and dignity."

“I have laid out my plans for the benefits that will be introduced this year and for the future delivery of devolved benefits. Responsibility for all devolved benefits, including their funding, will be with the Scottish Government from 1 April next year, with the roll out of disability assistance starting shortly after. It is through disability assistance we can make the biggest difference to the largest number of people, particularly through reform of an assessments system that causes stress and anxiety. And at all times involving people in how we do that, designing a system with people and for people.”

The devolution of powers over some aspects of social security to the Scottish Government is enabling some issues to be tackled although the resources available are limited. Further devolution of social security powers would be welcomed by many, but would probably carry significant financial risks for the Scottish Government.

AWICS Surveys

At AWICS we value feedback from our clients and from users of our website. This is for two reasons:

- We actively seek feedback from clients so that we can evaluate what we are doing now and use the information to improve our services in future.
- We like to have a dialogue with clients and users of our website so that we can understand their developing needs and provide services to meet them as part of a long-term commercial relationship.

We have therefore developed a series of surveys and questionnaires that can be found at: <http://awics.co.uk/questionnaires-and-feedback>

These include a survey about our seminars. Whether or not you have attended one of our seminars recently, I would be grateful if you could assist us by completing our short survey. It can be found at: <https://form.jotformeu.com/71926426584364>

There is also a similar survey on webinars. Whether or not you have attended one of our webinars recently, I would be grateful if you could assist us by completing our short survey. It can be found at: <https://form.jotformeu.com/73325960384360>

Editorial Note

The Public Services News is published by AWICS Limited. This edition was edited by Adrian Waite. Articles are written by Adrian Waite unless otherwise stated. However, the views expressed are not necessarily those of Adrian Waite or AWICS unless expressly stated.

All You Want to Know About Housing Association Finance 2019

July 2019

Housing Associations face significant financial challenges because of which it is now more important than ever that everyone involved in the governance, management and operations of housing associations has a working knowledge of housing association finance.

These seminars provide a solid grounding in the basics of housing association finance including:

- The financial environment in which housing associations work
- Regulatory requirements including Viability and Value for Money
- Statements of Comprehensive Income
- Statements of Financial Position
- Statements of Cash Flow
- How Development and other Capital Expenditure is financed including through grants and loans
- Managing Opportunities, Threats and Risks
- Budgeting and Budgetary Control

Do you think that a working knowledge of housing association finance gained at our interactive seminar would put you in a position of advantage? If so, whether you are a Housing Manager, Board Member, Tenant Representative or even a member of the Finance Team; whether you are in a housing association or in a council that has partnerships with housing associations you should attend one of our seminars.

The seminars will be presented by Adrian Waite, an accountant and former Housing Association Chair, who is well known for his ability to explain complex financial issues clearly.

Delegates will gain an overview of the finances of housing associations and will keep up to date with developments. There will be opportunities for networking. The session is also accompanied by a very useful book that is designed for reference after the session entitled:

“All You Want to Know about Housing Association Finance 2019”

Venues and Dates

- **North:** Novotel Hotel, Leeds – Tuesday 2nd July 2019
- **London:** Novotel Hotel, Waterloo – Tuesday 9th July 2019

For further information or to make a booking, please click here: <https://awics.co.uk/all-you-want-to-know-about-housing-association-finance-2019>

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- Asset Management and Treasury Management
- Developments in government policy including welfare reform and the social housing green paper of 2018

Housing associations are innovative in their response with many developing new sources of income including increased service charges and having ambitious new build and regeneration schemes.



Bramble Court at Brampton, an Extra Care Elderly scheme developed by Impact Housing Association while Adrian Waite was Chair.

To view or download a copy of our brochure, please click here: https://awics.co.uk/files/module_document_pdfs/all_you_want_to_know_about_housing_association_finance_2019.pdf

Other AWICS Seminars:

Our next seminars are as follows:

- All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance.
- Universal Credit and the Management of Rent Arrears
- All You Want to Know about Scottish Local Authority Housing Finance
- All You Want to Know about Service Charges in Social Housing in England
- All You Want to Know about Welsh Local Authority Housing Finance
- All You Want to Know about Risk Management

Information about all our seminars can be found at: <https://awics.co.uk/seminars-2019>

About 'AWICS'

'AWICS' is a management consultancy and training company. We specialise in providing support in finance and management to clients in local government and housing in England, Scotland and Wales. We are well known for our ability to analyse and explain complex financial and management issues clearly. Our mission statement is 'Independence, Integrity, Value'. We therefore provide support to clients from an independent standpoint that is designed to help the client to achieve their objectives. We are passionate about working with the utmost integrity. We believe that we offer the best value for money that is available today!

For more information about our services and us please visit our website at www.awics.co.uk or contact Adrian Waite at Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk. Services that we offer include:

- Management Consultancy – <http://www.awics.co.uk/ManagementConsultancy.asp>
 - Interim Management – <http://www.awics.co.uk/interimmanagement.asp>
 - Regional Seminars - <https://awics.co.uk/seminars-2019>
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