

Gordon Macdonald

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Pentlands

December
2018



Best Start Grant



Social Security Scotland
Dignity, fairness, respect.

Pregnancy and Baby Payment from December

This month, Social Security Scotland will begin accepting applications for the *Best Start Grant (BSG) Pregnancy and Baby Payment*. The first payments of this new benefit will be made before Christmas 2018.

The *BSG Pregnancy and Baby Payment* will replace and expand on the current *Sure Start Maternity Grant (SSMG)* in Scotland, which supports families on low incomes with the costs of having a child.

The BSG forms part of a programme of Scottish Government measures targeted at children's early years with the aim of tackling inequality, supporting parents, improving health outcomes and raising attainment. There will be three payments available: -

1. A *Pregnancy and Bay Payment* of £600 for a first child and £300 for any subsequent child. This will help with expenses in pregnancy or of having a new child. There will be an extra £300 for a multiple birth.
2. An *Early Learning Payment* of £250 per child. This will help with costs with early learning at around the time a child may take up a nursery place, to support child development.
3. A *School Age Payment* of £250 per child. This will help with the costs or preparing for primary school.

Welcoming the payments, Gordon said, "These payments demonstrate our commitment to ensuring babies are provided for when born, and prepared for their first day at nursery and primary school."

Christmas Card Competition



Gordon's annual Christmas card competition, run with Sainsbury's Longstone, was won by: -

- **Cailyn Angus**, P5,
Longstone Primary School.

Runners up were: -

- **Genevieve Minns**, P5,
Braidburn Special School.
- **Emma Shu**, P3a,
Canal View Primary School.
- **Kehinde Olanipekun**, P5,
Canal View Primary School.
- **Teddy Jones**, P4/5,
Sighthill Primary School.
- **Calum Rae**, P2/3,
Dean Park Primary School.

Out and About...

Be Smart This Winter



Gordon is encouraging residents to make sure their homes are winter ready, noting, "Last winter, more than 154,000 homes across Scotland experienced a boiler breakdown. During the *Beast from the East*, temperatures went below -10°C. Therefore, it's really important to keep a step ahead with the following British Gas advice." Winter ready tips: -

1. With smart meters, you can see how much energy you're using.
2. Radiators cold at the top could indicate air pockets that requiring you to bleed them. Cold at the bottom may indicate sludge and the need to flush the system.
3. Fitting draught excluders is a quick, easy and affordable way to draught-proof your home.
4. Putting your sofa in front of a radiator will absorb heat that could heat the rest of the room.
5. Service and ensure your boiler is working properly before the cold weather kicks in.
6. Insulate your hot water system to prevent pipes freezing/bursting.
7. Install a carbon monoxide detector: You can't hear it, see it, taste it or smell it, and it kills around 30 people a year.

Community Alcohol Partnership



During *Alcohol Awareness Week*, Gordon visited local retailers participating in the *Community Alcohol Partnership* with police.

The objective of the partnership is to help retailers avoid committing the offence of selling alcohol to an adult who is making a proxy purchase for a younger person.

Gordon was pleased to visit a retailer who correctly had their license on display, followed *Challenge 25* where anyone who looks under 25 is asked to produce ID, and kept a register of the time and date of people they rejected alcohol sales.

Supporting Occupational Therapy



Gordon met with representatives of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists in support of their campaign, *Getting my life back*, promoting mental health and wellbeing.

The campaign aims to prioritise prevention and early intervention in mental health services in order that people can be helped to recover before problems escalate.

Commenting, Gordon said, "This campaign follows the College's philosophy of *improving lives saving money* where early intervention can lead to better outcomes and save NHS money".

Contact Details

By email

gordon.macdonald.msp@parliament.scot

Home visit

Available for those who cannot travel

By phone

0131 443 0595

By letter

The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP



Gordon Macdonald MSP



@GMacdonaldMSP

Monthly Surgeries — No appointment needed

- 1st Monday of the month, 6.30pm Wester Hailes Library
- 2nd Monday of the month, 6.30pm Carrickvale Community Centre
- 3rd Monday of the month, 6.30pm Currie Library
- 4th Monday of the month, 6.30pm Oxfgangs Library (Not 24 Dec)
- 5th Monday of the month, 6.30pm Ratho Com. Centre (Not 31 Dec)

NB: NO SURGERIES DURING PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS

Working for Edinburgh Pentlands