

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

HAVING AND KEEPING A HOME: STEPS TO PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS
AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE – FOLLOW-UP

CITIZENS ADVICE SCOTLAND
COMMENTS ON SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE RECEIVED TO DATE

Thank you for sending the summary of evidence which fairly reflects the points that CAS raised in evidence, along with issues from other respondents. There are two key points in particular that we feel would be worth raising in evidence with the Minister –

“There are strong concerns about the use of intentionality criteria” – CAS also raised this point in evidence to the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee, who [recommended in their report that the Scottish Government investigate and report on the reasons why the numbers of those who are made intentionally homeless has risen, and whether the Government intends to take any action to encourage greater consistency](#). It is our understanding that the Scottish Government has done some further investigation since, so the Minister may have more information to add.

“Young people are disproportionately facing benefit sanctions...” In particular, the point raised in evidence at paragraph 61 of the report relating to miscommunication between the Jobcentre and local authorities leading to **Housing Benefit being stopped incorrectly** in some cases where a claimant has been sanctioned is important. This can lead to rent arrears quickly building up, as tenants are often unaware that their Housing Benefit has stopped, and in any event will struggle to pay it due to their loss of income due to the benefit sanction.

Whilst CAS did not raise this issue in our written evidence, we explored the problem in [our report ‘Sanctioned: What Benefit?’ \(page 27\)](#). Subsequently, the Oakley Review of sanctions also highlighted the issue, but recent CAB evidence suggests it is still occurring. We would be happy to provide further information on this issue should the Committee desire it.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute. If the Committee would like further information of any of these points, please let me know and we’d be happy to provide what we can.

Rob Gowans
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9 December 2014