

Government Response sent to Lesley Blair on behalf of Scottish Members

Thank you for all your work with us to date seeking to help us resolve some issues that your members have been having in accessing funding through the Newly Self Employed Hardship Fund and Mobile and Home Based Close Contact Services Fund.

As discussed earlier this week, and ahead of a further call this afternoon, I am happy to share information with you in some broad areas which seem to be the root of most enquiries to date, to help you reassure and update your members on the actions we are taking to resolve issues and move things forward. These issues were of course part of our discussions.

1. Applications Declined Due to Systems Errors:

As you know we have unfortunately experienced a few technical issues in administering the schemes that have impacted the ability of some applicants (around 100 in total) to submit applications. We have worked hard to find ways through these challenges, as our core objective is to get the funds out to all those that are eligible for them as swiftly as we possibly can. All applicants that have been impacted by a known systems issue have now been contacted with an apology and given an opportunity to re-apply.

2. Applications Declined Due to User Mistakes:

We have also been dealing with a large number of cases (around 1300 in total currently) where decisions to decline funding result from user mistakes via incomplete or inaccurate information being supplied on the application form. We have worked hard to find ways through these challenges also, and taken steps to help eligible applicants where we can, whilst balancing the need to manage fraud risks.

We have decided to offer those that are eligible but whose applications have been impacted by a user data entry problem an opportunity to re-apply also. We are in the process of updating and testing the system to enable that, and are also updating the guidance for applicants to highlight common mistakes to reduce the prospect of those re-occurring.

that our delivery agent, Umi, will be in touch with every applicant individually when the appraisal team reaches their case. If eligible and their case is also impacted by manual mistakes we will also offer them an opportunity to re-apply at that point.

We would also like to offer reassurance that all applications received by the closing date of 16 March 2021 will be processed and will receive funding if eligible. Reference numbers should not be viewed as an indication of when an application will be concluded, as the work involved in each case may differ.

We are aware that some individuals that have not received an automated email confirming that their application has been received. Our delivery team has advised that system logs have been checked and acknowledgement emails have been sent to the email addresses that applicants included in their application forms. If your members completed the full application process and received an on screen message that their form had been submitted with a reference number attached it will be in the system.

4. Enquiry Process:

We are working to manage the review of cases systematically so nothing gets missed. We have been receiving multiple emails from individuals and enquiries on behalf of those same individuals from a wide range of sources. This is a 14r-0.00000690.0000610352 4