# Government Issues Apology and Repays £7,000 to Elderly Woman with Dementia



**Government Apologizes and Repays £7,000 to Elderly Woman with Dementia**

**Location:** United Kingdom

**Date:** May 15, 2024

Government ministers have issued a formal apology and returned £7,000 in overpaid benefits to a 93-year-old woman, following an investigation by The Guardian. The woman, diagnosed with dementia, was previously held responsible for accruing debt despite her medical condition, which hindered her ability to manage her affairs.

Minister for Disability, Mims Davies, acknowledged the case as "disturbing." The woman’s daughter and carer, Rose Chitseko, stated that her mother, who has advanced Parkinson’s, was unjustly accused of failing to notify the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about changes affecting her benefit eligibility. Despite internal data that could have prevented the overpayment, the DWP continued to issue benefits and later demanded repayment.

In response to the ongoing scandal involving carers' allowance overpayments, the DWP plans to implement strategies for better communication, such as sending text messages or emails to claimants. This is intended to prevent future overpayments and reduce the risk of financial hardship for unpaid carers.

Around 150,000 unpaid carers are currently repaying overpayments, with some facing prosecution. Carers UK and other organizations have called for the government to work toward a more supportive system for carers.

Emily Holzhausen, director of policy at Carers UK, emphasized the need for systemic reform to alleviate the distress and financial burden on carers. The National Audit Office found that less than 10% of carers’ allowance overpayments are fraudulent.

Following a review, the DWP cancelled the overpayment and agreed to refund all repayments made by the woman. A DWP spokesperson reaffirmed the commitment to improving processes and ensuring fair treatment within the welfare system.