



## Rhoda Grant

Scottish Labour MSP for the Highlands and Islands

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### Online Applications Creating Barriers to Crofters

Rhoda Grant, Highlands and Islands MSP, is urging the government not to exclude crofters from funding as a result of the introduction of online applications.

Following concern from a Shetland crofter who does not have access to the internet Mrs Grant contacted the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs to call for applications to the Rural Development Programme – Rural Priorities to be made available offline.

“The minister said that the vast majority of people chose to use an agent to complete these applications previously – which can offer funding for areas like improving animal welfare, investing in agricultural businesses to reduce production costs, and diversification - and that the internet allows these forms to be dealt with more efficiently.

“ However, that does not help individual crofters who might want to access these 120 different funding options and are not familiar with the internet.

Mr Lochhead has said the department has allocated £100,000 to the Crofters Commission to provide project officers to help community groups apply for funding – but again this does not help the individual,” she said.

Mrs Grant has written again to the minister to ask what support is to be made available to individuals concerned about how they are to move from the previous schemes to those within the Scottish Rural Development Programme.

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Rhoda Grant's website : [www.rhodagrants.org.uk](http://www.rhodagrants.org.uk)

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