



Rhoda Grant

Regional MSP for the Highlands and Islands

news release

06 November 2008

Call for weavers and fishermen to enjoy same benefits

Rhoda Grant, Highlands and Islands regional MSP, has written to the Chancellor, Alistair Darling, with a plea to re-write benefit rules to allow weavers to claim when they are not working.

The Labour MSP is calling for a similar benefits system to be introduced for self-employed weavers as was put in place for fishermen, who are likewise dependent on the actions of others for work.

Mrs Grant commented: "The problem is that the weavers only work if called upon by the mill and if work is not available they are not eligible for benefits.

"The criteria was adjusted to allow fishermen to claim allowances and, given that the weavers are asked to work in a similar ad hoc way, support in the lean times would make a huge difference to their financial survival.

"We have already seen a huge fall in the number of skilled weavers on the Western Isles and we must find ways to protect their work if we want Harris Tweed to continue to compete in the global textiles industry."

Rhoda Grant's website : www.rhodagrants.org.uk