



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Social Security Scotland Client Survey: 2021-2022



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Short summary

Looking across the survey, respondents were largely positive about their experience with Social Security Scotland. For example, 89% rated their overall experience with Social Security Scotland as 'very good' or 'good'. A large majority were also positive about their interactions with staff, the experience of applying for benefits, and receiving payments.

However, there were specific areas where some respondents were less positive. Around three-in-ten respondents who had made an application did not agree that they had received enough updates on the progress of their application(s), and around one-in-four did not agree that their application was handled within a reasonable time frame.

There was also some evidence to suggest that particular demographic groups had a less positive experience with Social Security Scotland. Respondents aged 55 years and over and those with a communication need were broadly less positive about their experiences. This was in relation to using Social Security Scotland websites, communicating with Social Security Scotland, and making applications. Respondents with a communication need were also more likely to have experienced discrimination, or a barrier getting help.

The sections below provide more information on the headline results from each part of the survey.

1. Executive Summary

Overall Experience

Around nine-in-ten (89%) respondents rated their overall experience with Social Security Scotland as 'very good' or 'good'. Only 3% described their experience as 'poor' or 'very poor'. A little under nine-in-ten respondents believed that they had been treated with dignity (87%), fairness (87%) and respect (89%). A similar proportion agreed that Social Security Scotland had not wasted their time (86%) and that they understood what Social Security Scotland does (86%).

Marginally fewer respondents agreed that Social Security Scotland is an honest (84%) or open (81%) organisation. However, only 2% of respondents said they disagreed with each of these points. The rest said they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' or answered 'don't know'.

Comments made about overall experience were mostly suggestions for improvement. Around a quarter were positive comments, but a third were negative. Better and more frequent communication from Social Security Scotland was consistently suggested by respondents, as was a desire for regular updates about applications. Many requested clearer and more easily accessible information on eligibility. Respondents also suggested that Social Security Scotland benefits should be advertised more widely through a range of media. Positive comments simply reflected a good overall experience, and in negative comments, delays in application processing time and decision making were a clear theme.

Finding out about Social Security Scotland

Respondents were asked how they first found out about Social Security Scotland. A little under a quarter said via word-of-mouth (24%), the most common response. Less than one-in-five first heard 'online or via social media' (19%), through being contacted by Social Security Scotland (17%), or through a health service (16%). Very few respondents first heard of Social Security Scotland through a leaflet, pamphlet or poster (3%), or a news article including radio (3%).

Looking up Social Security Scotland websites

Around two-in-three (65%) respondents said that they had looked up a Social Security Scotland website (including mygov.scot) since 1 April 2021. The majority of respondents who had looked up a Social Security Scotland website agreed that the websites were 'easy to navigate' (86%) and 'easy to understand' (87%). Only a small proportion (4%) of respondents disagreed with these statements.

There was some variation in experience with Social Security Scotland websites by benefit experience. Funeral Support Payment and Job Start Payment applicants were least likely to agree that the websites were 'easy to navigate' (82% and 83% respectively), and that 'the information was easy to understand' (80% and 84% respectively). Young Carer Grant applicants were most likely to agree with these statements (91% and 94% respectively).

Contact with Social Security Scotland

Around half (53%) of all respondents said that they had tried to contact Social Security Scotland since 1 April 2021. By far the most common type of contact respondents had had with Social Security Scotland was through the phone helpline (68%).

Around eight-in-ten (81%) respondents agreed that 'it was easy to contact Social Security Scotland', whilst one-in-ten (10%) disagreed with this. A similar proportion agreed with the statements 'I received the right level of communication from Social Security Scotland' (80%) and 'I had enough choice about how Social Security Scotland communicated with me' (80%).

Experiences with staff

Nearly half of respondents (48%) said they had been in contact with a member of Social Security Scotland staff. More than nine-in-ten respondents who had been in contact with a member of Social Security Scotland staff said their overall experience with staff was 'very good' or 'good' (93%). Just 3% rated their experience with staff as 'poor' or 'very poor'. 94% of respondents said staff treated them with kindness. A little over nine-in-ten said staff listened to them (92%) and made them feel comfortable (91%).

Those whose main language was not English were more likely to rate their overall experience with staff as 'very good' or 'good' (95%), compared to those whose main language was English (90%).

Overall, most comments were positive, especially describing the manner of staff members, who were often described as knowledgeable, empathetic and putting clients at ease. Some respondents received conflicting information from different members of staff or could not get the help that they needed. Other clients said some staff members were rude or unhelpful. Long helpline call wait times were cited negatively (including the call-back system), even as clients acknowledged the impact of the pandemic.

Applying for benefits

Around two-thirds (66%) of respondents said they had applied for at least one Social Security Scotland benefit. Respondents most commonly reported making an application online (82%), whilst far fewer applied via phone (21%) or postal application (8%).

Around nine-in-ten respondents (90%) who had applied for a Social Security Scotland benefit said their experience of the application process overall was 'very good' or 'good'. Just 2%, around one-in-fifty respondents, described their experience of the application process overall as 'very poor' or 'poor'.

Around nine-in-ten respondents who had applied for a benefit said that the application process was clear (90%), and a similar proportion felt that they were only asked relevant questions (90%). Marginally fewer said that their application was handled in a reasonable time frame (87%).

However, the processing time for applications was the most negatively cited issue in the comments, with many clients still waiting for their applications to be processed. This, compounded by a lack of communication, led to many applicants wanting updates about their application. Some clients noted that they had difficulties with their application forms, including issues with the design of the forms (length, complexity and questions) as well as technical issues. Other comments expressed that Child Disability Payment forms were repetitive.

Some clients had difficulties with supporting information they needed for their application. These included difficulties uploading documentation; not being asked to provide supporting information until later in the application process; and difficulties in obtaining supporting information itself. There was some confusion by respondents claiming Best Start Foods and Best Start Grant over the timing of eligibility, leading to some suggesting single applications for each component.

Of the positive comments, many cited the ease of the application process, that the overall experience of applying was good, and expressed gratitude for staff members' help.

Application decisions

A little under nine-in-ten respondents agreed that the decision(s) on their application(s) was 'explained clearly' (87%). A similar proportion said they 'understood the decision' (88%). However, just seven-in-ten (70%) agreed with the statement 'I got enough updates on the progress of my application(s) and three-in-four (75%) agreed with the statement 'my application(s) was (were) handled within a reasonable time frame'. 17% and 14% disagreed with these statements respectively.

Nearly three-in-ten (28%) respondents who had applied for a benefit said that they had received at least one unsuccessful decision. The most common response to receiving an unsuccessful decision, given by more than four-in-ten (44%) respondents, was to take no further action.

Around one-in-ten respondents (11%) had received a decision(s) since 1 April 2021 which they disagreed with. Around one-in-four (26%) of this group asked Social Security Scotland to look at the decision(s) again. Those who had disagreed with a decision on an application for Child Disability Payment were most likely to ask Social Security Scotland to look at the decision again (47%).

In terms of comments, many respondents stated that a decision had not yet been received and therefore they were unable to comment. Negative comments mostly focused on Social Security Scotland's processes, fewer on service, and fewer still on policy. Poor timing, information, and accuracy of decision making was mentioned consistently. Some applicants were still awaiting a decision who had already waited a long time. Some disagreed with eligibility criteria or the decision; others felt that eligibility criteria for some benefits unfairly treated working people.

Respondents who applied for Child Disability Payment or Adult Disability Payment suggested permanent awards for long-term conditions that will never improve. Some applicants had difficulties contacting Social Security Scotland to get feedback about why the

decision outcome was as it was or had poor communication around their decision. Some repeated that they had had to contact Social Security Scotland for updates themselves and would like to have been updated. Some comments showed that decision letters had not been received by some applicants, or that payments were received before decision letters.

Positive responses mainly focused on the overall experience as well as our service, mostly about our staff and their manner.

Receiving payments

More than eight-in-ten (83%) respondents said they had received a benefit payment from Social Security Scotland. Nearly half had received Scottish Child Payment (49%), and around a quarter had received Best Start Grant (27%), Best Start Foods (25%), or Carer's Allowance Supplement (27%).

The majority of respondents (93%) said that their overall experience of receiving benefit payment(s) from Social Security Scotland was 'very good' or 'good'. Only 1% described their experience as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Furthermore, a large proportion (96%) of respondents who had received a payment said they got it when Social Security Scotland said they would. A similarly high proportion said that they were paid the right amount 'first time' (97%) and, where relevant, the right amount 'every time' (93%).

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'a lot', respondents gave the following scores for how much benefit payments:

- Helped to make a difference to their life – 72% gave a rating of 8-10, mean rating of 8.3
- Helped them to control their finances – 63% gave a rating of 8-10, mean rating of 7.6
- Helped them to pay for what they needed – 69% gave a rating of 8-10, mean rating of 8.1

Around 500 respondents provided a comment regarding their experience of receiving a payment from Social Security Scotland. Nearly three-in-five comments were positive and around one-in-five were negative. The most frequent positive theme was an appreciation for benefit payments, some expressing thanks. Others mentioned the positive impact payments had on their lives. A large number of comments mentioned the positive impact that payments had on their children or family.

Many respondents also commented that their payments were processed on time and without any difficulties, and mentioned payments being transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions. Some respondents who received Carer's Allowance Supplement felt the benefit recognised their value as carers. Some respondents felt payments should be higher, and several respondents said they had received their payment before any form of confirmation, which caused confusion.

Barriers

17% of respondents said they had faced some sort of barrier getting help from Social Security Scotland. Those with communication needs were markedly more likely to say that they had experienced a barrier (30%, compared with 16% of those with no communication needs).

Just over a third (35%) of those who had faced a barrier said they told Social Security Scotland about them. Around half of this group agreed that Social Security Scotland 'understood them' (52%) whilst a slightly smaller proportion agreed that Social Security

Scotland 'supported them in overcoming them' (45%).

Comments elaborated on common barriers faced, the most commented upon being long wait times for the phone helpline. The lack of updates or information on applications was also a barrier, often compounded by delays. The inability of client advisors to tell respondents about a decision over the phone or to provide information was a barrier. Language was a barrier for some respondents, either because they didn't speak English as a first language or because they had additional communication needs.

Discrimination

3% of respondents said they had been discriminated against during their experience with Social Security Scotland, and 4% answered 'prefer not to say'.

Respondents who had experienced discrimination were asked who or what they felt was discriminatory towards them. The most commonly highlighted source was Social Security Scotland 'policies', selected by more than two-in-five respondents (44%). More than one-in-three (36%) said that the source of the discrimination they experienced was Social Security Scotland 'processes', and just over one-in-four (27%) said Social Security Scotland 'staff'.

More than two-in-five of those who experienced discrimination disagreed with the statements 'it was clear how to challenge it' and 'I felt I could challenge it' (43% and 46% respectively). A little over one-in-three (36% and 34% respectively) agreed with these statements.

Most respondents who commented did not feel that they had been discriminated against, many felt that staff had treated them with dignity, fairness and respect. Of the respondents who had been discriminated against, most related to our service, specifically to communication and information. Some respondents also felt that Social Security Scotland policy and/or the eligibility criteria for certain benefits excluded certain groups of people.

Single benefit experience

This section presents top level results for respondents who only experienced one benefit¹. A total of 4,092 respondents (54%) only had experience of one benefit.

The proportion who rated their experience as 'very good' or 'good' was lowest amongst Child Winter Heating Assistance recipients (85%) and Job Start Payment applicants (85%). The highest rating came from respondents who had only applied for Young Carer Grant (92%) or Scottish Child Payment (93%).

Almost all (98%) respondents who only applied for Young Carer Grant described their overall experience with staff as 'very good' or 'good', as did 96% of respondents who only applied for Scottish Child Payment. More than nine-in-ten rated their experience of staff as 'very good' or 'good' across most benefit groups, with the exception those who only applied for Job Start Payment (88%) or only received Carer's Allowance Supplement (87%).

Those who only applied Scottish Child Payment were most likely to rate their application process as 'very good' or 'good' (95%). This was the case for around nine-in-ten of those who only applied for Young Carer Grant (90%) or Best Start Grant/Foods (89%), whilst fewer did so across other groups.

¹ This includes making a joint application for Best Start Grant / Best Start Foods, or receiving either Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods, given the close link between these two benefits.

Across all sole benefit recipient groups, a very high proportion received their payment on time. At least 93% did so for each group, and almost all respondents who only received Carer's Allowance Supplement (98%), Young Carer Grant (99%), and Scottish Child Payment (98%) did so.

Around nine-in-ten of those who only applied for Young Carer Grant (91%), Scottish Child Payment (90%), and Child Disability Payment (89%) agreed that the decision they received was explained clearly, although other groups were less likely to do so.

There was some disparity in the likelihood of experiencing barriers getting help from Social Security Scotland by single benefit experience. Around one-in-eight of those who only experienced Scottish Child Payment (14%), Child Winter Heating Assistance (13%), Carer's Allowance Supplement (13%), or Job Start Payment (12%) said that they experienced a barrier getting help from Social Security Scotland. However, around one-in-five of those who only experienced Funeral Support Payment (19%), Young Carer Grant (20%), or Best Start Grant/Foods (23%) said that they did.

Next steps

The survey results provide rich insight into some of the experiences of Social Security Scotland clients. The results will be used alongside other evidence to populate the [Charter Measurement Framework](#) which reports on Social Security Scotland's performance. The findings will also support Social Security Scotland's continuous improvement. They have highlighted areas where more research may be useful to further explore clients' experiences, views and expectations.

We are also planning for the future of the survey. The financial year 2022-23 will see the client survey move from a single survey to three benefit-specific surveys, each covering a specific cluster of benefits that Social Security Scotland deliver. The intention, from Spring 2023 onward, is for the survey to be issued on a rolling basis to all applicants following a decision on an application. Invites will also be sent annually to people receiving recurring benefits. These updates will not only improve the reliability of the data but will also expand its usability as a resource for policy and operational work within Social Security Scotland.

[Please get in touch](#) with any feedback, comments or suggestions you have on this report or any aspect of the survey.

2. Background and methodology

2.1 Background

This report presents the findings from the 2021-2022 Social Security Scotland Client Survey. The data presented in this publication was collected across three rounds of fieldwork, which ran between 10 November and 17 December 2021, 7 February and 20 March 2022, and 9 May and 5 June 2022. The survey was open to everyone who had received a decision on an application for at least one of: [Best Start Grant and/or Best Start Foods](#), [Funeral Support Payment](#), [Young Carer Grant](#), [Scottish Child Payment](#), [Job Start Payment](#), or [Child Disability Payment](#) between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. A survey invite was also sent to anyone who had received [Carer's Allowance Supplement](#) or [Child Winter Heating Assistance](#) for the first time, or who had completed a Child Disability Payment Case Transfer during this time.

Any client who completed the survey before subsequently applying for or receiving another benefit was potentially invited to take part in a subsequent round of fieldwork. It was therefore possible for a single client to complete the 2021-2022 survey up to three times, but data suggests this was very rare.

The survey asked about key aspects of respondents' experience with Social Security Scotland. The results are a key source for measuring how well Social Security Scotland is performing and where it can improve. In particular it gives data for the [Charter Measurement Framework](#).

A total of 7,534 responses were received for the 2021-2022 Social Security Scotland Client Survey. This equates to around 6% of the 126,276 invites sent. Of clients who completed the survey:

- 22% had received Carer's Allowance Supplement (n=1,653)
- 40% had experience of Best Start Grant (n=3,023)
- 41% had experience of Best Start Grant (n=3,114)
- 9% had experience of Funeral Support Payment (n=700)
- 3% had experience of Young Carer Grant (n=201)
- 1% had experience of Job Start Payment (n=107)
- 47% had experience of Scottish Child Payment (n=3,575)
- 5% had received Child Winter Heating Assistance (n=378)
- 10% had experience of Child Disability Payment (n=782)

Around three-in-five (47%) respondents had experience of one benefit, less than one-in-five (17%) of two benefits, nearly one-in-three (31%) of three benefits, and 5% of four or more benefits.

2.2 Survey purpose

Social Security Scotland was established in 2018. It is an executive agency of the Scottish Government. Its purpose is to deliver benefits which the Scottish Government has responsibility for.

In 2018, [Our Charter](#) was co-designed by the Scottish Government and people with lived experience of social security. It informs the work and culture of Social Security Scotland:

- how Social Security Scotland will uphold the principles in the [Social Security\(Scotland\) Act 2018](#)
- what people should expect from the social security system
- how Social Security Scotland will make sure it is taking a human rights-based approach
- how Social Security Scotland will demonstrate dignity, fairness and respect in all its actions

The Scottish Government, Social Security Scotland and a diverse group of people with lived experience of the social security system then co-designed the [Charter Measurement Framework](#) (The framework). The framework consists of measures to monitor how well Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Government are meeting the commitments of Our Charter.

The Social Security Scotland Client Survey (the Survey) was designed in 2019/20. Its purpose is to inform the Charter Measurement Framework and learn about the overall experiences and needs of Social Security Scotland's clients.

The survey sits alongside and complements other research activities which aim to capture the views and experiences of those who use (or will use) the social security system in Scotland. This includes short surveys at the end of application forms and phone calls. It also includes the work of the Social Security Experience Panels, set up by Scottish Government researchers in 2017.

Additionally, as part of the survey, respondents were offered the opportunity to sign-up for Social Security Scotland's Client Panels. The Client Panels are made up of Social Security Scotland clients from across Scotland. Panel members will be invited to participate in research and asked to share their experiences and opinions on how Social Security Scotland should work. The Client Panels provide another route to ensure user voices inform how Social Security Scotland operates.

All clients are eligible to join the Client Panels and joining is completely voluntary. Around 1,600 respondents to the 2021-2022 round of the Social Security Scotland Client Survey chose to sign up for Client Panels. Further information on the characteristics of those who signed up is provided in [Annex A](#). The invitation to get involved in the Client Panels will also be included in future rounds of the survey. This will help to ensure the Panels continue to evolve as Social Security Scotland's live benefits and client base grow further.

2.3 Structure of this report and supporting materials available

The main body of the report is structured as follows:

- the remainder of Section 2 (this section) provides information on the survey methodology and factors to be aware of when interpreting results
- Sections 3 to 12 outline the main findings across the survey, grouped into themes as structured in the questionnaire
- Section 13 covers the main findings from most sections of the survey, among those who only experienced one benefit
- Section 14 briefly outlines how the results will be used and the future of the survey
- Annex A provides further information on the characteristics of those who signed up to the Client Panels

A [Summary report](#) which presents the key findings from across this report in a more concise and accessible format is also available.

More detailed information on the characteristics of respondents is provided in the [Supplementary document: tables and methods](#) published alongside this report. This also contains findings for the headline question from each section of the survey, broken down by respondents' benefit experience and a range of demographic characteristics for readers looking for more detailed results.

2.4 Survey design and distribution

2.4.1 Survey content

The survey was first designed in 2019, with the aim to understand and report on Social Security Scotland clients' experiences and needs. In particular, reporting requirements as part of the [Charter Measurement Framework](#) were taken into account when the survey content was developed.

The survey sought to capture the most important aspects of client experience without being too long and inaccessible. To achieve this, it underwent extensive review prior to the content being finalised before the first round of fieldwork. This included:

- quality review by Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland officials responsible for the design and delivery of Social Security in Scotland
- review by Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland officials specialising in content design and communications
- cognitive testing with a range of Social Security Experience Panels members across various locations (Dundee, Edinburgh, Kirkcaldy, Oban, Inverness, Aberdeen).

This helped to ensure questions were relevant and fit for purpose. Once finalised, the survey contained questions designed to gather:

- clients' overall views on their experiences of dealing with Social Security Scotland
- information on particular and specific aspects of client experience, such as their experience of submitting an application, views on contact with staff, and feedback on receiving benefit payments.

A review of the survey content was undertaken prior to the 2021-22 iteration (the findings from which are presented in this report). This review led to new questions covering the use of Social Security Scotland websites, including supporting information in an application, and an expansion of the questions on experiencing barriers. These questions underwent consultation and cognitive testing.

2.4.2 Survey structure

The structure of the survey reflects the key ways in which a client would interact with Social Security Scotland, in loose order. The table below provides an overview of the structure of the survey by its main themes.

Table 2.1: Overview of survey questionnaire sections

Survey sections
1. Finding out about Social Security Scotland
2. Looking up Social Security Scotland websites
3. Contact with Social Security Scotland
4. Experiences with staff
5. Applying for Social Security Scotland benefits
6. Application decisions
7. Receiving payments
8. Barriers
9. Discrimination
10. Overall experience
11. Taking part in future research (Client Panels sign-up)
12. More about you (standardised demographic characteristics/equalities questions)

A number of questions were filtered based on previous answers so that respondents only completed questions relevant to them. For example, respondents who had not been in contact with staff were not asked follow up questions about how staff had treated them. A copy of the questionnaire can be provided on request. Please send requests to our [research mailbox](#).

Section 11 of the questionnaire offered respondents the chance to sign up for the Client Panels (discussed above). Section 12 gathered a range of demographic information from respondents. This helps us understand who took part in the survey in terms of broad characteristics and spread across the population. It also allows us to explore whether views and experiences vary among different population groups.

Section 2.2 outlines the structure of this report which follows the same order as the survey, with the exception that the findings on respondents' overall experiences of dealing with Social Security Scotland (Section 10 of the questionnaire) are presented first, as these represent the survey's headline results. It then reverts to following the order of the questionnaire from start to end – i.e. from Section 1 to Section 9.

2.4.3 Eligibility

Everyone who received a decision on an application, or who had received a payment for a benefit where an application is not required², between April 1 2021 and 31 March 2022 was eligible to take part in the survey. This included applicants for any of the following Social Security Scotland benefits:

- [Best Start Grant and/or Foods](#)
- [Funeral Support Payment](#)
- [Young Carer Grant](#)
- [Job Start Payment](#)
- [Scottish Child Payment](#)
- [Child Disability Payment](#)

Invites were also sent to anyone who had received [Carer's Allowance Supplement](#), [Child Winter Heating Assistance](#), or Child Disability Payment after completing a case transfer between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. The two former payments do not require an application, so often involve limited interaction between recipients and Social Security Scotland. Clients whose cases were transferred to Child Disability Payment are likely to have similar, limited contact.

2.4.4 Fieldwork

Distribution of survey invites and fieldwork period

Eligible clients were invited to take part in the survey via email³, text message, or letter. Each form of invite included a link to the online survey, and a Freephone number which could be called to request a paper survey or to complete the survey over the phone (with a translator if required). Respondents who received their invitation via letter were also sent a paper survey, along with a pre-paid return envelope.

The invitation explained the purpose of the survey and the ways in which it was possible to complete the survey, as well as information on data protection. All clients were sent a reminder (email, text or letter) 7 days after they received their invite, and a second reminder 14 days after they received their invite. Many of the clients who did not have an email address or mobile number on record (and thus received an invite letter) had not applied for a benefit. Therefore, a 'non-application' version of the survey was developed and sent to these clients. This version omitted the 'application' and 'decision' sections of the survey, which reduced unnecessary burden for these respondents and reduced paper use.

Data was collected during three rounds of fieldwork. Round 1 ran between 10 November and 17 December 2021 and included clients who had received a decision or a payment (where no application required) on a Social Security Scotland benefit between 1 April

² This includes those who received Carer's Allowance Supplement, Child Winter Heating Assistance, or Child Disability Payment after completing a case transfer.

³ Those who had provided a valid email address as part of their benefit application were sent an email invite, those who had not provided an email but had provided a valid mobile number were sent a text. Those who had provided neither were sent a letter invite.

2021 and 30 September 2021. Round 2 ran between 7 February and 20 March 2022 and included clients who had received a decision or a payment between 1 October and 31 December 2021. Round 3 ran between 25 April and 22 May 2022 and included clients who had received a decision or a payment between 1 January and 31 March 2022. Clients who had more than one decision or payment across multiple fieldwork reference periods were invited to take part in the survey more than once.

A total of 126,010 invites were sent for the Client Survey 2021-22. 90,418 (74%) were sent via an email, 12,423 (10%) via a text invite, and 23,169 (18%) via a letter invite.

Number of responses

A total of 7,534 responses were received once the data had been cleaned and duplicate checks performed. This represents 6% of the number of invites issued.

Around three quarters of respondents completed the survey online (76%), and a little under one quarter did so via a paper survey (23%). A very small proportion (1%) completed the survey over the phone.

2.5 Data cleaning and analysis

2.5.1 Closed questions

The majority of the survey questions were closed questions, meaning they had answer options for respondents to choose from. Responses to these questions were analysed alongside the demographic information provided by respondents. All personal identifiable information is held in a separate secure file.

Data was cleaned and analysed by Social Security Scotland researchers. A non-response weight cannot be developed for this data as all questions are optional, and thus some respondents chose not to provide geographic or demographic information (for example their postcode and date of birth).

Results from the closed questions are generally presented for all respondents, who answered the question, then broken down by benefit experience. Key results across the survey were also examined for differences across selected geographic and demographic characteristics⁴. The geographic and demographic characteristics used in analysis include:

- gender identity
- age
- ethnicity
- whether respondent had a long-term physical or mental health condition
- whether respondent lived in an urban or rural area (2-fold classification)
- deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation)

⁴ A minimum base of 25 was required for a benefit experience or demographic characteristic to be used a break down.

- whether respondent had any communication needs
- main language⁵
- whether respondent could speak, understand, read and write English ‘very well’

Notable differences between groups are highlighted in the report. A complete outline of the derivation and parameters for these groups, as well as further demographic breakdowns, are provided in the [Supplementary document: tables and methods](#) published alongside this report.

For a small selection of key questions, the report also includes analysis assessing the difference in views between respondents who had received any successful decision or benefit, compared to those who had only been unsuccessful with their application(s). Around 9% of all respondents had only been unsuccessful with Social Security Scotland benefit applications and had not received any benefit not requiring an application.

2.5.2 Open text questions

Most sections of the survey ended with a chance to provide comments⁶. Respondents were asked if they would like to say anything more about the subject of that section (i.e. applying, staff, discrimination, and so on). For the ‘Overall’ section the open text question asked the respondent if they would like to make suggestions for improvement or provide any further comments.

Responses were categorised as positive, negative, neutral, mixed, unclear and suggestion, before undergoing further thematic analysis. During this analysis stage, the open text responses (quotes) were not linked to the respondent’s wider contextual information, for example the respondent’s demographic information or responses at other questions.

After themes had been identified and quotes selected to best reflect these themes, the gender identity, age, and benefit experience of the corresponding respondent was included with each quote. This means that no efforts were made to present quotes, for each theme, from a wide range of sub-groups within the respondent sample. Rather, that the contextual information included with the quotes may be indicative of whether the themes identified were raised by a wide range of groups, or more commonly amongst particular groups. Caution must be given here to the fact that certain characteristics (e.g. being a woman) were more prevalent within the sample. A detailed analysis of who took part in the survey is provided in the [Supplementary document: tables and methods](#).

Comments were coded as unclear when they did not fit a recurring or emerging theme, could not be understood by the researcher or were generally unclear. A number of responses contained details that made it clear the comment was not about Social Security Scotland.

⁵ The questions ascertaining respondents’ main language and whether respondent could speak, understand, read and write English ‘very well’ were added to the survey for the 2nd round of fieldwork, and thus have a lower number of responses.

⁶ There were nine opportunities to provide comments in total.

Most of these described experiences with the Department for Work and Pensions. Others detailed experiences with outside agencies including Citizens Advice, Jobcentres, local council, NHS or home visits⁷. These comments were not included in the analysis. It is likely that more comments, without explicit indicators, were also about experiences not related to Social Security Scotland. However, only those comments explicitly about other organisations or experiences were coded as such, and therefore excluded.

2.6 Understanding and interpreting survey results

2.6.1 Summary of who responded and implications for findings

The survey results provide rich insight into some of the experiences of Social Security Scotland clients. However, we cannot assume that the results represent the views of Social Security Scotland's clients as a whole. It is reasonable though, given the number of responses, to treat the findings as indicative of the general view of clients. This includes when results are shown by benefit experience and demographic group.

However, information on the benefit experience and demographic characteristics of respondents does help us further understand the results contained in this report and view them in context. A detailed analysis of who took part in the survey is provided in the [Supplementary document: tables and methods](#).

The demographic background of respondents did differ across each benefit group. For example, we know that respondents with experience of applying for Funeral Support Payment were more likely to be older and living with a long-term health condition. These relationships may be a factor behind any difference in results seen across these groups. For example, findings for Funeral Support Payment applicants may be influenced by the older age profile of this group. In other places, what appears to be an age effect in results may actually be related to different benefit experience in each age group.

2.6.2 Comparing findings with previous publications

Data presented in this report is not directly comparable to data presented in either of the previous two Social Security Scotland Satisfaction Survey publications⁸. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, as set out in Section 2.3.3, this publication includes responses from clients who were not successful in any of their applications. However, the previous surveys (2018-2021) were only open to clients who had received a positive decision on an application (or received a benefit payment). The inclusion of clients who were not successful in any of their applications is likely to have impacted some of the findings. Secondly, the proportion of respondents who received each benefit differs across the different publications, which again can influence findings. Caution should therefore be applied to any comparisons made; any difference in findings across the publications may be as a result of the amendments to the surveys' methodology across rounds.

⁷ Social Security Scotland only performed home visits on a few occasions under exceptional circumstances

⁸ These can be found here: [Social Security Scotland - Client Survey 2018-2021](#) and here: [Social Security Scotland - Social Security Scotland Client Survey 2018-2020](#)

2.6.3 Understanding results and quotations presented in the report

Other key factors to be aware of when interpreting the findings in this report are:

- Results for the closed questions presented in this report are rounded to whole numbers. As such, results included in charts and tables figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding. This may also mean that if the report text presents a finding which is a sum of two response options, rounding may cause the summed value to be 1 percentage point higher or lower than the sum of the two constituent values.
- Results for each question shown in the report exclude any respondents who either skipped the question, said 'not applicable' or were filtered out of the relevant question, unless otherwise stated. 'Don't know', 'Can't remember', and 'Prefer not to say' responses are included as valid responses.
- Some percentages quoted in the report relate to questions that allowed respondents to choose more than one response. These percentages will not sum to 100%.
- All quotes presented under the 'Comments about...' sections throughout this report are contained within coloured text boxes to separate them from the analytical commentary. The quotes included in the report serve as examples that illustrate or represent key themes or points raised in client comments. Quotes are presented in a manner that reflects the comments received as accurately as possible. This includes where capitalised text may have been used by respondents for emphasis but does not include text that's been entirely capitalised (block capitals). Such text has been rewritten in lower case for better readability. Any potentially identifying information has been omitted.
- Themes are generally presented in order of prominence in the 'Comments about...' sections. This means that, in each subsection where quotes supporting a theme are presented, the theme with the most numerous responses overall is presented first, then the second-most numerous and so on until the theme with the least numerous responses. It should be noted, however, that this is generally how themes are presented; despite some themes containing only a few responses does not mean that that theme is less important or insightful.
- '#' indicates that a value is suppressed due to a small number of respondents in a group. To reduce risk of disclosure, the minimum base size for a variable to be included in a cross break was set at 25. The minimum base size for a response within the cross break was set at 5.
- Some base sizes greater than 25 (for example the 107 respondents who received Job Start Payment) are included but should be interpreted with caution.
- Results are presented to zero decimal places. '0%' should therefore be interpreted to mean <0.5%. If no responses were given then this is denoted by '-'.
- Many closed questions within the survey provide respondents with response options in a 5 point Likert scale format, for example: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree', or alternatively: 'very good', 'good', 'neither poor nor good', 'poor', 'very poor'. When analysed these responses were combined into, for example, agree (including 'strongly agree', 'agree'), neither agree nor disagree, and disagree (including 'disagree', 'strongly disagree'). No guidance was given to respondents as to how they should interpret these response options, they were allowed to interpret at their discretion.
- Report Tables include a 'Total' row or column. Where a Table presents findings from 'All respondents', the 'Total' is the number of respondents who answered the corresponding

question. Where a Table includes a cross break, for example 'by benefit experience', the 'Total' outlines the number of respondents within each sub-group, for example the number of respondents who had experience of Scottish Child Payment.

- Some findings are broken down by benefit. This can be by 'experience of the benefit' (experience of applying for or receiving each benefit), 'experience of benefit application' (experience of applying for each benefit), or 'experience of receiving benefit' (experience of receiving each benefit). Each table which includes benefit break downs will specify the category of benefit experience included.

3. Overall experience

This section presents findings from the survey's headline questions which asked respondents for their views of their overall experience with Social Security Scotland.

3.1 Overall rating of experience

The survey's highest level question asked respondents how they would rate their overall experience with Social Security Scotland. The majority of respondents (89%) said that their overall experience was 'very good' or 'good'⁹. Just 3% said their experience was 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Table 3.1: Overall rating of experience with Social Security Scotland

All respondents; Column percentages

Response options	All respondents ¹⁰
Very good	56%
Good	34%
Neither poor nor good	8%
Poor	2%
Very poor	0%
Total	7,294

Respondents were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of more specific statements about their experience. Again, respondents generally indicated a positive experience, with a clear majority agreeing (agree or strongly agree) with each of the statements (see Table 3.2).

Notably, nearly nine-in-ten believed that they had been treated with dignity (87%), fairness (87%) and respect (89%). A similar proportion agreed that Social Security Scotland had not wasted their time (86%), whilst around eight-in-ten (81%) said they understood what Social Security Scotland does.

Few respondents actively disagreed with each of the statements, as Table 3.2 shows. Instead, respondents who did not give a positive response to each statement tended to say 'neither agree nor disagree'. The statement which produced the highest level of disagreement, from around one-in-twenty respondents (5%) was 'Social Security Scotland is an honest organisation'

⁹ Unrounded figures for 'very good' and 'good' sum to 89%.

¹⁰ In this table, and all other tables and figures, the sample size does not include respondents who skipped the question, or (with some other questions) were routed around the question.

Table 3.2: Views on overall experience with Social Security Scotland
All respondents; Row percentages

Thinking about your overall experience with Social Security Scotland...	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Social Security Scotland treated me with dignity	87%	9%	2%	1%	6,977
Social Security Scotland treated me fairly	87%	8%	3%	1%	6,955
Social Security Scotland treated me with respect	89%	8%	2%	1%	7,001
Social Security Scotland did not waste my time	86%	10%	4%	1%	7,081
I understand what Social Security Scotland does	81%	17%	2%	1%	6,493
I feel I can trust Social Security Scotland	83%	14%	3%	0%	7,032
Social Security Scotland is an honest organisation	86%	9%	5%	1%	7,032
Social Security Scotland is an open organisation	84%	14%	2%	1%	6,942

3.2 Overall rating of experience by benefit experience

It is also possible to examine views on Social Security Scotland based on the benefit experience of respondents. Section 2.5 provides key information to consider when looking at findings presented in this way throughout the report. The key consideration to note is that all respondents are presented against each of the benefits they said they had experience of, meaning there is some overlap between the groups, given that almost four-in-ten (38%) respondents had experience of more than one benefit.

As shown in Table 3.3, the proportion who rated their experience as 'very good' or 'good' was lowest amongst respondents with experience of Job Start Payment (85%) and highest for those with experience of Scottish Child Payment (93%). However, the rating of overall experience was broadly similar across benefit groups. Again, few respondents in each group answered 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Table 3.3: Overall rating of experience with Social Security Scotland, by benefit experience
All respondents with experience of each benefit; row percentages

Benefit experience	Very good or good	Neither poor nor good	Poor or very poor	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	90%	9%	2%	1,622
Best Start Grant	91%	6%	3%	2,950
Best Start Foods	91%	6%	3%	3,039
Funeral Support Payment	89%	8%	3%	676
Young Carer Grant	92%	7%	1%	198
Job Start Payment	85%	11%	4%	100
Scottish Child Payment	93%	5%	2%	3,516
Child Winter Heating Assistance	90%	9%	1%	370
Child Disability Payment ¹¹	91%	7%	2%	767

Table 3.4 shows results for the more detailed questions on respondents' overall experience by benefit experience. Broadly, respondents with experience of Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods, Scottish Child Payment, or Young Carer Grant were most likely to agree with the statements, and those who had received Carer's Allowance Supplement or Child Winter Heating Assistance were least likely.

Agreement with almost all statements was lowest among respondents with experience of Job Start Payment, including with: 'Social Security Scotland is an honest organisation' and 'Social Security Scotland is an open organisation' (77% and 76% respectively). The exception to this being that Carer's Allowance Supplement recipients were least likely to agree with the statements 'I understand what Social Security Scotland does' (71%) and 'I feel I can trust Social Security Scotland' (77%).

Respondents with experience of Young Carer Grant were most likely to agree that they had been treated with dignity (92%), fairness (93%), or respect (94%). This was also the case for around nine-in-ten respondents with experience of Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods, Scottish Child Payment, Funeral Support Payment, or Child Disability Payment (see Table 3.4).

¹¹ 'Child Disability Payment' includes respondents who applied for this benefit, and those who were Case Transferred.

Table 3.4: Views on overall experience with Social Security Scotland, by benefit experience

All respondents with any experience of each benefit; row percentages

Strongly agree or agree that...	Carer's Allowance Supplement	Best Start Grant	Best Start Foods	Funeral Support Payment	Young Carer Grant	Job Start Payment	Scottish Child Payment	Child Winter Heating Assistance	Child Disability Payment
Social Security Scotland treated me with dignity	84%	90%	90%	90%	92%	79%	91%	87%	91%
Social Security Scotland treated me fairly	86%	89%	89%	87%	93%	81%	91%	88%	89%
Social Security Scotland treated me with respect	85%	91%	91%	92%	94%	80%	92%	90%	92%
I understand what Social Security Scotland does	80%	90%	90%	84%	89%	78%	91%	84%	90%
Social Security Scotland is an open organisation	71%	87%	87%	78%	88%	78%	87%	80%	83%
I feel I can trust Social Security Scotland	77%	88%	88%	82%	88%	79%	88%	83%	84%
Social Security Scotland did not waste my time	84%	87%	87%	86%	88%	77%	89%	87%	87%
Social Security Scotland is an honest organisation	79%	89%	89%	83%	88%	76%	90%	84%	84%
Total	1,531	2,892	2,974	671	191	98	3,449	325	754

3.3 Overall rating of experience by demographic characteristics

Some variation was evident when assessing respondents' overall rating of their experience with Social Security Scotland by some demographic characteristics. Those with a long-term physical or mental health condition (87%) were less likely to rate their overall experience as 'very good' or 'good' compared to those without such a condition (91%), as were respondents aged 25-44 (91-92%) compared to those aged 16-24 (86%) and those aged 45 and older (85-88%). Those with a communication need were also less likely to rate their overall experience as 'very good' or 'good' (84%, compared to 90% of those with no communication needs).

Table 3.5: Overall rating of experience with Social Security Scotland, by demographic and geographic breakdowns

All respondents

Demographic/Geographic group	Proportion who said that their overall experience was very good or good	Total
Gender identity		
Man	87%	1,183
Woman	90%	5,486
Answered in another way	80%	50
Prefer not to say	76%	35
Long-term health condition		
With long-term physical/mental health condition	87%	2,294
No long-term physical or mental health condition	91%	3,986
Prefer not to say	87%	481
Ethnicity		
White	89%	5,110
Minority ethnic	90%	1,070
Prefer not to say	84%	187
Age		
16-24	86%	660
25-34	91%	1,993
35-44	92%	2,032
45-54	88%	869
55-64	88%	851
65+	85%	324
Urban-rural classification		
Urban	90%	5,349
Rural	89%	931
Communication needs		
Had communication needs	84%	705
Had no communication needs	90%	6,372
Main language		
English	86%	2,877
Other	88%	1,041
Speaking, writing, understanding, and reading English		
Could speak, write, understand, and read English 'very well'	87%	2,659
Others	86%	1,386

Results for the set of more detailed questions exploring respondents' overall experience were also generally positive across the range of demographic groups. However, differences were again evident between some groups.

For example, respondents living with a long-term health condition were less likely than people without such a condition to agree with each of the statements, as shown in Table 3.6. Other breakdowns are provided in the [Supplementary document: tables and methods](#).

Table 3.6: Views on overall experience with Social Security Scotland, by whether respondent had a long-term health condition

All respondents

Proportion who strongly agree or agree that:	With long-term physical/mental health condition	No long-term physical/mental health condition	Prefer not to say
Social Security Scotland treated me fairly	87%	89%	85%
Social Security Scotland treated me with respect	86%	89%	84%
Social Security Scotland treated me with dignity	88%	91%	86%
Social Security Scotland did not waste my time	83%	89%	83%
I understand what Social Security Scotland does	78%	84%	79%
I feel I can trust Social Security Scotland	80%	86%	80%
Social Security Scotland is an honest organisation	84%	87%	82%
Social Security Scotland is an open organisation	82%	87%	82%
Total	2,203	3,831	451

Respondents who had applied for a benefit and not received any successful decisions were decidedly less positive about their experience with Social Security Scotland¹². Within this group 72% rated their overall experience as 'very good' or 'good', compared to 93% of those who had been successful with an application. Applicants who had not received a successful decision were also less likely to say that they had been treated with dignity (75%), fairness (70%), or respect (78%), compared to those who had been successful with an application (90%, 91%, and 91% respectively).

¹² Based on responses given in the survey, 18% of applicants had not received any successful decisions.

3.4 Comments about overall experience and general suggestions

The survey's final question invited all respondents to offer suggestions for improvement or make further comments about their overall experience with Social Security Scotland¹³

370 respondents (around one-in-twenty of the overall respondents) provided a substantive¹⁴ comment. Around a third of these comments were suggestions for improvement. The rest were general comments about overall experience, of which just over a third were negative and just over a quarter were positive.

Most suggestions were related to our service, particularly around issues of communication and information. A clear theme apparent in the suggestion comments was the desire for better and more frequent communication:

"Better communication."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"Improved communication in a more timely manner"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Winter Heating Assistance

"Greater written communication about everything would help."

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"I look forward to my cares allowance + my children's DLAs and PIPs award going over to SSS from the existing DWP. I hope the process will be smooth and quick. I feel some communication to existing Scottish DWP recipients to explain the process and timelines would be beneficial and reassuring. Thanks"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"More communication overall including jobcentres discussions about this service."

Man, aged 25-34, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

There was a consistent suggestion of updates about applications:

"Better communication with regards to claims ie updates on applications. More staff so applications don't take 6 months to process and don't need to formally complain."

Aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Better communication with regards to updating people"

Woman, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Possibly return calls to advise on progress of claims"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"update on applications more and employ staff that are not rude."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

¹³ 'Would you like to make any suggestions for improvement or further comments about your overall experience?'

¹⁴ Responses such as "N/A", "no comment" etc are not included in this figure.

"I think it would be good if people who apply online where able to check the status of their applications online instead of waiting for letters, emails, texts or phone calls"
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

Many suggestions related to communication were related to various aspects of eligibility, most typically information on entitlements:

"Be more forthcoming about extra benefits that we may be able to receive."
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"More explanation on benefits entitlement"
Man, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

"An explanation of needing to be on benefits to qualify - I am on statutory maternity pay only, applied for universal credit apparently don't qualify for that either, again on SMP and have child benefit payments. i felt it was a waste of time"
Woman, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"I was told by a friend to apply for the best start Grant. I think it would help people to know what the criteria for a successful application would be. When my friend told me to apply, I nearly didn't as I thought I wouldn't receive anything. My friend sending me the link prompted me. If people know that it wouldn't be a waste of time i.e. that they 'fit' the criteria in terms of income, then I believe more people would apply."
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"If people are applying it would be nice to know over the phone whether or not they're eligible rather than getting there hopes up with help that they won't receive."
Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

There was also desire for Social Security Scotland to more widely advertise their benefits and services. All of the exemplifying comments outlined below were given by respondents who had not applied for a Social Security Scotland Benefit, only received a benefit requiring no application:

"It would be good if you could advertise the help available more widely."
Man, aged 35-44, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Maybe a little bit more advertisement on what's available regarding benefits/schemes etc maybe in local papers, magazines, leaflets etc"
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Need more adverts on tv / radio to inform people of what SSS does."
Aged 35-44, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"More information about what SSS is responsible for."
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Winter Heating Assistance

"[...] I did not see a TV advert etc/newspaper or social media to inform people about what Social Security Scotland does and what they help with. (Benefits)"
Man, aged 16-24, experience of Child Winter Heating Assistance

“More advertisements - leaflets/TV/Radio I think if this was to happen people would have a better understanding of the benefits available to them.”
Man, aged 55-64, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

Most negative comments related to our service and, to a lesser but still significant extent, our processes. Again, communication as a theme featured heavily in these comments, as well as time (delays) and the manner of our staff. Many of these comments were not wholly negative, as many also contained suggestions.

Respondents mentioned delays in hearing back about their application and/or application processing time:

“Just very slow to hear back from them when applying for an application”
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement, Child Winter Heating Assistance, and Child Disability Payment

“Process applications within a reasonable and respectful timeframe. realise that the people who are applying are desperate and cant wait 3 months for a couple of extra pounds”
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“Pay people who need money quickly. Don’t waste time with unimportant questions or by asking one question one day and another the next. People on benefits are busy, many of us work more than one job and still need help.”
Experience of Funeral Support Payment and Scottish Child Payment

“Waiting times for decisions are very bad”
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

“State that applications could take up to 12 weeks rather than 30 days and let people know earlier how there application is. This isn’t the first time I’ve applied and waited a lot longer than 30days. Then people and prepared to wait longer. I know not got an update that extra information was needed because I phoned myself. First time was after the 30days and application hadn’t been looked at 2nd time was told a technical issue meant application made the day I applied had been missed”
Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“More transparency when problems arise. I was made to feel like a time waster when I started to phone weekly after waiting 12 weeks for my application to be processed. In the end it took 5 months but no one ever contacted me with updates or acknowledged that my experience was poor.”
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

Some of the negative comments mentioned staff manner, particularly lack of empathy/sympathy:

“Answer calls quicker. Staff to be a bit more sympathetic to callers.”
Woman, aged 65+, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“Start treating applicants as individuals and not just blanket cases. We weren’t waiting on referrals or appointments, so feel I should have been in receipt of payments since the day I applied. Tax credits did so why not you? (I didn’t even apply just got a letter with an

award)”
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

“Time wasters, zero empathy with the needed”
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Scottish Child Payment

“Staff should have more training and not such a sharp tone”
Aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

“Staff would benefit from education/training in communication skills eg to [illegible] to emotional intelligence, empathy and listening.”
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“Training for Staff[.] Social Security is what we are entitled to, but I felt I was an inconvenience on many occasions and not everyone has access to the internet or computers. I was told that I would be contacted at a later date, as the dept. was too busy at that particular time. I feel this is stupid and no wonder S. Security has a backlog, just deal with the case as it comes in does this make sense.”
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

The majority of positive comments were simple reflections on an overall good experience, and did not relate to any one area of the agency:

“I really like what and how you do. Transparency is important and Social Security Scotland take cares of it too. Congratulations.”
Woman, aged 65+, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“A positive experience.”
Aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

“Extremely Good.”
Man, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“I really feel personally no further improvements are needed.”
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“SSS is a very good service for Scotland”
Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment

“Everything was easy and went really smoothly I appreciate it all”
Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

4. Finding out about Social Security Scotland

The survey opened by asking respondents how they had first found out about Social Security Scotland. Respondents could choose more than one option if applicable.

The most common means of first finding out about Social Security Scotland was via 'Word-of-mouth' (24%), which was the case for around a quarter of respondents. Around one-in-five (19%) first found out about Social Security Scotland 'online or via social media (for example, Twitter, Facebook)', and slightly fewer through being contacted by Social Security Scotland or through a health service (17% and 16% respectively). Respondents were least likely to say that they first found out about Social Security Scotland via a 'Leaflet, pamphlet or poster' (3%) or 'News article or programme (including radio)' (3%), as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: How respondents first heard of Social Security Scotland
All respondents

Response options	All respondents
Word-of-mouth	24%
Online or social media (for example, Twitter, Facebook)	19%
Social Security Scotland contacted me (for example, phone call or letter)	17%
Health service (for example, NHS worker, GP, Health Practitioner, Psychologist)	16%
Department for Work and Pensions (including Jobcentre Plus)	13%
Citizens Advice	7%
Community or social care service	6%
Advert (for example, TV, radio, newspaper)	5%
Leaflet, pamphlet or poster	3%
News article or programme (including radio)	3%
Other	6%
Can't remember / don't know	9%
Total	7,472

4.1 Finding out about Social Security Scotland – by benefit experience

Table 4.2 shows how respondents first found out about Social Security Scotland, broken down by benefit experience. There were clear differences among those with experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement or Child Winter Heating Assistance (which do not require an application). Around one-in-five (21%) of Carer's Allowance Supplement and one-in-three (34%) Child Winter Heating Assistance recipients said they first heard about Social Security Scotland through being contacted by us.

Those who had experience of Funeral Support Payment or Job Start Payment were least likely to say they first found out about Social Security Scotland online or via social media (10% and 13% respectively). More than half of respondents with experience of Job Start Payment (54%) first found out about Social Security Scotland via the Department for Work and Pensions, overwhelming more than other benefit experience groups. Many of the 'Other' responses given by 11% of respondents with experience of Funeral Support Payment mentioned a funeral director.

Table 4.2: How respondents had first heard of Social Security Scotland, by benefit experience

All respondents with any experience of each benefit; Column percentages

Response options	Carer's Allowance Supplement	Best Start Grant	Best Start Foods	Funeral Support Payment	Young Carer Grant	Job Start Payment	Scottish Child Payment	Child Winter Heating Assistance	Child Disability Payment
Social Security Scotland contacted me	21%	15%	15%	13%	13%	10%	15%	34%	17%
Advert	4%	6%	6%	3%	5%	6%	7%	7%	7%
Online or social media	15%	21%	21%	10%	28%	13%	24%	19%	26%
News article or programme (including radio)	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Word-of-mouth	22%	25%	25%	33%	25%	18%	26%	16%	23%
Citizens Advice	8%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Department for Work and Pensions, including Jobcentre Plus	20%	9%	9%	23%	8%	54%	9%	14%	12%
Health service	13%	24%	24%	6%	8%	6%	20%	16%	19%
Community or social care service	7%	5%	5%	5%	10%	2%	5%	9%	6%
Leaflet, pamphlet or poster	2%	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%
Can't remember / don't know	10%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	10%	8%
Other	7%	5%	5%	11%	8%	7%	5%	5%	5%
Total	1,638	3,020	3,111	690	201	106	3,571	375	780

5. Looking up Social Security Scotland websites

This section explores respondents' experiences of looking up Social Security Scotland websites. 65% of all respondents said that they had looked up a Social Security Scotland website (including mygov.scot).

5.1 Were websites easy to navigate and understand

The majority of respondents who had looked up a Social Security Scotland website agreed that the websites were 'easy to navigate' (86%) and 'easy to understand' (87%).

Table 5.1: Whether respondents found the website easy to navigate and found the information easy to understand.

All respondents who had looked up a Social Security Scotland website, row percentages

Thinking about when you looked up our websites...	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
It was easy to navigate the website(s)	86%	9%	4%	1%	4,800
The information was easy to understand	87%	8%	4%	1%	4,580

There was some variation in experience with Social Security Scotland websites by benefit experience, as set out in Table 5.2. Respondents with experience of Funeral Support Payment or Job Start Payment were the least likely to agree that the websites were 'easy to navigate' (both 81%), and that 'the information was easy to understand' (80% and 84% respectively). Respondents with experience of Young Carer Grant were most likely to agree with these statements (90% and 93% respectively).

Table 5.2: Whether respondents found Social Security Scotland websites easy to navigate and found the information easy to understand.

All respondents who had looked up a Social Security Scotland website, by benefit experience

Benefit experience	Proportion who strongly agree or agree that:		Total
	It was easy to navigate the website(s)	The information was easy to understand	
Carer's Allowance Supplement	85%	85%	971
Best Start Grant	88%	89%	2,329
Best Start Foods	88%	89%	2,396
Funeral Support Payment	81%	80%	388
Young Carer Grant	90%	93%	126
Job Start Payment	81%	84%	70
Scottish Child Payment	89%	91%	2,674
Child Winter Heating Assistance	86%	91%	211
Child Disability Payment	87%	88%	611

Respondents aged 55 years or older were less likely to agree that the websites were 'easy to navigate' (80%, compared with 89% of respondents aged 16-54), and that 'the information was easy to understand' (80%, compared with 88% of respondents

aged 16-54). Age may be the driver behind the lower level of agreement for these statements among Funeral Support Payment applicants, who had a mean age of 56 years, compared to 36 years across all other respondents.

Those who identified as having a communication need were less likely to agree with the statement 'The information was easy to understand' (79%, compared with 88% of those with no communication needs).

6. Contact with Social Security Scotland

This section explores respondents' experience of their contact with Social Security Scotland. This includes when contacting Social Security Scotland, and when Social Security Scotland contacted them.

6.1 Making contact with Social Security Scotland

53% of all respondents said that they had tried to contact Social Security Scotland at some point since 1 April 2021. Women were more likely to have tried to contact Social Security Scotland (55% of women, compared to 51% of men), as were respondents aged 16-54 (54%, compared to 50% of those aged 55 or older).

Table 6.1 sets out the type(s) of contact respondents had with Social Security Scotland. Respondents could select more than one option. By far the most common was through the Phone Helpline (68%). Very few respondents had contact with Social Security Scotland in person (at an arranged venue or at home), or via a Video call appointment.

Table 6.1: Type(s) of contact with Social Security Scotland
All respondents who had tried to contact Social Security Scotland

Response options	All respondents
Phone helpline	68%
In person - at an arranged venue	1%
In person - home visit	1%
Video call appointment	2%
Phone appointment	15%
Webchat (through mygov.scot or the Social Security Scotland website)	15%
Letter	37%
Other	5%
Total	3,927

6.2 Experience of contact with Social Security Scotland

Those who had tried to contact Social Security Scotland were generally positive about their experience of doing so. Most respondents agreed with the statements, 'I had enough choice about how I communicated with Social Security Scotland' (85%) and 'I got the support (information or advice) I needed' (84%). Slightly fewer agreed that 'It was easy to contact Social Security Scotland' (81%), whilst one-in-ten (10%) disagreed with this, as Table 6.2 shows.

Table 6.2: Views on communication choices and support received

All respondents who had tried to contact Social Security Scotland; Row percentages

Thinking about your experience contacting Social Security Scotland, how much do you agree or disagree...	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Can't remember/ Don't know	Total
I had enough choice about how I communicated with Social Security Scotland	85%	9%	5%	1%	3,857
It was easy to contact Social Security Scotland	81%	9%	10%	1%	3,829
I got the support (information or advice) I needed	84%	7%	9%	1%	3,864

Some divergence was seen between benefit experience and views on communication choices and support received, as shown in Table 6.3. Respondents with experience of Job Start Payment were less likely to agree with each of the statements regarding communication choices and support received, whereas agreement was highest among Young Carer Grant applicants.

Table 6.3: Views on communication choices and support received, by benefit experience

All respondents who had tried to contact Social Security Scotland

Benefit experience	I had enough choice about how I communicated with Social Security Scotland	It was easy to contact Social Security Scotland	I got the support (information or advice) I needed	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	82%	77%	83%	685
Best Start Grant	86%	82%	86%	1,933
Best Start Foods	87%	83%	85%	1,978
Funeral Support Payment	82%	81%	86%	471
Young Carer Grant	90%	87%	87%	115
Job Start Payment	79%	74%	75%	72
Scottish Child Payment	89%	85%	87%	2,044
Child Winter Heating Assistance	88%	86%	85%	144
Child Disability Payment	89%	86%	86%	524

Again, age was associated with a lower level of agreement with the statements relating to communication choices and support received. Respondents aged 55 years or older were less likely to agree with the statements: 'I had enough choice about how I communicated with Social Security Scotland' (79%, compared to 87% of respondents aged 16-54), 'It was easy to contact Social Security Scotland' (74%, compared to 84% of respondents aged 16-54), and 'I got the support (information or advice) I needed' (79%, compared to 85% of respondents aged 16-54).

Respondents with a communication need were also less likely to agree with the statements: 'I had enough choice about how I communicated with Social Security Scotland' (79%, compared to 86% of respondents with no communication needs), and 'It was easy to contact Social Security Scotland' (75%, compared to 82% of respondents with no communication needs).

Around eight-in-ten of all respondents agreed with the statements 'I received the right level of communication from Social Security Scotland' (80%) and 'I had enough choice about how Social Security Scotland communicated with me' (80%).

Those with experience of Job Start Payment and Carer's Allowance Supplement were less likely to agree with these statements, whereas those with experience of Young Carer Grant were more likely, as set out in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Views on amount and choice of communication received from Social Security Scotland, by benefit experience

All respondents with any experience of each benefit

Benefit experience	I received the right level of communication from Social Security Scotland	I had enough choice about how Social Security Scotland communicated with me	Total
All respondents	80%	80%	7,074
Carer's Allowance Supplement	78%	74%	1,570
Best Start Grant	82%	84%	2,964
Best Start Foods	82%	84%	3,050
Funeral Support Payment	84%	83%	671
Young Carer Grant	87%	87%	197
Job Start Payment	74%	76%	100
Scottish Child Payment	83%	85%	3,503
Child Winter Heating Assistance	80%	72%	361
Child Disability Payment	82%	84%	756

Respondents with a communication need were also less likely to agree with the statements: 'I received the right level of communication from Social Security Scotland' (73%, compared to 81% of respondents with no communication needs), and 'I had enough choice about how Social Security Scotland communicated with me' (70%, compared to 81% of respondents with no communication needs). No difference was observed across any other demographic characteristics in terms of agreement with these two statements.

7. Experiences with staff

This section presents findings on how respondents who had been in contact with Social Security Scotland staff felt about their experience.

7.1 Whether respondents had been in contact with staff

Respondents were asked if they had been in contact with a member of Social Security Scotland staff, in-person, over the phone, or through an interpreter, at any point since 1 April 2021.

Nearly half of respondents (48%) said they had been in contact with a member of staff. This figure varied notably by benefit experience. Almost six-in-ten of those who said they had applied for a Social Security Scotland benefit reported contact with staff (58%), compared to around three-in-ten (30%) of those who had not applied for a benefit.

Looking at individual benefits, respondents with experience of Funeral Support Payment were most likely to have been in contact with staff (78%), followed by those with experience of Child Disability payment (68%). There was little difference between respondents with experience of Best Start Grant (55%), Best Start Foods (54%), Young Carer Grant (54%), Job Start Payment (53%), or Scottish Child Payment (49%).

Respondents whose main language was English were marginally more likely to have been in contact with a member of staff (52%, compared to 48% of those whose main language was not English). This was also the case for respondents who indicated that they could read, write, understand, and speak English very well (52%, compared to 46% of other respondents).

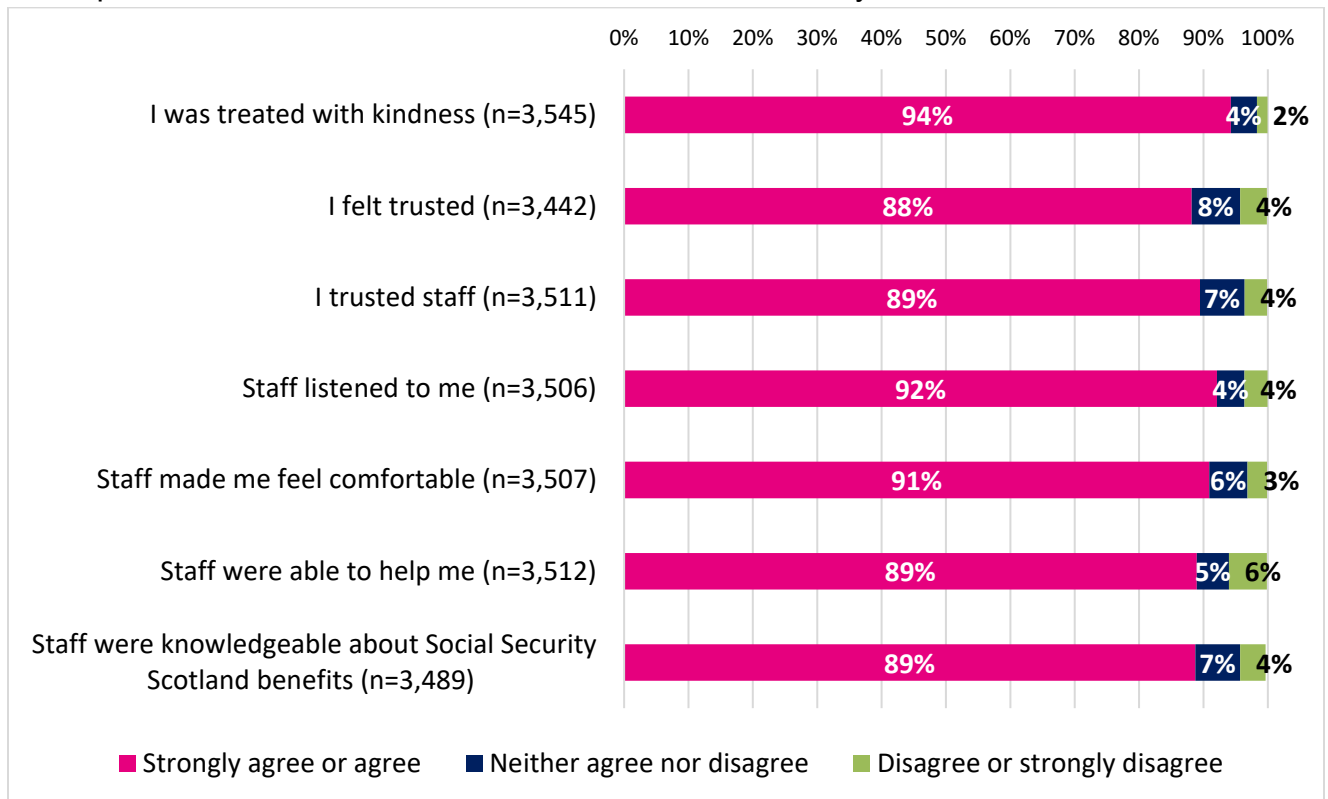
7.2 Views on contact with staff

More than nine-in-ten respondents who had been in contact said their overall experience with staff was 'very good' or 'good' (93%). Just 3% rated their experience with staff as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

In related questions about their experience, 94% of respondents said staff treated them with kindness. A little over nine-in-ten said staff listened to them (92%) and made them feel comfortable (91%), as set out in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Views on interactions with Social Security Scotland staff

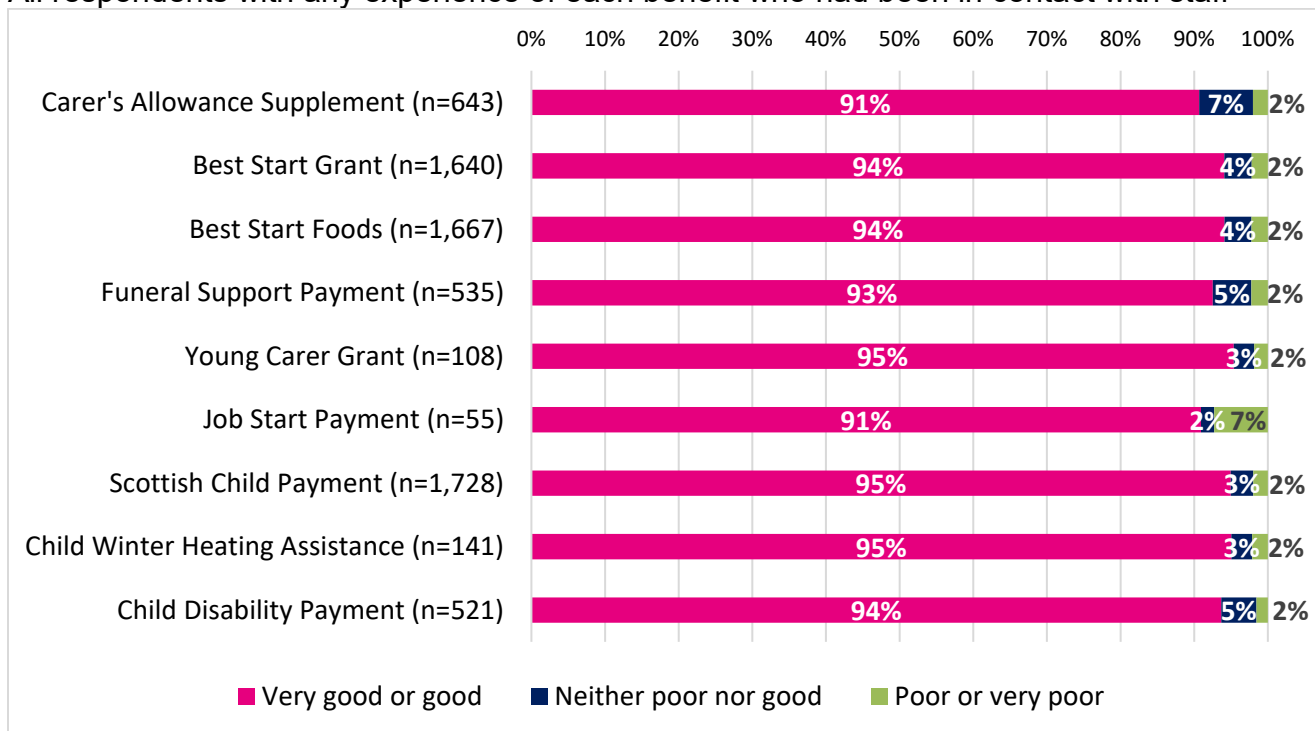
All respondents who had been in contact with Social Security Scotland staff



Respondents were very positive about staff regardless of their benefit experience. For instance, 95% of those with experience of Young Carer grant, Scottish Child Payment, or Child Winter Heating Assistance rated their experience with staff as 'very good' or 'good' (see Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2: Overall rating of experience with staff, by benefit experience

All respondents with any experience of each benefit who had been in contact with staff



Responses to follow up questions were also similar across benefit experiences (see Table 7.1). Young Carer Grant applicants were particularly likely to reflect favourably on interactions with staff, and conversely Job Start Payment applicants less favourably. However, the small number of respondents in these groups should be taken into account.

Table 7.1: Views on interactions with Social Security Scotland staff by benefit experience

All respondents with any experience of each benefit who had been in contact with Social Security Scotland staff

Proportion agreeing with statement:	I was treated with kindness	I felt trusted	I trusted staff	Staff listened to me	Staff made me feel comfortable	Staff were able to help me	Staff were knowledgeable about Social Security Scotland benefits	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	93%	85%	87%	93%	89%	91%	87%	643
Best Start Grant	95%	90%	91%	93%	92%	89%	91%	1,644
Best Start Foods	95%	90%	91%	93%	92%	89%	91%	1,667
Funeral Support Payment	94%	88%	89%	92%	91%	91%	88%	528
Young Carer Grant	94%	93%	93%	96%	94%	94%	96%	108
Job Start Payment	86%	83%	85%	85%	82%	87%	84%	56
Scottish Child Payment	96%	91%	92%	94%	93%	91%	92%	1,729
Child Winter Heating Assistance	97%	88%	88%	94%	90%	91%	91%	212
Child Disability Payment	96%	90%	91%	93%	93%	90%	88%	524

Men were slightly less likely to rate their experience with staff as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (90%) compared with women (94%). A smaller proportion of men also agreed with the statement “I felt trusted” by staff (85%, compared to 90% of women). Those aged 55 and older were less likely to rate their experience with staff as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (89%) compared with those aged 16-54 (94%). This group were also less likely to agree with the statements:

- I was treated with kindness (91%, compared to 95% of those aged 16-54)
- I felt trusted (83%, compared to 90% of those aged 16-54)
- I trusted staff (86%, compared to 91% of those aged 16-54)
- Staff were knowledgeable about Social Security Scotland benefits (85%, compared to 90% of those aged 16-54)

Respondents whose main language was not English were more likely to rate their overall experience with staff as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (95%, compared to 90% of respondents whose main language was English). This group were also more likely to agree with the statements:

- I felt trusted (90%, compared to 86% of those whose main language was English)
- I trusted staff (92%, compared to 87% of those whose main language was English)
- Staff listened to me (96%, compared to 90% of those whose main language was English)
- Staff were knowledgeable about Social Security Scotland benefits (91%, compared to 86% of those whose main language was English)

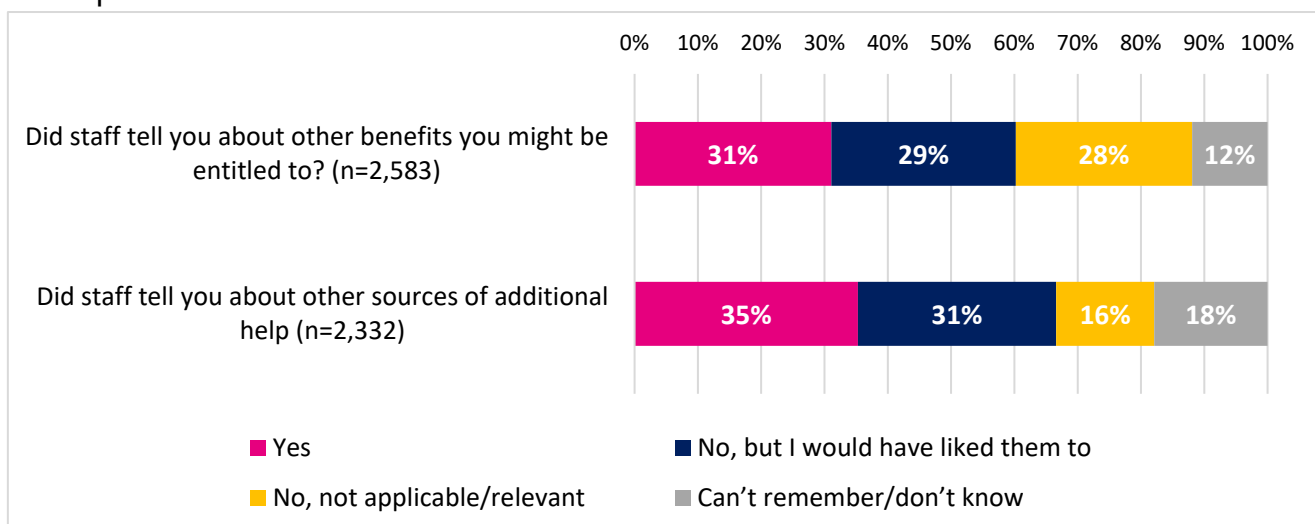
7.3 Information and advice provided by staff

Respondents who had been in contact with a member of staff were asked whether they were told about other benefits they might have been entitled to. Around three-in-ten (31%) respondents said this was the case¹⁵. However, a similar proportion (29%) said that they would have liked to have been told about other benefits by staff but were not. This was also raised in some of the open-text comments in this part of the survey (see Section 7.4 below). These results do not tell us whether staff considered likely eligibility or other factors when choosing whether to provide further advice.

A similar pattern also emerged when respondents were asked if staff told them about other sources of help that might be available, as outlined in Figure 7.3. Of those who were told by staff about other sources of additional help, the most common were: Citizens Advice Bureau (50%), welfare rights (such as the local council) (28%), money help (for example Money Advice Service) (26%), pregnancy and baby services (19%), housing support (18%), and foodbanks or similar services (16%).

¹⁵ This excludes respondents who answered ‘No, not applicable’ in regard to whether staff told them about other benefits or sources of additional help.

Figure 7.3: Whether respondents were told about other benefits or sources of help
All respondents who had been in contact with staff



Respondents who said they were told about other benefits or sources of additional help were much more likely to rate their overall experience with staff positively. Almost all (99%) of those who were told about other benefits they might be entitled to described their experience with staff as 'very good' or 'good'. This figure fell to 82% for respondents who said they would have liked to have been told about other benefits but were not (see Table 7.2). A similar disparity was also evident with regard to being told about sources of additional help.

Table 7.2: Relationship between being told about other benefits/sources of help and overall rating of experience with staff

All respondents who had been in contact with Social Security Scotland staff; Row percentages

Whether told about benefits or other sources of support	Very good or good	Neither poor nor good	Poor or very poor	Total
Staff told about other benefits	99%	1%	0%	1,104
Would have liked to have been told by staff about other benefits but were not	82%	11%	7%	1,007
Staff told about other sources of additional help	98%	1%	1%	966
Would have liked to have been told by staff about other sources of additional help but were not	81%	12%	8%	832

7.4 Comments about experiences with staff

Respondents who had been in contact with a member of staff had the chance to provide further comment on their experience¹⁶.

616 responses were given. Nearly six-in-ten of the comments were positive and just under a quarter were negative. Around one-in-ten responses were coded as mixed (containing positive and negative content), and around one-in-twenty responses were suggestions. Due to this being the first open text question that clients encountered in the survey, many gave comments that were not directly related to their experiences with staff and are therefore not reported here.

Most positive comments discussed staff members' manner and/or the help they provided:

"Everytime I have called social security Scotland they have spoken politely. They have explained what iv had to do to give evidence/proof off. They talked me through how to screen shot and upload things. Above and beyond, even when my baby has been screaming in the background, no pressure, always kind to say take your time, do it just when your free."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment, and Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Always helpful and polite"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"The person that dealt with my enquiry was very helpful, polite, professional, patient and just made me feel good about the whole process:)"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Very impressed with the help I received."

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"I have spoken with staff on a couple of occasions, the staff member who was dealing with me in January could not have done more to help, he was really great"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Scottish Child Payment

"I would like to thank them for all their help"

Man, aged 65+, experience of Funeral Support Payment

A lot of clients said that staff put them at ease or made them feel comfortable:

"I was anxious about applying but when I got a phone call for the lady to gain more information she put me at ease straight away"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

¹⁶ 'Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with our staff?'

"I have never had to claim for anything like this before. We are both retired and I was made to feel very comfortable with the lady I spoke to."

Aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"I had a great experience with the staff member who helped me with my claim. We had to speak about things that were quite uncomfortable but he made me feel at ease and acknowledged which I really appreciated."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"This is the first time I dealt with SSS, from the very start I was treated very well. I felt very comfortable which enabled me to speak from the heart. Also the staff member who dealt with me telephoned to make sure that I had managed to deal with what she advised me to do. I thought this was a lovely thing to do as you are normally forgotten about. 100% service and top marks for the way I was dealt with. I am pleased to have received this survey as I am able to show my appreciation."

Experience of Funeral Support Payment

"Staff made me feel really comfortable and at ease, through what could have been a very uncomfortable situation. I felt empathy and compassion from each person I had contact with."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

Many respondents described staff as knowledgeable:

"Found staff understanding and helpful. Staff sounded knowledgeable about difficulties faced by people with learning disabilities/complex conditions"

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Child Winter Heating Assistance and Child Disability Payment

"All staff members that I spoke with were understanding and knowledgeable. I had no issues getting my questions answered."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Child Disability Payment

"Had a phonecall from a member of staff looking for further info on my child's application recently and the lady I spoke with was lovely, I felt at ease talking to her and she was very understanding and knowledgeable and answered any questions I also had."

Woman, experience of Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment and Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Very easy and straight forward to communicate with Social Security Scotland. Staff very knowledgeable."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"Staff were absolutely wonderful!! Full of knowledge and advised me on how to progress with my claim."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

Some respondents described staff as empathetic, including several with experience of Funeral Support Payment:

"Very helpful after my husband died last November were courteous and understanding and had empathy with my situation"

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Funeral Support Payment

"Everyone I had contact with were most helpful and understanding listened to me and had empathy."

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Excellent, professional + empathetic staff"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"I found the staff member involved in my case to be professional , knowledgeable and showed empathy to me at a time when my wife had recently died. Most helpful in every way."

Man, aged 45-54, experience of Funeral Support Payment

"I was claiming Funeral Support Payment as my mother had died and I was unable to pay for the funeral, as I am disability benefits. The lady who helped me was incredibly empathetic, understanding and made the whole process easy to navigate. She helped make an awful experience better and I got awarded the benefit. I have nothing but praise for my experience."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Funeral Support Payment

Social Security Scotland staff were occasionally favourably compared to the Department for Work and Pensions:

"Staff both on the phone lines and the webchat are friendly, easy to talk to and come across as if they care. There's a world of difference between my experience with SSS and DWP."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Next to the horrific experience I've had with the DWP over disability benefits, the staff at Social Security Scotland are like the avenging angels by comparison"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"Much better experience than when dealing with my other child's DLA application. Spoke to like a human being and felt my child's needs were taken seriously much better process less stress and worry."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Child Disability Payment, Carer's Allowance Supplement, and Child Winter Heating Assistance

"So much better than DWP: No long wait on hold (Under 15mins) [Social Security Staff member] was really good, answers questions as needed and patiently waited on call while I found my child's NI Number"

Woman, experience of Child Disability Payment

"Staff seemed kind and not harsh as other departments such as DWP"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Funeral Support Payment

Accuracy was a key issue in clients' interaction with staff. Whilst many clients cited the friendly manner of staff, there were a number of respondents who had received contradictory information from different members of staff or could not get the help that they needed from staff:

"All the staff I communicated with were very friendly and helpful. Unfortunately "product knowledge" was an issue as they were unaware of certain T/C's. However, this is due to lack of training. Overall the staff were polite and friendly and helped me to feel at ease."
Woman, experience of Child Disability Payment

"[...] I phoned many times and was given conflicting information on each call. [...] I felt fobbed off on every call. The individual staff were almost all polite and respectful but all promised to sort things out which never seemed to happen. I lost trust that I was being given accurate information."
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I was getting told different things from different members of staff. I would phone about a problem and a member of staff would tell me to do something and then i would phone about a different problem and be told that i shouldn't have done what the first member of staff told me to do and this delayed me getting a lot of money when i was heavily pregnant unable to work which added so much stress"
Woman, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Staff were very courteous and polite but ultimately didn't help - there was a problem with a payment of the child winter heating allowance to my adult son who receives PiP and no-one I spoke to seemed to be able to help. I was told at one point that they didn't know why I'd had the letter telling me to call SSS."
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Child Winter Heating Assistance

"[...] nothing got sorted really from the help of social security Scotland, as nice as everyone was who I spoke to, they didn't really help me with anything on how to fix my situation."
Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Being told different things everytime I phoned. [...] I was told I couldn't discuss a decision over the phone until I had the decision letter so when I did finally get the letter and tried to discuss this I was told I couldn't? Also when I phoned to appeal as it says on the decision letter I could I was told I could do it by the form that was sent and send it back because ' it will take too long over the phone' so this made me feel as if the customer agent couldn't be bothered to do this with me via a telephone which would of been easier for myself."
Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Child Disability Payment

Conversely, some clients found the staff member they spoke to rude or unhelpful:

"Staff are rude, applications are slow and no one keeps in contact to keep you updated."
Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Majority of the time it has been good. However I had one member of staff that was quite rude and usually I don't really notice this kind of stuff and ignore it if I do however they

were on loud speaker and another member of family had said that they were rude”
Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Job Start Payment and Scottish Child Payment

“Applied for early school payment and milk tokens still not heard a thing back, phoned up and the staff were rude and did not give me an update on my application”
Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“Staff member was not at all helpful she did not listen to me and interrupted me. I was distressed by the experience at a time when I was already vulnerable.”
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“Staff need to be sympathetic and understanding they seem to be on auto cue and unable to deviate from script and tied up in so much red tape u can’t get a straight answer other than call back in a few weeks.”
Man, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

Whilst not directly related to interaction with staff, some negative comments mentioned helpline call wait times. Similar comments were also left in the sections relating to barriers, and overall experience. This included clients’ experience of the ‘call-back’ system:

“Being able to phone and get through to a person. Not able to get through and waiting times very long.”
Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“Calling through took me over 45 mins on hold waiting for someone to speak to. No call-back option like other services to hold spot in queue.”
Aged 35-44, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“I understand it is a covid time but found it very difficult to get help through the telephone could not get through. I would have liked been advised to benefit i am entitled to as i have no clue about social security as i am a working man. Only by contacting others i had an idea to what benefit i can apply for”
Man, aged 55-64, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

“If you phone up no one answers the phone you have to wait to long on the phone. Everything should be simplified, no need for all the red tape which complicates everything as you become older.”
Woman, aged 65+, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“Staff were friendly, helpful and informative. The platform for contacting social security can be infuriating though. I often requested the callback when queues were long. When I missed this callback a voicemail was left and I had to call back and go through the whole waiting process again. Sometimes 2 hours, which was infuriating when I’d already waited.”
Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Child Disability Payment

“Problem was not resolved and I had to make numerous calls. Staff did not call me back despite promising to do so.”
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement and Young Carer

8. Applying for Social Security Scotland benefits

This section presents findings on respondents' experience of applying for Social Security Scotland benefits. The findings presented in the section below relate only to respondents who had applied for a benefit. Anyone who had not applied for a benefit¹⁷ did not answer these questions. The [Supplementary document: tables and methods](#) outlines the benefit experience of survey respondents in more detail.

8.1 Applying for benefits and success rate

66% of respondents said they had experience of applying for a Social Security Scotland benefit – at least one of Best Start Grant/Foods, Funeral Support Payment, Young Carer Grant, Job Start Payment, Scottish Child Payment, or Child Disability Payment. Around four-in-ten (39%) respondents applied for one benefit¹⁸, around one-in-four (25%) applied for two benefits, and a very small proportion (2%) applied for 3 or more.

The proportion all applicants applying for each was:

- Best Start Grant/Foods – 47%
- Funeral Support Payment – 13%
- Young Carer Grant – 4%
- Job Start Payment – 2%
- Scottish Child Payment – 56%
- Child Disability Payment – 13%

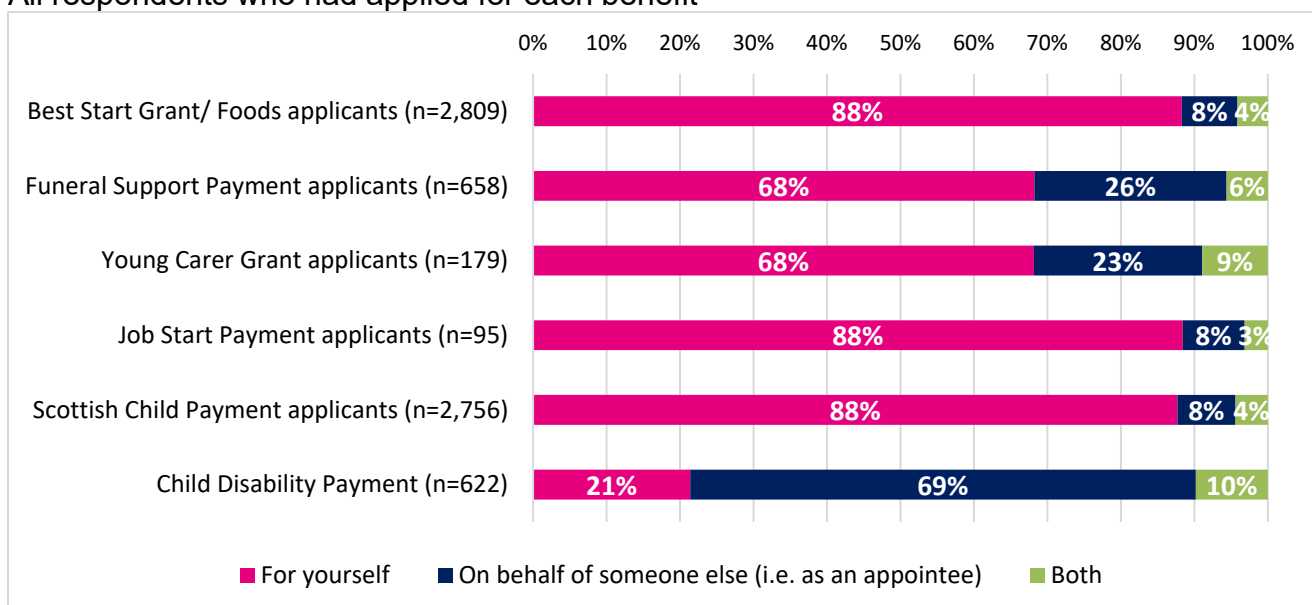
Most respondents said they had applied for themselves (78%). Nearly one-in-five (18%) had applied on behalf of someone else (i.e. as a carer or an appointee) and a small proportion (4%) said they applied for both themselves and someone else.

Overwhelmingly, respondents with experience of applying for Child Disability Payment were more likely to say that they had applied on behalf of someone else (69%), as shown in Figure 8.1. This is likely to be driven by respondents perceiving themselves to have applied on behalf of their dependent child, or both themselves and the dependent child. Around a quarter of those who had applied for Funeral Support Payment (26%) and Young Carer Grant (23%) did so on behalf of someone else.

¹⁷ This applies to those who only received Carer's Allowance Supplement, Child Winter Heating Assistance, or who were case transferred onto Child Disability Benefit.

¹⁸ This includes the joint application for Best Start Grant/Foods.

Figure 8.1: Who respondents applied for, by benefit experience
All respondents who had applied for each benefit



8.2 Application method

Respondents most commonly reported applying for benefits online (82%); far fewer applied via phone (21%) or via a postal application (8%). Respondents could select more than one option to capture complex interactions or multiple applications where relevant.

There was a clear difference in the way in which Funeral Support Payment applicants completed their application. Less than half (46%) of this group completed an online application, whereas nearly three-in-five (58%) applied over the phone (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: Application method(s) used by benefit experience
All respondents who had applied for each benefit; Column percentages

Method(s) used to apply	Best Start Grant/Foods applicants	Funeral Support Payment applicants	Young Carer Grant applicants	Job Start Payment applicants	Scottish Child Payment applicants	Child Disability Payment
Online	90%	46%	85%	90%	90%	80%
Phone	18%	58%	15%	14%	16%	18%
Video call	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%
Postal application	7%	8%	8%	4%	7%	20%
In person	0%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%
Through a Client Support Adviser	2%	3%	4%	4%	2%	3%
Total	2,829	661	179	98	2,500	624

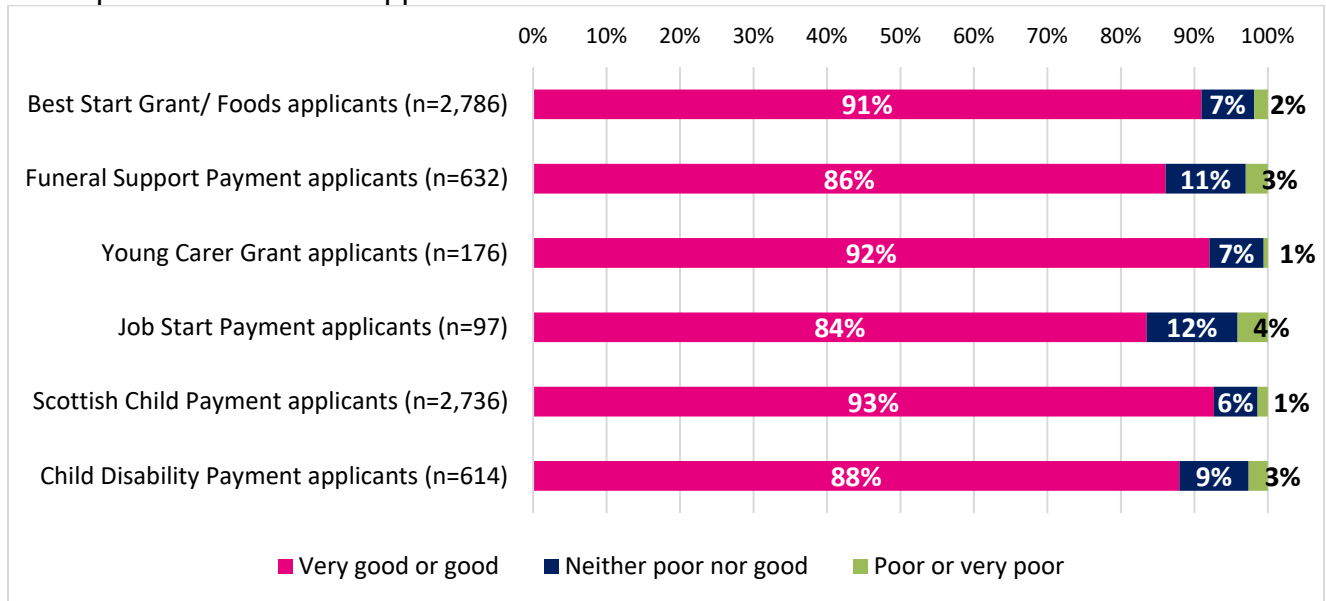
8.3 Views on application process

Around nine-in-ten respondents (90%) who had applied for a Social Security Scotland benefit said their experience of the application process overall was ‘very good’ or ‘good’. Just 2%, around one-in-fifty respondents, described their experience of the application process overall as ‘very poor’ or ‘poor’.

Figure 8.2 presents the findings broken down by benefit experience. Broadly, it shows a positive experience across the board, though those with experience of applying for Young Carer Grant, and Scottish Child Payment provided particularly positive feedback. Conversely, Job Start Payment and Funeral Support Payment applicants were less positive.

Figure 8.2: Overall rating of the application process, by benefit experience

All respondents who had applied for each benefit



There was divergence in the overall experience if the application process across some demographic characteristics. White respondents were less likely to rate the application experience as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (89%, compared with 94% of minority ethnic respondents), as were respondents aged 55 or over (85%, compared with 91% of respondents aged 16-54), and respondents with a communication need (85%, compared to 91% of those without communication needs). These results can be seen fully in the [Supplementary document: tables and methods](#).

Furthermore, those who had only been unsuccessful with their application(s) were much less likely to rate the experience as ‘very good’ or ‘good’ (72%, compared 93% among those who had had a successful application).

Around nine-in-ten respondents who had applied for a benefit said that the application process was clear (90%), and a similar proportion felt that they were only asked relevant questions (90%) (see Table 8.2). A slightly smaller proportion of respondents said that filling in and submitting the application(s) did not take too long (87%).

Table 8.2: Views on the application process

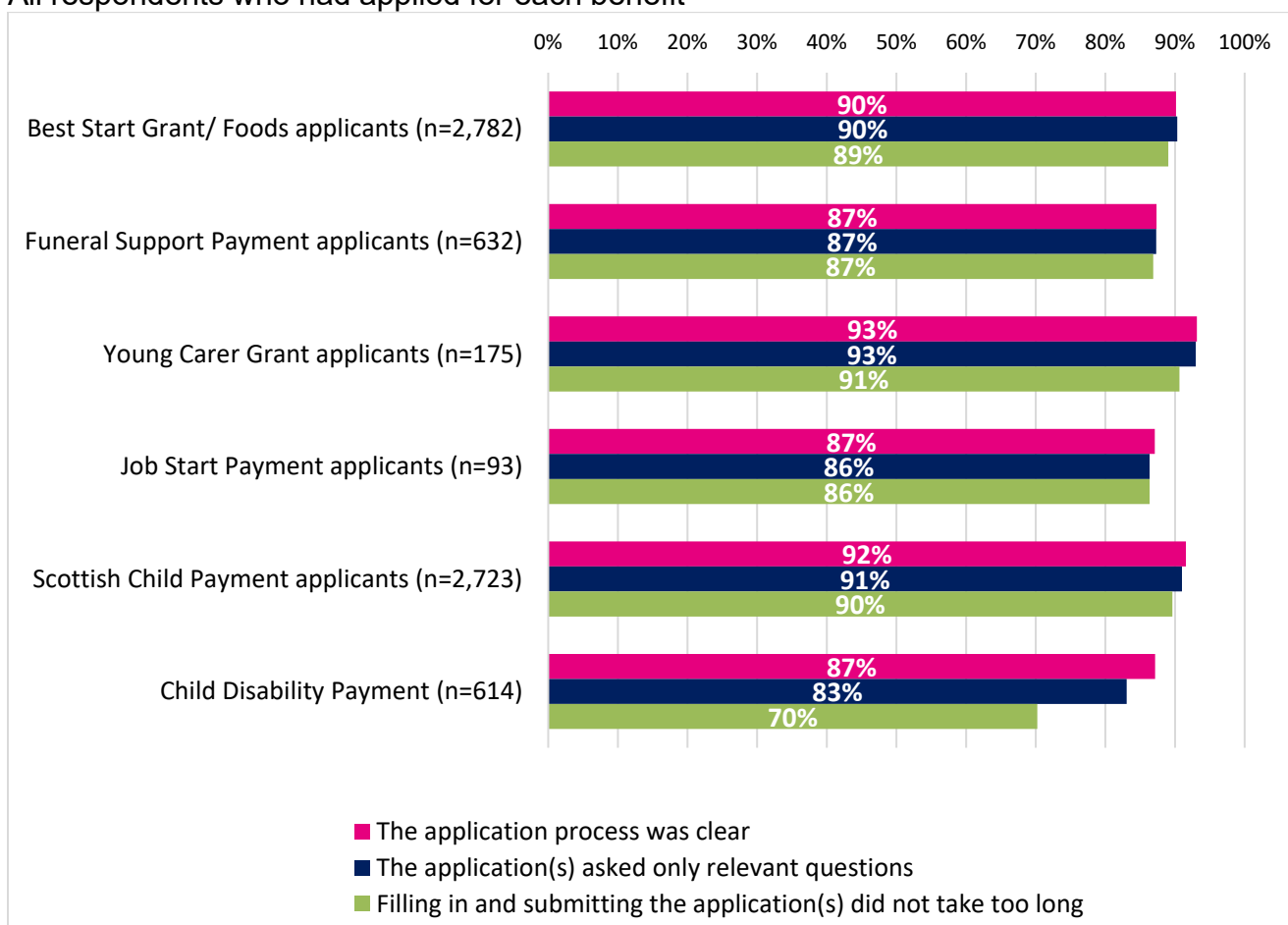
All respondents who had applied for at least one benefit; Row percentages

Thinking about when you applied...	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Can't remember / Don't know	Total
The application process was clear	90%	6%	4%	0%	4,856
The application asked only relevant questions	90%	7%	3%	0%	4,745
Filling in and submitting the application(s) did not take too long	87%	8%	5%	0%	4,771

Respondents who had applied for Child Disability Payment were markedly less likely than other respondents to agree with the statement 'Filling in and submitting the application(s) did not take too long' (70%, compared to 86-91% among others). This group was also least likely to agree that 'the application(s) asked only relevant questions' (83%). Young Carer Grant and Scottish Child Payment applicants gave the highest level of agreement with each of the three statements, as shown in Figure 8.3.

Figure 8.3: Views on application process, by benefit experience

All respondents who had applied for each benefit



Respondents aged 55 or over were less likely to say; their application was clear (85%, compared to 91% of respondents aged 16-54), asked only relevant questions (84%, compared to 91% of respondents aged 16-54), and did not take too long (83%, compared to

88% of respondents aged 16-54). Those with a long-term physical or mental health condition were also less likely to agree that their application did not take too long (84%, compared to 89% of respondents with no such condition).

Those with a communication need were less likely to agree that; their application process was clear (82%, compared to 91% of respondents with no communication needs), asked only relevant questions (82%, compared to 90% of respondents with no communication needs), and did not take too long (78%, compared to 88% of respondents with no communication needs).

Respondents who had only been unsuccessful with their application(s) were also far less likely to agree that their application was clear (74%), asked only relevant questions (76%), and did not take too long (75%), compared to those who had had a successful decision (92%, 91%, and 89% respectively).

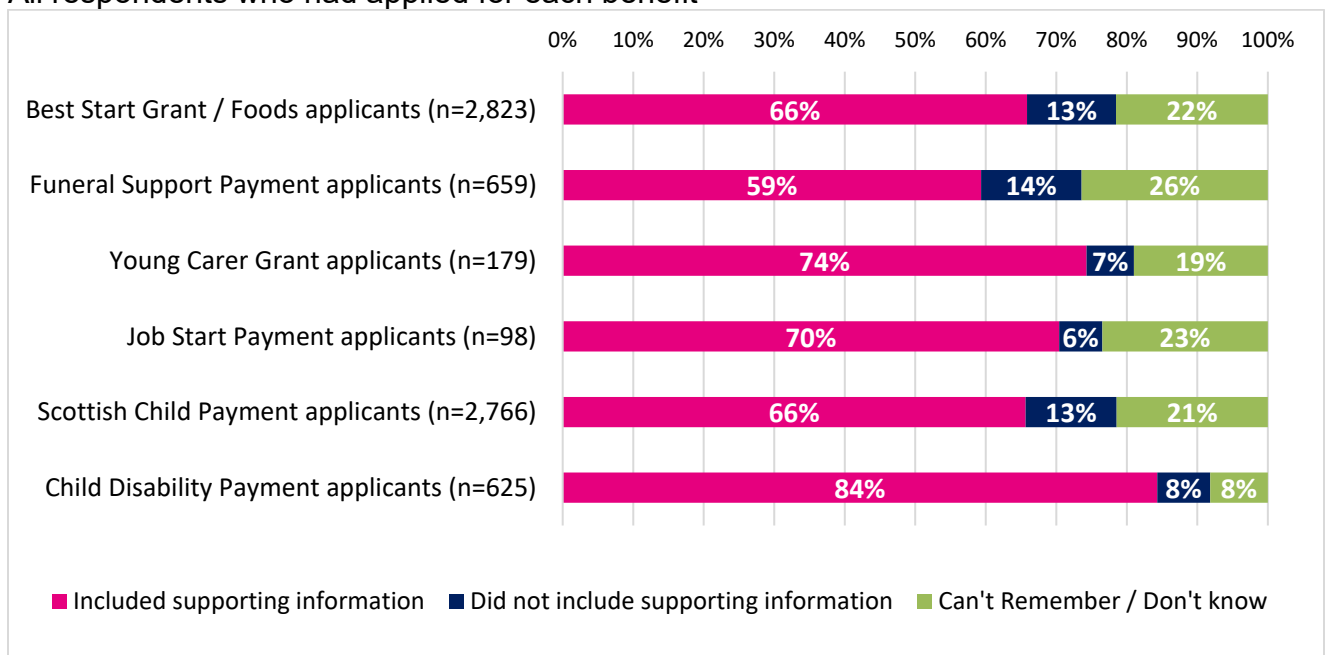
8.4 Including supporting information as part of an application

Around two thirds (67%) of respondents who had applied for a benefit said that they had included supporting information as part of an application. More than one-in-ten (13%) had not included supporting information, and a little over one-in-five (21%) answered “Can't Remember / Don't know”.

Figure 8.4 shows that Child Disability Payment applicants (84%) were most likely to have provided supporting information, whereas Funeral Support Payment applicants (59%) were the least likely to have done so.

Figure 8.4: Whether respondents included supporting information as part of an application, by benefit experience

All respondents who had applied for each benefit



Across all applicants, submitting online was the most common means of providing supporting information (85%), whilst sending through the post (15%) was next most likely. Very few respondents provided their supporting information in person (1%) or through another means (2%). This trend was true across all benefit experience groups, yet some groups were less likely to submit supporting information online. Table 8.3 shows that this was the case for Funeral Support Payment and Child Disability Payment applicants (58% and 77% respectively), who were also more likely to have submitted through the post (31% and 25%). Just 4% of Child Disability Payment applicants said that they had asked a Client Support Adviser to collect supporting information on their behalf.

Table 8.3: How supporting information was provided to Social Security Scotland, by benefit experience

All respondents who had provided supporting information; Row percentages

Benefit experience	I submitted it online	I sent it through the post	I provided it in person	Other	I asked a Client Support Adviser to collect it on my behalf ¹⁹	Total
All applicants	85%	15%	1%	2%		3,285
Best Start Grant/Foods applicants	91%	12%	1%	1%		1,859
Funeral Support Payment applicants	58%	31%	4%	9%		391
Young Carer Grant applicants	88%	17%	-	2%		133
Job Start Payment applicants	94%	6%	1%	-		69
Scottish Child Payment applicants	92%	11%	1%	1%		1,816
Child Disability Payment applicants	77%	25%	1%	3%	4%	527

The majority of respondents who provided supporting information as part of an application agreed that it was clear what should be supplied (92%), it was easy to get the supporting information wanted (87%), it was clear how to include (90%), and, on the whole, it was easy to provide supporting information (90%), as shown in Table 8.4.

¹⁹ This answer option was only available to Child Disability Payment applicants.

Table 8.4: Views on including supporting information to Social Security Scotland
All respondents who had provided supporting information; Row percentages

Thinking about your experience of including supporting information...	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree or strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
It was clear what information I should supply	92%	5%	3%	0%	3,337
It was easy to get the supporting information I wanted	87%	7%	5%	0%	3,304
It was clear how to include the supporting information	90%	6%	4%	0%	3,301
It was easy to provide supporting information ²⁰	90%	6%	4%	-	924

Views on including supporting information were broadly positive, with around nine-in-ten of all respondents who had provided supporting information agreeing with each of the statements. Respondents were most likely to agree that 'it was clear what information I should supply' (92%), and least likely to agree that 'It was easy to get the supporting information I wanted' (87%). These trends were replicated across most benefit experience groups, as shown in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5: Views on including supporting information to Social Security Scotland, by benefit experience

All respondents who had provided supporting information; Row percentages

Benefit experience	It was clear what information I should supply	It was easy to get the supporting information I wanted	It was clear how to include the supporting information	It was easy to provide supporting information	Total ²¹
All applicants	92%	87%	90%	90%	3,301 / 924*
Best Start Grant/Foods applicants	92%	88%	91%	91%	1,842 / 476*
Funeral Support Payment applicants	91%	85%	86%	89%	378 / 99*
Young Carer Grant applicants	92%	86%	95%	89%	133 / 38*
Job Start Payment applicants	85%	74%	87%	#	68 / 13*
Scottish Child Payment applicants	94%	90%	92%	92%	1,799 / 401*
Child Disability Payment applicants	92%	85%	91%	89%	523 / 241*

²⁰ This answer option was only available in the third round of fieldwork, hence the lower number of responses

²¹ The asterisked figures under 'Total' show the number of responses to 'It was easy to provide supporting information'.

8.5 Comments about applying for Social Security Scotland benefits

Anyone who had made an application was given the chance to comment on their experience²².

418 responses were given. Just over three-in-ten comments were positive, whilst a little less than half were negative. Less than one-in-ten comments were mixed, and a similar amount contained suggestions for improvements.

Many clients mentioned time as a key factor in the application process. The time taken to process applications was cited negatively, with many clients still waiting for their applications to be processed:

“Application took too long to be processed”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“I have not been advised of outcome”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“As stated processing the application is taking far too long causing me no end of stress”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“Application processing time was very long”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“Still waiting on decision from applying in October 2021”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“The person managing first part of my application on the phone misunderstood information, which caused a delay of over a month and several phone calls to clarify. The 2nd part of application had to be filled in on paper. It was very lengthy and required me to add various pieces of paper to continue. I would have preferred to do it as an electronic”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Child Disability Payment

This was often coupled with a lack of communication from the Agency, leading to some applicants wanting updates from Social Security Scotland about the progress of their application:

“Applied January 23rd and still not heard anything other than that the application is quick and easy.”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“I have submitted an application but it is 1 year and I still not received any answer”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“I’m still waiting to hear back from my application”

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

²² ‘Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience applying for Social Security Scotland benefits?’

"I just feel that the communication is extremely poor. Personally I feel that you should be kept up to date with your claim instead of having emails that you can't apply too. I also feel that the decision waiting time is extremely poor as well, I understand you guys are busy but it would be nice to be included in your own application process."

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Job Start Payment

"I do not understand how there is no answer from SSS - I applied in august 2021 And Why there is no application number to check the progress/result and no phone number to check"

Experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"My main issue is the lack of communication after an application. Having an online account to check the progress or being able to chat to someone online would make the system far easier to navigate and stop you from sitting on a phone for hours to get no answer or an answer of no decision yet."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

Some clients noted that they had various difficulties filling out their application forms, including technical issues, issues with the design of the forms themselves and/or the forms' length/complexity:

"The DLAP to CDP 16+ Appointee Form is confusing. Didn't know whether to fill in sections or not. DLA lets you be an appointee but have money go to child's account. No option for that with CD. Should be able to help/fill in forms/admin for CDP but allow child chance to learn to budget by getting the money?"

Woman, experience of Child Disability Payment

"The form was very hard to understand and took a very long time to fill out"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment and Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Form didn't save and I had to start again. Lost lots I had already completed"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"Leave someone enough time to fill out the form because to do a thorough job can take a week or two."

Experience of Child Disability Payment

"Maybe have an online version as I ended up having to fill out the form twice due to the first lot going missing..."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Child Disability Payment

"I found the form confusing as to what benefit I was applying for"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"The form itself did not make it clear what you would be entitled to with regards to income thresholds etc. I was unsure at the start what to actually apply for."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

Clients noted that application forms were repetitive, especially in the case of Child Disability Payment:

"Some of the question are a bit repetitive and trying to find out information on line is a bit of a pest as u can't find somethings"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Funeral Support Payment

“Some of the questions were repetitive”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

“The form was lengthy and repeated the questions worded differently. Some people could find the form difficult to manage”

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment and Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“Too many repetitive questions for care and mobility. Very hard to upload multiple page letters, each page had to be photographed and uploaded separately and I had to add things like page 1 of 4, 2 of 4 and so on, I had lots to upload so took nearly 2 hours”

Man, aged 55-64, experience of Child Disability Payment

“As much as the application is a long one and at times the written does repeat themselves I think it was created and delivered in the correct manner, especially in my case where my child's health conditions effect everything in his life”

Man, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

“Child disability payment had a tendency to repeat itself however I do appreciate the fact all disabilities may need more info than others.”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

“Whilst explaining the impact of disability on everyday life is always likely to be a long process, at times I felt that I was giving the same information repeatedly and unnecessarily. Additionally, some of the questions asked were only applicable to someone with a physical disability which took up unnecessary extra time during my application as I was applying for a child with Autism and no associated physical disabilities. It might be helpful to try and differentiate between physical and non physical disabilities in the future to reduce application times on an already extensive process.”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

“Form was long and repetitive parts where not even relevant to a child”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

Some clients had various difficulties related to supporting information they needed for their application. These included:

difficulties uploading documentation;

“When submitting supporting documents there was a size limit to what could be uploaded. This was not made clear other than displaying an error message. By breaking down the document into smaller versions I was the able to upload them separately. This did take some time to figure out and complete. Clearer messaging on document size limits would be helpful and save time.”

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment

“[...] When it came to uploading documents for checking, I took several attempts, rescanning it different formats until a document was finally accepted. I had set my scanner to create a multi-page pdf, but the size of file was too big to be accepted and, if I recall correctly, the screen just showed it had failed, without a reason why. It took many re-scans to get my document into your system. It would be helpful to include a note specifying a maximum document size so that applicants don’t have to trial and error their way through this page, or provide a dropbox set-up for larger document sizes.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment and Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Can only upload certain supporting letters etc. This is very annoying and holds up the length of time to process"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

"It was a slow process uploading the digital copies of documents. I could only do one photo at a time and I supplied about 20 photos so having to repeat the process for each individual photo was time consuming. It would be a much quicker process if you could upload several in one go."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

not being asked to provide supporting information until later in the application process;

"Filling in and submitting is easy enough However it takes some time before finding out further information is required"

Woman, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I was not asked to provide any supporting documents until over a month after I applied and only when I chased it up. I then had to provide more info 2 weeks later when again I had to chase it up. It still took another 2 months after that to receive my full entitlement"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"The process of filing out by postal and waiting to hear back and find out if more supporting information was needed was long and drawn out process I would have preferred face to face or phone application as someone who suffers CPTSD I find form filling to be high anxiety inducing."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"Did not make clear that I had to or how to add supporting information, was only told after the claim had been submitted. After I had submitted the information took weeks to process."

Experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement and Young Carer Grant

and difficulties in obtaining supporting information itself:

"You didn't accept Coroners Certificate of Death. It confirms death, deceased address and dates etc which is all you should need. A Death Certificate is not issued until inquest."

Woman, aged 65+, experience of Funeral Support Payment

"Felt the online form could have been clearer about being able to upload info e.g proof of address. This meant I had to be contacted and sent thru post. It was difficult for me as a young person to get proof of address"

Man, aged 18-25, experience of Young Carer Grant

"As we did not realise that our children's issues could possibly lead to a claim, we didn't save letters, appointments etc as proof of their ongoing health issues. [...] We also thought that having to contact GPs and consultants for duplicates would put us in a bad light or be looked down upon for making a claim for CDP."

Man, aged 35-44, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

"The forms are complicated and ask for information which no 1 has as everything is done online have to screen shot and then upload after weeks of trying to get evidence which dwp already has on linked system"

Man, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"The problem us getting the information requested from the health board etc. With a five year waiting time for NDAS, how can we provide written evidence? All that time, we struggle, then the benefits agency ask you to get medical proof your struggling. Well, I don't have it, because the NHS is crap, and hasn't provided us with anything. It's Kafkaesque. We can't access the clinical help we need because there are not enough clinicians, so when we cut hours at work to care for our child, we can't access the financial help because we haven't got a diagnosis from a clinician. [...]"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

There was some lack of awareness of Best Start Foods and Best Start Grant eligibility:

"Didn't know I needed to apply for universal credits to be awarded the grant."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I applied for the best start grant which was rejected. My baby is now too old to apply again because he is 8 months. I had sepsis and was very very ill so I couldn't apply sooner. I was rejected because I hadn't applied for universal credits. I didn't know I had to, this was unclear and I didn't know I was entitled. I am now receiving universal credits but as I said it is now too late to apply again because of my babies age. I was one of the very unlucky ones getting maternal sepsis and I think under the extreme circumstances like mine more time should be given for the application. 6 months is not enough time"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"I found out I was entitled to money for my son 4 weeks before his time was to end, I think all children of age should be backdated to start of new benefit"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

Some Best Start applicants were left waiting for application/decision outcomes and received little communication:

"Well, I applied last year for the best start grant and best start food and I'm still waiting for results."

Man, aged 45-54, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"I applied the Scottish child payment and best start food grant 3 months ago my claim no through yet"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Still waiting on best start foods and 40 pound a month. I had no help during pregnancy and my baby is 5 months old not had any help"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Process of receiving a decision takes much longer than anticipated, I have now been waiting nearly 10wks with my baby due in 6wks I still have no decision? And if I am granted best start foods it takes at least 6wks to get the card through according to your website?"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"It was easy to do so, though I did apply for best start foods originally and was also told I was too early to apply for the best start grant, which I hadn't asked for. Then had to reapply at the right time for the best start grant and have been waiting around two months to hear about it"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"[...]I also didn't receive notification of whether or not my Best Start applications were successful. I did receive notification that I wouldn't be accepted for the Pregnancy and Child Payment which I didn't even apply for. The number on the letter for receiving support/advice also didn't have an option for information about Best Start Grants so I had to select the wrong option and then be asked to be connected to someone who could assist me."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment

Of the clients who gave positive responses, many cited the ease of the application process:

"Was easy and very quickly dealt with."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Wasn't any hassle and staff were very kind and respectful during a sad time and saved a lot of worry"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Funeral Support Payment

"Easy to fill up the application very clear about information"

Man, aged 45-54, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Filling the forms out online surpassed my expectations, not only could you go back to it and add more information but even once submitted you could contact social security Scotland for a link and you could easily upload more documents. This is so important and something I could never have done before."

Man, aged 35-44, experience of Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

"Much easier than the dwp application."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"I was dreading filling the online form in because these things can be very lengthy and annoying but not this one, very straight forward and quick to fill in lucky if it takes 3 minutes."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

Many clients expressed gratitude for staff members help with their applications, including several with experience of Funeral Supp:

"The questions asked were very straightforward and very easily filled in. The staff member who phoned and went over the application was lovely, knowledgeable and very sympathetic. She sorted out the problem and informed me what to do, then followed up with a phone call to make sure I had been able to do it ok. The very best service I could ever have asked for."

Experience of Funeral Support Payment

"The lady on the phone who helped me fill in the form was very kind and understanding. She made it a lot easier than I thought it was going to be"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Funeral Support Payment

“Without the help I don't know what I would have done. I am thank full for the support that was given”

Woman, aged 65+, experience of Funeral Support Payment

“Advisor was brilliant and made the long phone calls filling in the disability form very easy and was happy to listen to every detail I gave did not miss anything at all”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

“Benefits staff very helpful and sympathetic”

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Funeral Support Payment

“It was an easy process. Staff very helpful.”

Aged 55-64, experience of Funeral Support Payment

“It was easier than with most agencies to get to speak to a person and all were pleasant, efficient and helpful.”

Man, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

“My application was dealt with in a very sensitive and professional manner.”

Woman, experience of Funeral Support Payment

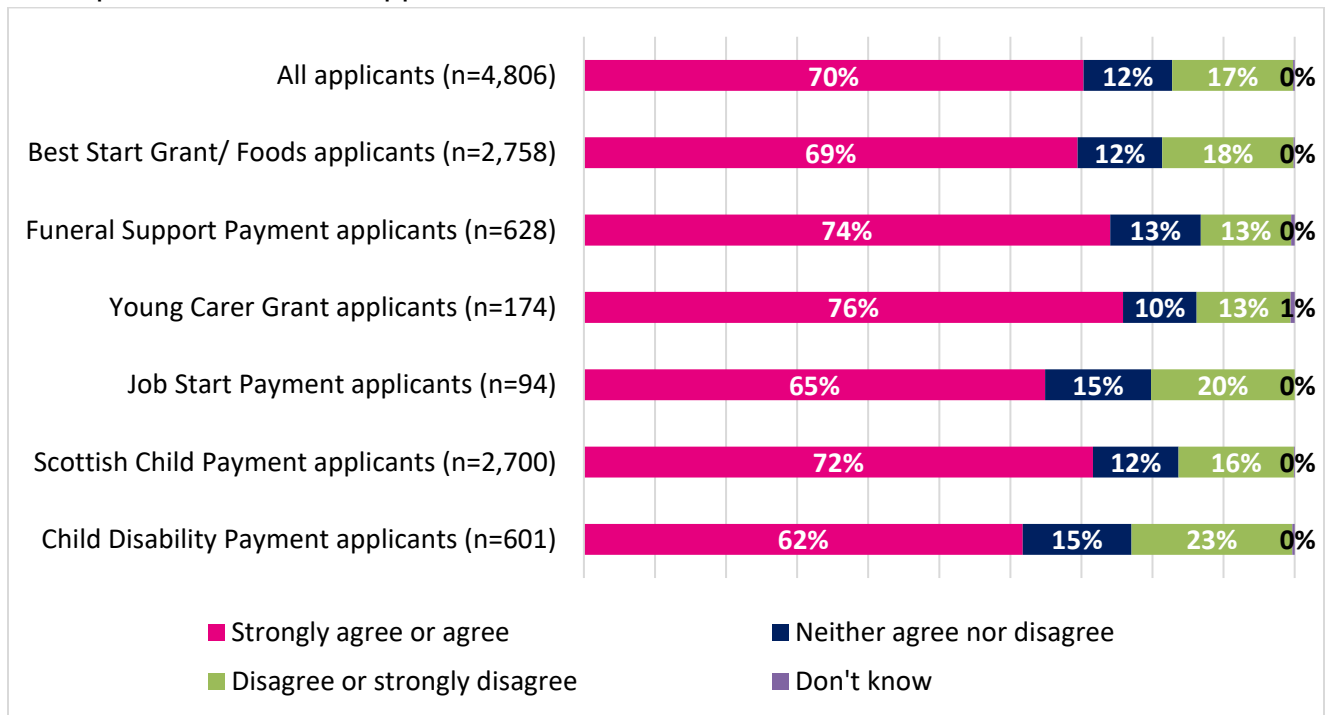
9. Application decisions

9.1 Updates on progress of decisions

Among all respondents who had applied for a benefit, just seven-in-ten (70%) agreed with the statement 'I got enough updates on the progress of my application(s)'. A little under one-in-five (17%) disagreed with this statement and slightly more than one-in-ten (12%) answered 'neither agree nor disagree'.

Views on progress updates were least favourable from Child Disability Payment and Job Start Payment applicants, amongst whom agreement with the statement was given by fewer than two-in-three respondents (62% and 65% respectively). Within these groups disagreement was indicated by around one-in-five (23% and 20% respectively), as shown in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1: 'I got enough updates on the progress of my application(s)', by benefit experience
All respondents who had applied for a benefit



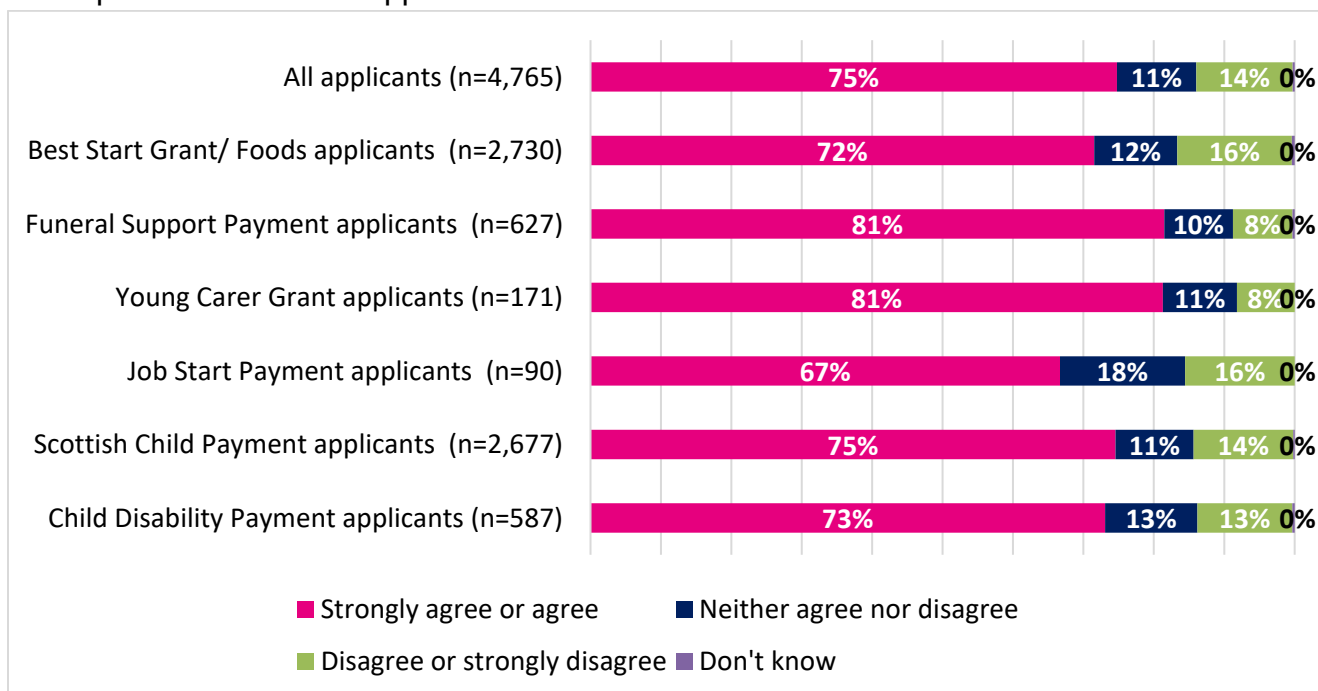
Agreement with the statement 'I got enough updates on the progress of my application(s)' was particularly low among respondents who had only received an unsuccessful decision on any applications made. Just 40% agreed with this statement, whilst 40% also disagreed. Of those who had received a successful decision, 74% agreed and 14% disagreed with the statement.

9.2 Timeliness of decision

Among all respondents who had applied for a benefit, around three-in-four (75%) agreed with the statement 'My application(s) was (were) handled within a reasonable time frame'. Around one-in-seven (14%) disagreed with this statement, and slightly more than one-in-ten (11%) answered 'neither agree nor disagree'. Agreement was highest from Funeral Support Payment (81%) and Young Carer Grant applicants (81%), as shown in Figure 9.2.

Figure 9.2: 'My application(s) was (were) handled within a reasonable time frame', by benefit experience

All respondents who had applied for a benefit



Again, agreement with the statement 'My application(s) was (were) handled within a reasonable time frame' was much lower among respondents who had only received an unsuccessful decision on any applications made. Less than half of this cohort (46%) agreed with this statement, whilst around one-in-three (33%) disagreed. Of those who had received a successful decision, 78% agreed and 11% disagreed with the statement.

9.3 Unsuccessful decisions

Nearly three-in-ten (28%) respondents who had applied for a benefit said that they had received at least one unsuccessful decision. As a proportion of those who had applied for the benefit, Job Start Payment applications were most likely to have been unsuccessful at some time (37%), followed by applications for Young Carer Grant (21%). Fewer than one-in-ten (8%) Child Disability Payment applications had been unsuccessful (see Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: Proportion of respondents who received an unsuccessful decision, by benefit for which the unsuccessful decision(s) related

All respondents who had applied for each benefit

Benefit applied for	Received an unsuccessful decision	Total
All applicants	28%	4,973
Best Start Grant	13%	2,833
Best Start Foods	11%	2,833
Funeral Support Payment applicants	18%	668
Young Carer Grant applicants	21%	179
Job Start Payment applicants	37%	98
Scottish Child Payment applicants	12%	2,772
Child Disability Payment applicants	8%	627

Respondents who had received an unsuccessful decision were asked what their response to this had been. The most common response, given by more than four-in-ten (44%) respondents, was to take no further action. This was the response from nearly six-in-ten (59%) of those who had received an unsuccessful decision for a Funeral Support Payment application, and nearly seven-in-ten (68%) of those who had been unsuccessful with a Job Start Payment application. Those who had been unsuccessful with a Child Disability Payment application were more likely than other benefit experience groups to say that they had asked Social Security Scotland to look at the decision again (33%).

Table 9.2: Action(s) taken after receiving an unsuccessful decision, by benefit experience
All respondents who had received an unsuccessful decision; Row percentages

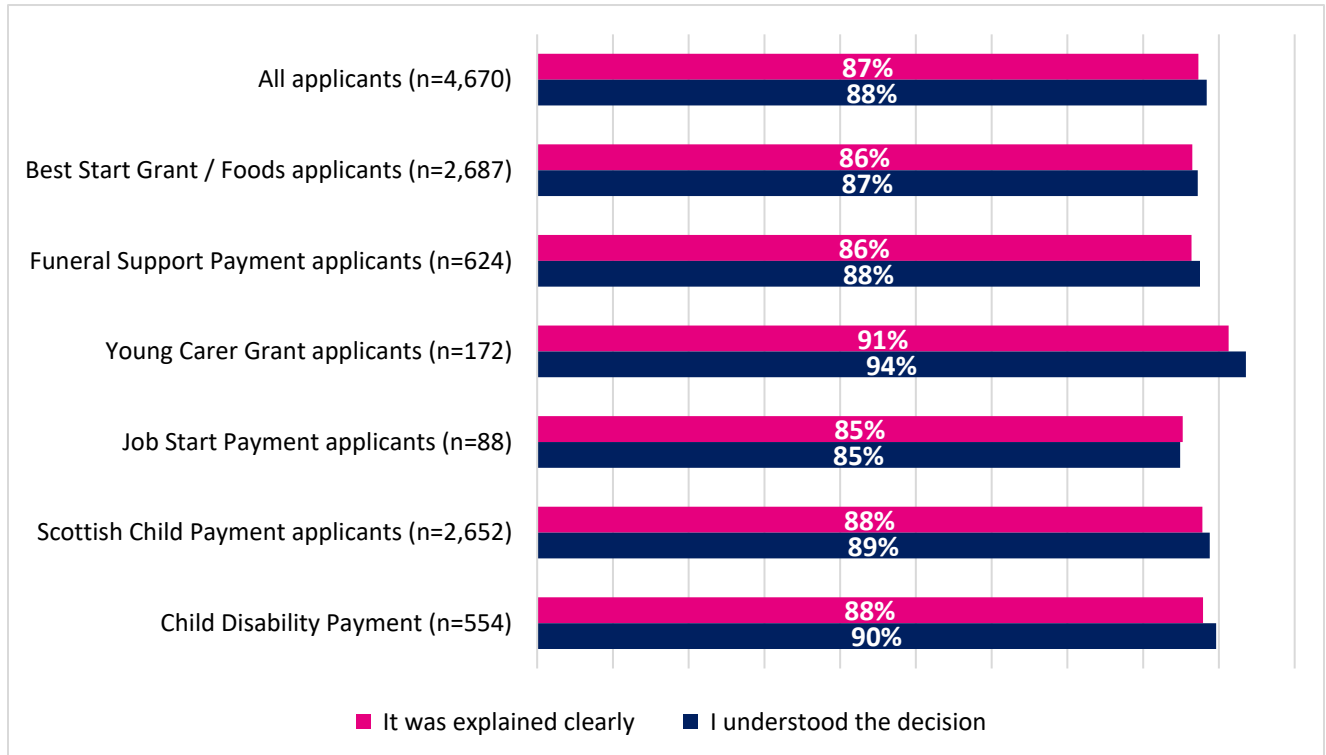
Had an unsuccessful decision for...	Ask Social Security Scotland to look at the decision again	Contact Social Security Scotland to find out more	Submit new evidence	Make a new application for the same benefit	Take no further action	Other	Total
All applicants	18%	17%	10%	22%	44%	7%	1,203
Best Start Grant	19%	20%	12%	33%	36%	5%	357
Best Start Foods	16%	18%	11%	29%	45%	6%	304
Funeral Support Payment	21%	10%	7%	12%	59%	5%	107
Young Carer Grant	29%	31%	#	34%	26%	19%	35
Job Start Payment	24%	24%	21%	15%	68%	#	34
Scottish Child Payment	25%	18%	16%	30%	35%	8%	319
Child Disability Payment	33%	14%	16%	10%	43%	24%	49

9.4 Clarity of decisions

A little under nine-in-ten respondents agreed that the decision on their application was 'explained clearly' (87%). A similar proportion said they 'understood the decision' (88%).

Figure 9.2 shows that views on the clarity of decisions were reasonably similar across most benefit experience groups. However, Young Carer Grant applicants were marginally more likely to agree with the statements, and Job Start Payment applicants marginally less likely.

Figure 9.2: Proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements ‘my decision(s) were explained clearly’ and ‘I understood the decision’, by benefit experience
All respondents who had applied for each benefit



Those with a communication need were less likely to agree that their decision was explained clearly (82%, compared to 88% of those with no communication needs), and also less likely to agree that they understood the decision (83%, compared to 89% of those with no communication needs).

Respondents who had only received an unsuccessful decision on any applications made were markedly less likely to say that their decision(s) were explained clearly (52%) and they understood the decision (51%), compared to those who had received a successful decision (91% and 92% respectively).

9.5 Disagreement with decisions

Around one-in-ten respondents (11%) did not agree with the decision(s) made on their application(s) for a Social Security Scotland benefit since 1 April 2021. Those who did not agree with a decision were asked for which benefit they disagreed with the decision, and whether they asked Social Security Scotland to look at the decision(s) again. Figure 9.3 sets out the findings from these questions. Almost half (47%) of those who disagreed with a decision on an application for Child Disability Payment then asked Social Security Scotland to look at the decision(s) again, much more than for those who disagreed with decisions for other benefits.

Table 9.3: Action(s) taken after receiving an unsuccessful decision, by the benefit decision which the respondent felt was wrong

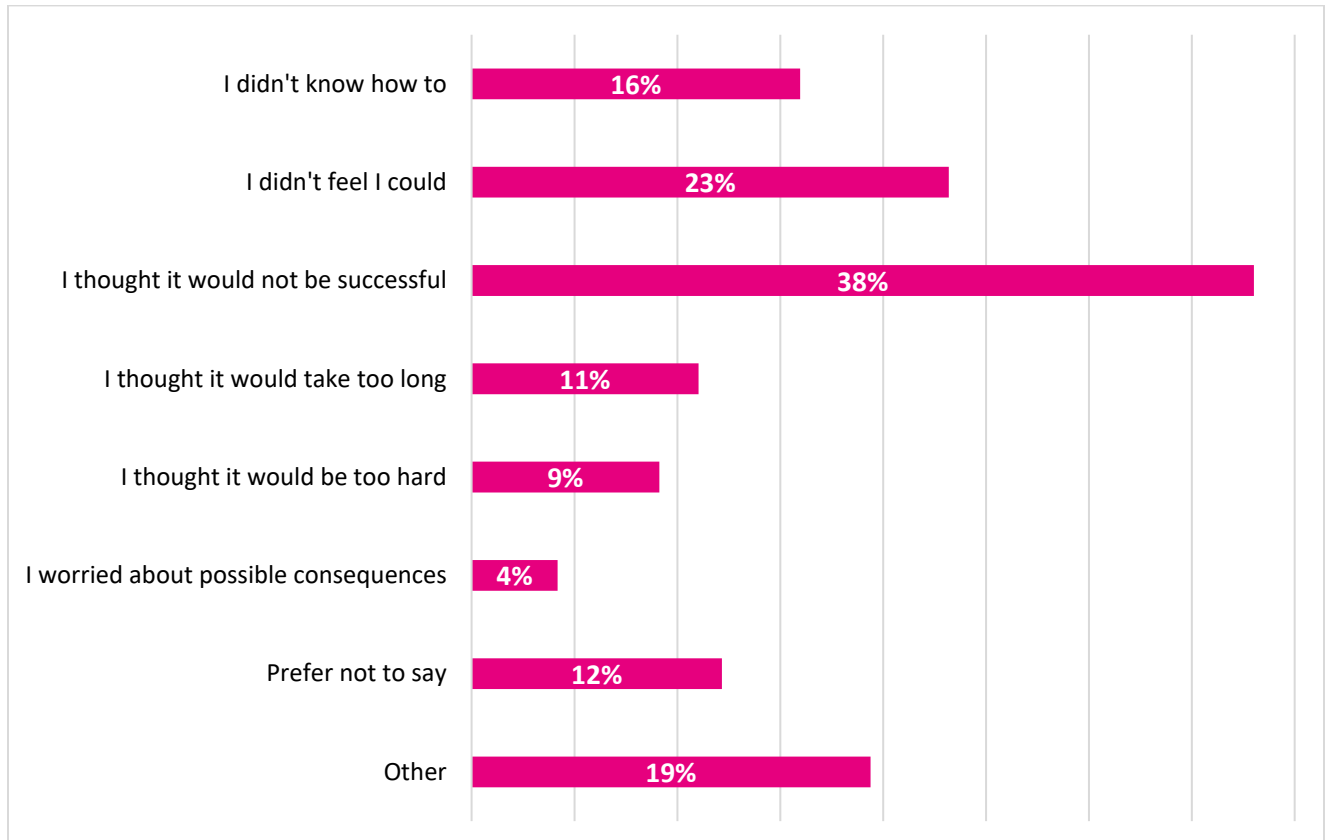
All respondents who had applied for each benefit

For which benefit(s) did you think Social Security Scotland got the decision wrong?	Felt Social Security Scotland got the decision(s) wrong	% who then asked Social Security Scotland to look at the decision(s) again	Total
All applicants	11%	27%	4,973
Best Start Grant	8%	28%	2,833
Best Start Foods	6%	24%	2,833
Funeral Support Payment	9%	26%	668
Young Carer Grant	5%	-	179
Job Start Payment	14%	29%	98
Scottish Child Payment	5%	27%	2,772
Child Disability Payment	8%	47%	627

The small cohort of respondents who felt that Social Security Scotland got the decision(s) wrong but did not ask Social Security Scotland to look at the decision(s) again (n=263) were asked why they didn't ask Social Security Scotland to look at the decision(s) again. Nearly four-in-ten (38%) respondents answered 'I thought it would not be successful', and nearly a quarter (23%) 'I didn't feel I could', as shown in Figure 9.3.

Figure 9.3: Why didn't you ask Social Security Scotland to look at the decision(s) again?

All respondents who disagreed with a benefit decision but did not ask Social Security Scotland to look at the decision again.



9.6 Comments about application decisions

Anyone who had made an application was asked to comment about their experience receiving an application decision²³.

473 responses were given. Half of these comments were negative, just under a quarter were positive, and just over one in ten were neutral comments (did not express a favourable or unfavourable sentiment).

The timing and accuracy around decisions was mentioned consistently in the negative responses that applicants gave, as was information about decisions. A number of comments mentioned still waiting on a decision. Clients were only invited to the survey if they had received an application decision or a payment, however many may have made multiple applications, or made an application whilst also receiving a payment for a non-application benefit.

The timing around decisions was the most discussed theme in negative responses. Many applicants who responded were still awaiting a decision:

“Been waiting 14 weeks so far for a decision and still not heard anything”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

“got told my application was being reviewed and nothing has come of it, baby was due the 4th of January and got told would have the money by then but not happened yet”

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“I am still awaiting a decision after applying in December 2021 - this process takes far too long, especially after submitting evidence 12 days ago I still haven't had any information on progress”

Woman, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“Still waiting to hear about best start grant. Been over 2 months. Applied as soon as I could. and with baby due in 4 weeks it's rather stressful as I'm relying on the money to buy baby items”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“Still waiting to hear about my daughters claim in March”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

“Just the time frame with bills and food etc going up waiting time for a decision can be even more drawn out and impactful on a family than before.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

²³ 'Is there anything else you would like to tell us about a decision made on your application for a Social Security Scotland benefit?'

"My application was put in on the 9th of December 2021 and as of today, 9th of February 2022, I still don't have an answer which I don't find an acceptable length of time to wait."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I have to wait 17 weeks for the first payment which seems unfair that you have to wait a "blanket" period of 13 weeks and didn't feel it was treated as an individual case."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"My latest application is still being processed and it is well over the expected time frame."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"They are so slow and do not keep you updated whatsoever"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

"It took 104 days for a decision to be made despite this being a very straightforward claim. My baby's disability entitled him to the higher rate of disability. I received no decision letter despite payment being made to my account after 104 days. I chased the decision letter 3 times as I needed a copy and finally received this in January. Nobody called me to discuss the decision."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Winter Heating Assistance and Child Disability Payment

Some disagreed with eligibility criteria or the decision that was made:

"Again i was just too disappointed at the decision not to help my child. In my opinion, children with a recognised medical disability should be helped to support them"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"I don't understand how a couple can get benefits if they both earn 45k each yet if one partner earns 55k and the other earns 17k they don't get any help."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I strongly disagree that the funding I applied for was for my mothers funeral service , she was on benefits and I am not so was t eligible, I do work but sadly don't have spare funds , was very Stressful time and still is as I don't feel my mother got the send of she truly deserved and I'm still paying back money I borrowed to cover her service"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Funeral Support Payment

"I think it's terrible that even though I am on universal credit, because I didn't get a UC payment in January, they said I'm not entitled to anything. Not getting a payment should say to you that I clearly need the extra help!"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"It seems as though I didn't earn enough money to access the payment I applied for that's what I was told. Absolutely disgusting."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

Some felt that eligibility criteria for some benefits unfairly treated working people:

"I think it's so difficult for you. Families who work for a living and aren't entitled to any help whatsoever but have to use childcare services so they can work and don't get any help whatsoever but those that could work and choose not to are handed everything to them"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Unfair to parents on maternity leave on SMP & unfair to working parents"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"It's a joke that working parents don't get any help with children, understandably people on benefits need help but so do working parents we pay high taxes on our wages, high childcare fees and have money deducted if we are sick and can't work yet we still have to pay in full for everything with our children just because we work doesn't mean our expenses are any less cause we have so much taken off and high outgoings it doesn't benefit us working as we just scrape buy every month. Disgusting working parents don't get help better of being on benefits."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Absolutely ridiculous it's only offered to people who are on benefits. I work hard and have a job and at the end of the month not left with very much after paying rent and bills and we can't get any help,"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Scottish Child Payment

"Absolute disgrace working people get no help."

Experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

Some applicants found it difficult to get in touch with Social Security Scotland to get feedback about why the decision outcome was as it was, or found the communication around their decision to be poor:

"I didn't find out that the Scottish child payment application was unsuccessful until after I had phoned to get an update on it as it had been over a month since I had applied. I was then told it was placed into an "error queue" because of an issue with my supporting evidence."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I couldn't understand why I was eligible for the Best Start Grant, but not the Food Grant. I respect the decision, but it was not explained to me why I was eligible for one and not the other."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"The first time I got in touch years ago it was handled better than what it is now, I've not been impressed this time around as if I've wanted any info I've had to get in touch myself rather than someone else being in touch with me"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"Unfortunately long drawn out process. Communication would be good. Only letter I received was a decline letter"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

"I received the back dated payment yesterday but have yet to receive any contact regarding my claim being successful. It would be helpful to receive an email, text or letter prior to payment to give me chance to update banking details etc if needed."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment and Scottish Child Payment

"It would be good to understand why I wasn't applicable but also learn what benefits will be suitable for me and my baby. I'm currently 7 months pregnant, living at home with mum. Just because I work doesn't mean that it's easy for us either. I'd like to move out soon but the cost of living is excessive."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

Some respondents repeated that they had had to contact Social Security Scotland for updates themselves, and would like to have received updates on their progress:

"I applied for disability payment on December the 1st and still haven't had an answer back no letters etc sent or updates I have had to contact them for updates."

Woman, experience of Child Disability Payment and Scottish Child Payment

“Applications take way to long to progress and zero updates are given.”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“Not enough updates about progress and when I contacted to find out progress I was told that it was still not looked at almost 2 months after applying. Have also tried to join webchat various days and times and never get contacted with an advisor. Poor experience with applications”

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“Due to an increase of applications, decision making is taking over 30 days as detailed. There is no update provided by SSS to advise of this.”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“More updates required. I called as had been waiting 12 weeks. An advisor told me they had past that date and my application had been missed. 3 weeks later and it still hasn't been processed. To me that should have been a priority.”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“I applied on the 1st March 2022 for a best starts payment. As per today the 4th May 2022 I am still waiting on a decision. I received 1 text on the 8th March advising a delay due to a high workload but have had no updates since. A further update would have been good as I still expected it to be sorted 2 months later.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

Some comments made it clear that decision letters are not being received by some applicants, or that money is being received before decision letters:

“I have had issues getting copy of decision letter so have been unable to get a redetermination made”

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment

“Determination letter has not been received, but payments are being received.”
Experience of Child Disability Payment

“I was never sent an email or letter, just received payment in my bank account and didn't even know what it was for had to ring for clarification”

Woman, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Carer's

Allowance Supplement

"Never received a letter regarding best start foods, received the grant which I am happy with but would have preferred a letter to explain if I was unsuccessful rather than having no communication at all."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I received the money in my account before my decision letter in the post (I got the letter 3 days later). I was expecting a payment so I wasn't too surprised but an email notification or a text alert would have been useful advising a decision had been made (before receiving the payment)."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"I've had no letter to confirm I was getting the child payment for my second child born in January. I had to contact staff to find out the documents I sent were not acceptable to had to get other proof then re submit I only found out I got the payment when it went into my bank account."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Scottish Child Payment

Positive responses mainly focused on the overall experience as well as our service:

"I appreciate your help to keep in the top of your job Very good Thanks you"

Man, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I found it so helpful"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Funeral Support Payment

"I lost my mum in December 2021 due to cancer & I'm her next of kin, i had funeral to arrange & was hoping to get some help with expenses, i applied & was accepted, this really helped me & took a lot of the stress from myself. I really appreciate the help i received, thank you so much!"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment, Funeral Support Payment, Child Disability Payment, Carer's Allowance Supplement, and Child Winter Heating Assistance

"It was very fair and I was happy with the decision"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Funeral Support Payment

"Overall very happy, and wouldn't have realised there was additional help out there if i hadn't received the letter, so i am very grateful i did."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Yes social security Scotland really appreciated and warm welcome to New children"
Woman, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"The explanation next to the decision was very clear and fair. I felt the case manager listened to my application and came to a fair and true decision. The way the statements were written was like they knew my child. I couldn't have worded it better myself"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

Respondents were also positive about our staff and their manner:

"[...] The three member of staff I spoke with (due to a technical issue) were very respectful, and this was so very much appreciated."

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment

"Child disability handled great due to his age etc was worried about putting him in uncomfortable situations but was handled with ease and care and think they really need mentioned as going through face to face is really tough and can have a huge affect on people was so easy thank you from the bottom of my heart as his mum who wants the best for him and doesn't want him upset etc truly thankful"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment, Funeral Support Payment, Child Disability Payment, Carer's Allowance Supplement, and Young Carer Grant

"Having applied for the first time for child disability payment, I found the process easy to follow, received regular updates and was contacted by a member of staff who treated me with dignity and respect."

Woman, experience of Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment and Carer's Allowance Supplement

"I had a received a phone call just double checking some of the information I had put in the application, as I hadn't been specific on time frames of certain things, lady I spoke with was lovely and very helpful."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"The decider was very kind and helpful and listened to every word I said"

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment

"The people I dealt with were kind, considerate and I cannot speak more highly of the response I received."

Man, aged 65+, experience of Funeral Support Payment

"There was no judgement and I appreciated that"

Woman, experience of Child Disability Payment

10. Receiving payments

10.1 Receiving payments from Social Security Scotland

Regardless of their response to other questions, all respondents were asked if they had received any benefit payments from Social Security Scotland. More than eight-in-ten (83%) respondents said they had, whilst 17% had not. Those who had received a payment were asked which benefits this related to (see Table 10.1). Almost half (49%) of respondents received Scottish Child Payment, whilst around a quarter received Carer's Allowance Supplement (27%), Best Start Grant (27%), or Best Start Foods (25%). In total, 9,639 benefits were received by 6,097 respondents.

Table 10.1: Which benefits were received

All respondents who had received a benefit payment from Social Security Scotland;

Benefit(s) received	Proportion of all respondents who had received a payment	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	27%	1,663
Best Start Grant	27%	1,683
Best Start Foods	25%	1,526
Funeral Support Payment	8%	493
Young Carer Grant	2%	128
Job Start Payment	1%	61
Scottish Child Payment	49%	2,997
Child Winter Heating Assistance	6%	378
Child Disability Payment	12%	720

Relating almost exclusively to Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods, and Scottish Child Payment, results showed that the number of respondents who said that they were in receipt of each benefit exceeded the number who said that they had applied for each benefit. 11% of those who received Best Start Grant, 17% of those who received Best Start Foods, and 25% of those who received Scottish Child Payment did not say that they had applied for the benefit they received. This suggests some confusion around which benefits were being applied for, potentially when completing a joint application. Another explanation may be that some clients applied for the benefit prior to the survey reference period (see section 2.3.4) but then received the payment within it; however, this would not explain the level of discrepancy found for these three benefits and not others.

10.2 Overall experience of receiving benefit payments

The vast majority of respondents (93%) said that their overall experience of receiving benefit payment(s) from Social Security Scotland was 'very good' or 'good'. Only 1% described their experience as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

A substantial majority (91% or more) of respondents with experience of receiving payments for each individual benefit also described their experience as 'very good' or 'good', with the exception of Job Start Payment recipients (89%) (see Table 10.2).

Table 10.2: Overall rating of experience of receiving payments, by benefit received
All respondents with experience of receiving a payment for each benefit; row percentages

Benefit received	Very good or good	Neither poor nor good	Poor or very poor	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	92%	6%	2%	1,634
Best Start Grant	95%	4%	1%	1,672
Best Start Food	95%	3%	2%	1,518
Funeral Support Payment	91%	8%	1%	484
Young Carer Grant	95%	5%	-	128
Job Start Payment	89%	#	#	61
Scottish Child Payment	95%	4%	1%	2,987
Child Winter Heating Assistance	94%	5%	2%	371
Child Disability Payment	94%	5%	1%	708

Ratings were similar across different demographic breakdowns, with over 90% in each key group saying their experience was good. These results can be seen in full in the [Supplementary document: tables and methods](#).

10.3 Timing and accuracy of benefit payments

The vast majority (96%) of respondents who had received a payment said they got it when Social Security Scotland said they would. A similarly high proportion said that they were paid the right amount 'first time' (97%) and, where relevant, the right amount 'every time' (93%). Agreement was also very high among all benefit recipient groups, as shown in Table 10.3.

Table 10.3: Whether payments were on time and accurate
All respondents with experience of receiving payments for each benefit; Row percentages

Benefit received	Received payment when Social Security Scotland said they would	Received right amount first time	Received right amount every time	Total
All benefit recipients	96%	97%	93%	5,537
Carer's Allowance Supplement	98%	98%	95%	1,505
Best Start Grant	96%	97%	²⁴	1,510
Best Start Foods	96%	95%	93%	1,362
Funeral Support Payment	95%	94%		428
Young Carer Grant	98%	100%		115
Job Start Payment	93%	98%		55
Scottish Child Payment	97%	96%	95%	2,758
Child Winter Heating Assistance	97%	98%	96%	335
Child Disability Payment	95%	98%	98%	663

²⁴ Best Start Grant may involve up to three payments, but each would be paid more than one year apart so survey respondents can only have received one such payment within the survey's reference period. Funeral Support Payment and Job Start Payment are one of payments. Young Carer Grant is a recurring benefit, but payment is made once a year, so again survey respondents could have only received one Young Carer Grant payment during the survey's reference period.

10.4 Impact of benefit payments

Respondents were asked about the impact that benefit payment(s) from Social Security Scotland have had for them. On a scale of zero ('not at all') to ten ('a lot'), benefit recipients were asked to rate how much their payment(s) had:

- Helped to make a difference to their life
- Helped them to control their finances
- Helped them to pay for what they needed.

Ratings provided were grouped into low (zero to three), medium (four to seven) and high (eight to ten) categories for the purposes of analysis. Overall, most respondents gave a high rating for the impact of receiving payments, as outlined in Table 10.4. Around seven-in-ten respondents gave a high rating for how much their payment(s) had 'Helped make a difference to your life' (72%) and 'Helped you to pay for what you needed' (69%). A little over six-in-ten respondents gave a high rating for how much their payment(s) had 'Helped you to control your finances' (63%). Around half of respondents gave a rating of ten ('a lot') across each of the three statements.

The table also shows the average score given in response to each statement ranged from 7.6 for payments 'helping [respondents] to control [their] finances' to 8.3 for 'helping to make a difference to [the recipient's] life'.

Table 10.4: Impact of benefit payments

All respondents with experience of receiving payments; Column percentages and mean score

Rating of impact of benefit payment in relation to statement from zero ('not at all') to ten ('a lot')	Helped make a difference to your life	Helped you to control your finances	Helped you to pay for what you needed
Proportion saying zero to three	6%	11%	9%
Proportion saying four to seven	22%	26%	22%
Proportion saying eight to ten	72%	63%	69%
Proportion saying ten	56%	46%	52%
Average (mean) rating	8.3	7.6	8.1
Total	6,077	6,030	6,081

The mean ratings given by those who received Child Disability Payment were higher across all three statements compared to other benefit recipient groups. The mean ratings given by those who had received Carer's Allowance Supplement or Job Start Payment were lower than across most other groups, as Table 10.5 shows.

Table 10.5: Average impact rating, by benefit experience

All respondents with experience of receiving payments for each benefit; mean score by row for each statement

How much benefit payments have:				
Benefit received	Helped make a difference to your life	Helped you to control your finances	Helped you to pay for what you needed	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	8.0	7.6	7.8	1,611
Best Start Grant	8.5	7.9	8.3	1,667
Best Start Foods	8.5	7.9	8.2	1,517
Funeral Support	8.6	7.5	8.4	467
Young Carer Grant	8.6	7.7	8.4	126
Job Start Payment	7.9	7.0	8.2	61
Scottish Child Payment	8.5	7.8	8.2	2,988
Child Winter Heating Assistance	8.8	8.1	8.5	372
Child Disability Payment	8.9	8.3	8.7	712

A clear association was evident between several demographic groups and the likelihood of giving a high rating (8-10) for each of the three statements relating to the impact of receiving payments. Women, respondents with long-term physical or mental health condition, white respondents, and respondents aged 16-54 were all more likely to give a high rating across all three measures. This was also the case for respondents without communication needs, who identified English as their main language, and who said that they could speak, write, understand, and read English 'very well'.

There was less difference found by deprivation (SIMD), however, respondents in quintiles 4 and 5 (least deprived) were less likely to give a rating of 8-10 for the statement 'helped you to pay for what you needed', as shown in Table 10.6.

Table 10.6: Average rating (out of 10) of benefit impact, by demographic group
All respondents with experience of receiving payments in each demographic group

Proportion providing rating of 8-10 for extent to which benefit payments have:				
Demographic group	Helped make a difference to your life	Helped you to control your finances	Helped you to pay for what you needed	Total
Gender identity				
Man	61%	54%	59%	915
Woman	74%	65%	72%	4,659
Long-term health condition				
With long-term physical/mental health condition	76%	66%	72%	1,920
No condition	70%	62%	68%	3,350
Ethnicity				
White	75%	65%	72%	4,273
Minority ethnic	60%	55%	59%	859
Age				
Aged 16-54	73%	64%	70%	4,665
Aged 55+	67%	61%	65%	959
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)				
Quintile 1 (most deprived)	72%	62%	69%	2,042
Quintile 2	71%	63%	70%	1,216
Quintile 3	75%	66%	73%	867
Quintile 4	68%	61%	64%	687
Quintile 5 (least deprived)	70%	61%	67%	369
Communication needs				
Had communication needs	63%	55%	61%	559
Had no communication needs	72%	64%	70%	5,351
Main language				
English	76%	67%	73%	2,349
Other	63%	55%	59%	767
Speaking, writing, understanding, and reading English				
Could speak, write, understand, and read English 'very well'	77%	68%	74%	2,177
Others	64%	55%	62%	1,035

10.5 Comments about receiving benefit payments

Anyone who had received a benefit payment had the chance to offer views on their experience²⁵.

499 respondents provided a comment regarding their experience of receiving a payment from Social Security Scotland. Nearly three-in-five comments were positive and around one-in-five were negative. An equal number of comments were suggestions, mixed, or neutral responses.

²⁵ 'Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience receiving benefit payments?'

The most frequent theme among positive comments was an appreciation for benefit payments. Some comments were general expressions of thanks. Others mentioned particular benefits and the positive impact payments had on their lives. A large number of comments came from respondents who specifically mentioned the positive impact payments had on their children or family:

“Carers Allowance allows me to fill my car with petrol every 2 weeks because I have to visit dad every day do a lot of back and forth between caring and shopping so help me a lot and very grateful for it.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“Hospital appointments can be costly in travel, parking, food for Hospital stays etc. This benefit is a huge help for my son.”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Child Disability Payment

“I am very grateful as it has helped me and my wife a great deal financially.”

Aged 55-64, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“It has been a massive help after the few years we have had, with having 4 children at home and my husband the only income provider while i study full time. especially with energy prices going up. It allowed us to get decent food shops and put petrol in the car. Massive help.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“The payment helps us out a lot to pay for extra gas and electric and to fill our fridge freezer.”

Man, aged 55-64, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“Although my son received his diagnosis almost a year prior to my application, I was reluctant to apply. I figured we had managed so far why bother. But the difference it has made in such a short space of time truly amazing. Its helped towards clothes and socks for his sensory issues, which are really expensive. He only eats certain food, and for one of the items in his packed lunch it is almost £10 per week not including everything else so small things like this have made a difference. It is also allowing us to save for a specialised pc for him.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

“Extra payments I have received have been crucial, have helped me and my son. Without these payments it would have been extremely difficult”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“I think this is a fantastic benefit for parents to be. Getting set up for a child is difficult and expensive so to have this help relieves a lot of stress.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“It helps do a lot more things with my child to keep him entertained and busy”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

“It's giving my little girl opportunities and now she will get the help and support she needs!”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

“Just so helpful, feel less stressed and more able to provide my family with what they need.”

Man, aged 45-54, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

“My son can now attend 2 autism groups and have a math tutor every week. Without this benefit there is no way I could afford this. This is a huge amount of support for my son which is helping him to do the things that will allow him to work towards independence as he gets older :-)”

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment

“The benefits have made a big difference in getting my son clothes and footwear to fit him.”

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

“This payment was a life line, helping to put extra gas and electricity, food during December. It took a big part of the monthly stress off.”

Experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

“The benefits are very generous and have helped a single mum like me very much in looking after her toddler daughter. They have also allowed us to go to a music class, which my daughter loves, and I can buy her more toys and books. She loves books! I am saving up for a holiday for us both. So they have made a huge difference to our lives.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

Many respondents also commented that their payments were processed on time and without any difficulties:

“Overall very efficient and was in my bank account when they said.”

Man, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

“My payments have always been paid into my account on the proper dates meaning I can plan my finances with confidence.”

Man, aged 65+, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

“Payments made on time and as expected.”

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

“The actual experience was as I would told it would be and I received the correct money with all back money paid to me and I received the supplement in December 2021 for which I am very grateful.”

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

“Very quick, efficient service, correct payments, clear correspondence”

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

“A quick and pain free process that was transparent.”

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Child Disability Payment

“It went very smoothly and all the information was clear.”

Aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment, Child Winter Heating Assistance and Scottish Child Payment

Some respondents who received Carer's Allowance Supplement felt the benefit recognised their value as carers:

"Having just moved to Scotland I wasn't expecting this payment so it was very welcome when it came through and I felt valued for the care I gave."

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"The Carer's Support Supplement made me feel valued. Boosted my self-worth."

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Receiving carers supplement made me feel valued as part of society again. It was a tough transition going from a health care professional to an unpaid carer and it helped me feel 'seen' and valued for the additional work I do compared to parents of non disabled children."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement and Child Disability Payment

"My faith in humanity was restored when I received the additional sum of money before Christmas. It really helped and made me feel as though I live in a country that is inclusive, participatory and caring. The work I have done for a long time now (caring) was valued as important and I had not been forgotten."

Experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

Among negative comments, some respondents commented to say that they felt payments should be higher:

"I think £33 a month for having a newborn isn't much to help with nappies milk etc especially when you have to provide your newborn with special milk."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"I am grateful for the supplement but I am still getting less than £10 a day to look after my seriously disabled husband. Until last year I earned that at work in 30 minutes, but had to leave to look after him. His carer paid by council get more than £10 an hour."

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"The payments are not enough to cover fruit and veg and baby milk as everything has gone up in price."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"£18 a month before baby is born then £36 for the first year of their life before going back to £18 after they are over 1... here's my opinion on that: Although it's great having a minuscule % of money to contribute towards my shopping, I don't think the prices of what is included has been taking into consideration. £18 a month would buy me a weeks worth of fruit/veg, not a month. And in there first year of a babies life, they are not eating proper meals and do not start weaning until around 6 months of age? Where's the common sense?"

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"I didn't know carers allowance was means tested or I would not have bothered. I feel family members who look after a sick relative should be paid for it. I also feel £67.60 per week for 35 hours is a total insult. This equates to £1.93 an hour."

Man, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"I get £17 a month and it only get me one tin of food and some baby wipes which does not last a week never mind a month. It is not a lot but it does help a little."
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"The Scottish child payment is £40 a month and whilst it helps buy shopping or towards bills, it's not a huge amount"
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I think the payments could be higher. Especially with all the prices of everything going up. The best start foods is only £17, this isn't enough."
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

As also reported in Section 9.6, several respondents commented to say that they had received their payment before any form of confirmation, which caused some confusion:

"Being made aware you were successful first before the payment was in my account would of been beneficial"
Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"Payment came before the letter so I wasn't sure what was awarded and where the money had come from"
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"Payment for Child Winter Heating Allowance was received before correspondence regarding the payment was received. This caused concern and confusion since an unknown payment was received into my bank account."
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

"I did not get the notification letter until after the money credited to my account. I did not know what money was in account and only found out via google, however I did get the letter a few days later"
Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

11. Barriers

All respondents were asked if they had faced any barriers getting help from Social Security Scotland²⁶. This section presents the results on how many said they had experienced barriers, the kinds of barriers faced, and whether those affected sought help.

11.1 Experience of barriers

17% of respondents said they had experienced some form of barrier getting help from Social Security Scotland.

Respondents with experience of Young Carer Grant (22%) were marginally more likely to have experienced some form of barrier getting help from Social Security Scotland, whereas Carer's Allowance Supplement recipients (13%) were less likely to have (see Table 11.1).

Table 11.1: Whether faced any barriers getting help from Social Security Scotland, by benefit experience

All respondents with any experience of each benefit

Benefit experience	Experienced barrier getting help from Social Security Scotland	Total
All respondents	17%	7,534
Carer's Allowance Supplement	13%	1,653
Best Start Grant	19%	3,023
Best Start Foods	19%	3,114
Funeral Support Payment	18%	700
Young Carer Grant	22%	201
Job Start Payment	20%	107
Scottish Child Payment	16%	3,575
Child Winter Heating Assistance	15%	378
Child Disability Payment	17%	782

Experience of barriers was similar across most demographic characteristics. However, more than one-in-five (22%) minority ethnic respondents said they had experienced barriers, compared to 15% of white respondents. Furthermore, those with a communication need were far more likely to say that they had experienced a barrier (30%, compared with 16% of those with no communication needs). This was also the case for those whose main language was not English (24%, compared to 17% of respondents whose main language was English), and those who did not answer 'very well' to how well they could: speak, write, understand, and read English (25%, compared to 16% of those who did answer 'very well' to each).

Nearly a third (32%) of respondents who had not received a successful decision on any applications or any benefit payments said that they had experienced some form of barrier getting help from Social Security Scotland. This is compared to 16% of those who had received a successful decision or payment.

²⁶ "Did you face any barriers getting help from Social Security Scotland?" Response options included "No (I didn't face any barriers)", as well as a list of types of barriers that may have been faced, which are included in Table 11.2.

Respondents were provided with a list of types of barrier, which are shown in Table 11.2. Across all respondents, none of the types of barrier were selected much more than others. There was a small amount of variation by benefit experience; those with experience of Job Start Payment were more likely to select 'I could not communicate with Social Security Scotland when I wanted to' (13%, compared to 4-9% across other groups). The barrier most infrequently selected across most groups was 'I could not access or use the internet', with the exception being those with experience of Funeral Support Payment amongst whom it was the most commonly selected barrier.

Table 11.2: Types of barrier faced, by benefit experience

All respondents with any experience of each benefit; Row percentages

Benefit experience	I could not communicate with Social Security Scotland when I wanted to	I could not communicate with Social Security Scotland how I wanted to	I could not access or use the internet	I could not get the information or updates I needed	Other	Total
All respondents	5%	3%	2%	6%	4%	7,339
Carer's Allowance Supplement	4%	3%	2%	4%	3%	1,606
Best Start Grant	7%	4%	2%	7%	5%	2,962
Best Start Foods	7%	4%	2%	7%	4%	3,053
Funeral Support Payment	5%	4%	6%	5%	3%	680
Young Carer Grant	9%	6%	4%	6%	6%	198
Job Start Payment	13%	7%	7%	9%	6%	104
Scottish Child Payment	6%	3%	2%	6%	4%	3,512
Child Winter Heating Assistance	5%	4%	2%	5%	5%	372
Child Disability Payment	5%	4%	2%	7%	4%	770

After being given the above options (shown in Table 11.2), respondents who had reported facing a barrier were given an opportunity to tell us in their own words about the barriers they had faced²⁷. This provided additional insights into the barriers faced, and often the reasons why respondents faced the barriers that they did.

Responses were given by 441 respondents, which accounts for around one-in-three (35%) who said that they had experience a barrier.

²⁷ "Please tell us about the barrier(s) you faced?"

The most frequently mentioned barrier was the long wait times for the phone helpline:

“Call wait times were ridiculous”

Man, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“It took me over an hour to get through ,this is bad.”

Woman, aged 16-24 experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“just getting through to talk to someone about the application was difficult as it took ages to be answered and then no one had any information to give me.”

Experience of Child Disability Payment

“2-3 hours waiting time to get to speak to someone”

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“Getting through online and on phone was nightmare and took over an hour. Not very good.”

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

Applicants found the lack of updates or information on their application to be a barrier, often compounded by delays:

“Applied for scottish child payment on 3rd of January not heard anything no update and when I ask no one can update me”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“as i’ve said about not being told where my application is, i don’t know if it’s still being reviewed, declined or anything”

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“Delay.. still didn’t get any answer of my application”

Man, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“I could not get I formation on my claim it was different communication from people”

Aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment, Child Winter Heating Assistance, and Young Carer Grant

“The only barrier that there is you can't check your application without having to sit on the phone for ages and when you do its a short phone call.”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment and Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“When you call the phone number it’s very hard to get through to someone to find out if you have qualified even after waiting for over 30 days to hear back. I never called before the promised decision time but didn’t receive any update that’s why I had to call to get a disappointing answer”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Scottish Child Payment

“There was no updates on my application. It took over 3 months for my application to be completed and payment received.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

Applicants expressed that the inability of client advisors to tell them about a decision or to generally provide the information they needed over the phone was a barrier:

“Apparently they cant tell you the decision they make over the phone...I don't understand why they cant since u need to answer a lot of security questions to be able to even speak to someone in first place”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

“When I called they would not tell me the result.”

Experience of Child Disability Payment

“Nobody could tell me when anything would actually be finalised. Nobody could tell me when I would receive payments or back payments. One woman on the chat service was clearly not qualified to deal with people whatsoever.”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“I phoned up the first time to get an update on my application and they were a bit behind but when I phoned up again they didn’t let me go further as I needed my national insurance number but I have forgot it and don’t have a letter with it on , so I would have to wait a few weeks to get it sent out to me , but I don’t see the problem as I didn’t need it the first time for my application , thank you .”

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Scottish Child Payment

“Couldn't get the answer I needed”

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Young Carer Grant

“I still have not received my child winter payment from 2020 and every time I call no one can give me any information about when I will get it .”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement, Child Winter Heating Assistance and Child Disability Payment

"No one advises or provided information. Unless you ask and in my experience when you ask questions most of the staff couldn't answer as they said they didn't know the answers. I felt if you don't make your claim online your claim isn't taken seriously."

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

Language was a barrier for some respondents, either because they didn't speak English as a first language or because they had difficulties with language. Some respondents elaborated on why language was a barrier for them:

"I don't speak English enough I speak Arabic"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Child Disability Payment

"I don't speak english very well."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"I received a call from, as I said I can't speak English my husband tried to speak on behalf of me as he is doing now, but your staff ignoring that and she wants to speak with me, then she said she going to provide an Interpreter and will call me back still not received the call."

Man, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Language problem and too late feedback (decision or answer) from my need or asking"

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"My spoken English is very bad and I couldn't understand what the operator was saying."

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"My wife and I are alone in this country, neither friends nor family and we cannot understand or speak English. None of the govt officers informed us to contact the legal awareness services"

Man, aged 35-44, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

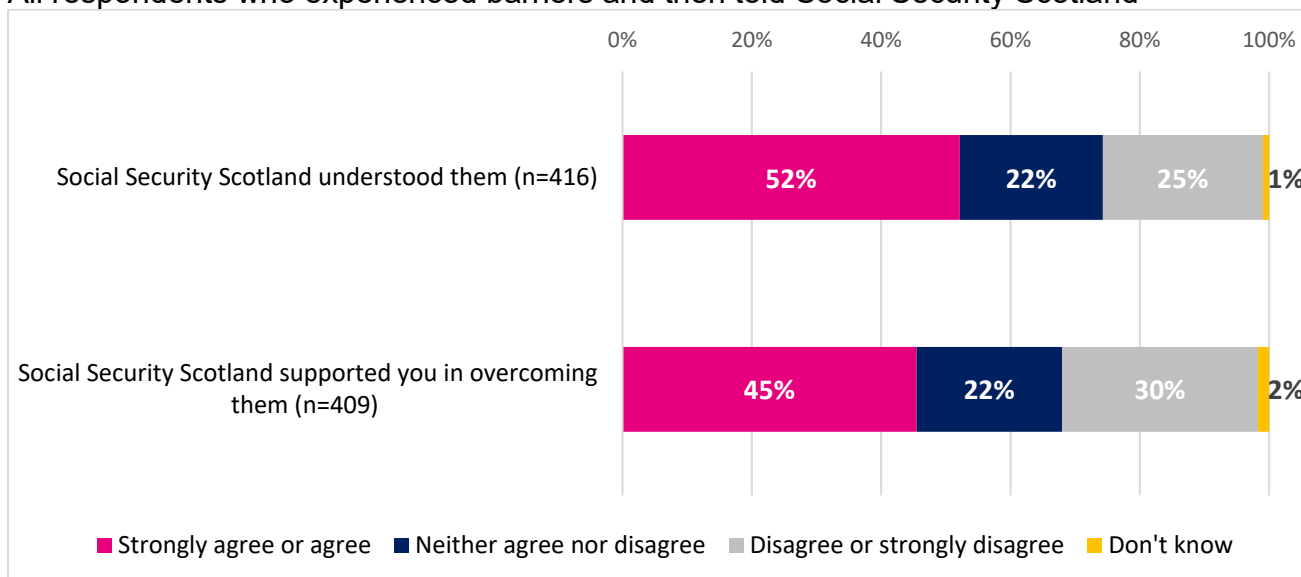
11.2 Tackling barriers

Around a third (35%) of those who experienced barriers said they told Social Security Scotland about them.

Where respondents had told Social Security Scotland about the barriers they experienced, around half agreed that Social Security Scotland ‘understood them’ (52%). A slightly smaller proportion agreed that Social Security Scotland ‘supported [them] in overcoming them’ (45%), as shown in Figure 11.2.

Figure 11.2: Whether respondents felt Social Security Scotland understood, and supported them to overcome the barriers they experienced

All respondents who experienced barriers and then told Social Security Scotland



Respondents had the option to explain why they did not tell Social Security Scotland about their barriers. Of the 434 respondents who indicated that they did not tell Social Security Scotland about the barriers they faced, one in four gave a reason why.

Of this cohort, most simply could not get in touch with Social Security Scotland. This was for a variety of reasons, some of which were compounded by the barriers they faced:

“Couldn't get through on phone tried several times.”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“Couldn't talk direct with someone not up with computers”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“No credit or Internet meanwhile isolating due to covid with my other child”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment, Child Winter Heating Assistance and Child Disability Payment

"I couldn't as have no phone"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I've not had a call back."

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"Wouldn't have been a barrier if SSS had returned my call and answered query."

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Funeral Support Payment

"Don't have internet."

Woman, aged 65+, experience of Funeral Support Payment

The second most stated reason was that respondents did not know how to get in contact with Social Security Scotland:

"Did not know who to tell"

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I didn't know who to call or the phone number"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"There was no option to"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

"How? Write a letter?"

Man, aged 45-54, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I do not know their working pattern."

Woman, aged 18-24, experience of Young Carer Grant

"I don't know how to contact them"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

A similar amount of respondents said that they did not have time or that it was too difficult to contact Social Security Scotland about the barriers they faced.

"Honestly I don't have time with me having a kid and trying to prepare for my new job"

Man, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Carer's Allowance Supplement

"I did not have time looking after someone who is terminally ill"

Woman, aged 16-24, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“Not enough time to hang on hold”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

“Too much hassle to contact”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“Because it’s draining ‘haggling for funds that are allegedly there to be claimed and trying to contact people who are unavailable to you if you can’t spend hours and days trying to get them via phone.”

Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Scottish Child Payment

A few respondents felt that contacting Social Security Scotland about their barriers would have made no difference or was pointless.

“I didn’t feel it would have made a difference”

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“I don’t think telling them would have made a difference or helped me complete.”

Man, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“What’s the point? you just ignore applications”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“Pointless exercise.

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

A similar amount of respondents did not get the help that they needed from Social Security Scotland to overcome their barriers.

“As they could not tell me the information I was asking for”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“They didn’t listen and showed no compassion”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Carer’s Allowance Supplement

“They hang up on me”

Man, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods

“When you have staff on the phone telling you “I don’t know” there’s not really anything else you can say to them”

Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

A small number of participants stated that their mental health prevented them from making contact:

“Anxiety”

Woman, experience of Scottish Child Payment

“I was going through to much stress as it was”

Man, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

“I was heavily bereaved”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Child Disability Payment

“Social anxiety can’t talk on phone”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Carer’s Allowance Supplement

12. Discrimination

This section presents results on respondents' experiences of discrimination when dealing with Social Security Scotland.

12.1 Experience of discrimination

Respondents were asked if they felt they had been discriminated against at any point during their experience with Social Security Scotland. A small proportion (3%) said they had experienced discrimination, with a further 4% selecting the 'prefer not to say' response option (see Table 12.1). The proportion who had experienced discrimination was very similar across most benefit groups.

Table 12.1: Experience of discrimination by benefit experience

All respondents with experience of each benefit; Column percentages

Benefit experience	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	Total
All respondents	3%	93%	4%	7,412
Carer's Allowance Supplement	3%	96%	2%	1,628
Best Start Grant	4%	91%	5%	2,999
Best Start Foods	4%	91%	5%	3,088
Funeral Support Payment	4%	92%	4%	683
Young Carer Grant	3%	92%	6%	198
Job Start Payment	6%	87%	8%	104
Scottish Child Payment	3%	93%	3%	3,556
Child Winter Heating Assistance	3%	95%	2%	374
Child Disability Payment	3%	95%	2%	778

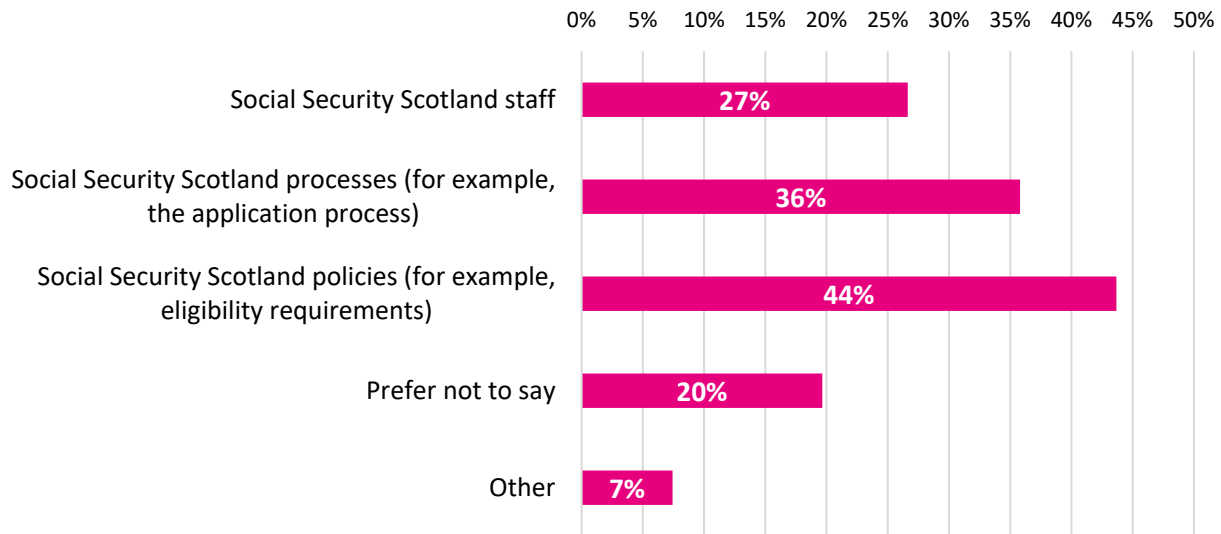
Results were broadly similar across key demographic breakdowns. However, those with a communication need were more likely to have experienced discrimination (8%, compared to 3% of those with no communication needs). Findings are outlined in full in [Supplementary document: tables and methods](#) available alongside this report.

More than one-in-ten (11%) respondents who had not received a successful decision on any applications or any benefit payments said that they had experienced discrimination during their experience with Social Security Scotland. This is compared to 3% of those who had received a successful decision or payment.

12.2 Nature of discrimination

Respondents who had experienced discrimination were asked who or what they felt was discriminatory towards them. They could select more than one option if they wished. The most commonly chosen source was Social Security Scotland 'policies', selected by more than two-in-five respondents (44%). More than one-in-three (36%) said that the source of the discrimination they experienced was Social Security Scotland 'processes', and just over one-in-four (27%) said Social Security Scotland 'staff' (see Figure 12.1).

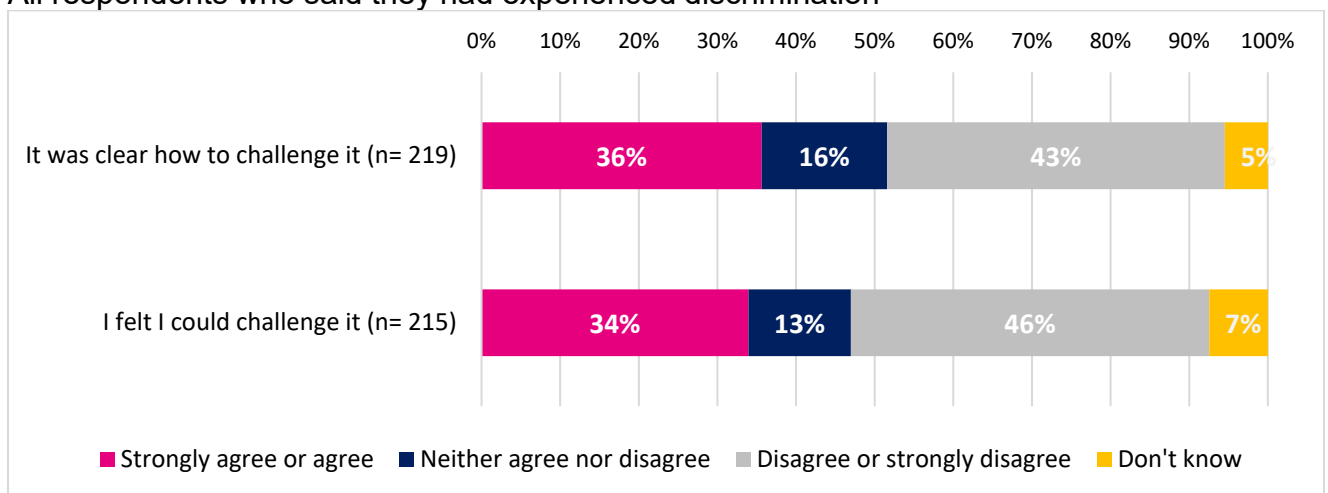
Figure 12.1: Who or what respondents felt discriminated by
All respondents who had experienced discrimination (n=229)



12.3 Tackling discrimination

More than two-in-five of those who felt they had been discriminated against disagreed with the statements 'it was clear how to challenge it' and 'I felt I could challenge it' (43% and 46% respectively). A little over one-in-three (36% and 34% respectively) agreed with these statements, as Figure 12.2 outlines.

Figure 12.2: Whether respondents knew how and felt able to challenge discrimination
All respondents who said they had experienced discrimination



Regarding the discrimination they faced, around three-in-five respondents aged 55 or over disagreed that 'it was clear how to challenge it' (61%) and 'I felt I could challenge it' (61%), compared to 40% and 42% respectively amongst respondents aged 16-54. This was also the case for white respondents who experienced discrimination; around half (51%) disagreed that 'It was clear how to challenge' the discrimination they faced, and 'I felt I could challenge it' (57%) compared with 24% and 23% respectively amongst minority ethnic respondents.

Less than four-in-ten respondents said they told Social Security Scotland about the

discrimination they faced (38%), whilst around one-in-three (32%) selected the 'prefer not to say' option and a similar proportion said that they did not (30%).

Those who reported their experiences of discrimination (n=88) were asked if Social Security Scotland took the action needed. A little over half of the respondents (53%) said that Social Security Scotland took the action needed, and 32% said that Social Security Scotland did not.

12.4 Comments about discrimination

Regardless of their answers to the related closed questions, all survey respondents were given the chance to comment on discrimination in connection to their experience with Social Security Scotland²⁸.

166 comments were given, of which around two-in-five were positive and just under a quarter were negative.

Most respondents who gave positive responses used this section to recount good experiences with staff, describing staff as not being discriminatory, and highlighting staff manner as evidence of this:

"I felt absolutely no discrimination. The man that dealt with my claim listen to everything I had to say and was very understanding and sympathetic to my situation."
Woman, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment

"I felt they helpful and knew what I needed and pointed me in the right direction"
Man, aged 45-54, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"I got a call back quite quickly from a very polite guy - no problems at all."
Woman, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"I was fairly treated, not judged, treated with respect, they listened and helped"
Man, aged 55-64, experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

"Thank you for a stress free experience and making me feel listened to and valued."
Woman, experience of Child Disability Payment

"Far from it, staff treated me with nothing but respect and empathy for my situation"
Man, aged 35-44, experience of Child Disability Payment and Scottish Child Payment

²⁸ 'Is there anything you want to tell us about discrimination and your experience with Social Security Scotland?'

Of the negative comments that were given to this question, most related to our service, specifically to communication and information:

"As my disabilities are not necessarily visible it is very difficult to put across how everyday struggles are for me, especially over the phone (this is in relation to application done prior to 1st April 2021)."

Man, aged 16-24, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

"Can't get information what we need and staff didn't want explain or give any reference"

Man, aged 35-44, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

"I feel comments made by the person who called to ask questions about my child's health were dismissive and bordering on discriminatory."

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Child Disability Payment

"I felt ignored, disregarded and sometimes ridiculed"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Child Disability Payment and Child Winter Heating Assistance

"I have a social communication disorder, I feel that when I was questioned further about my sons disability it was not made clear to me that my word for word answers would be taken literally. I prefer to communicate via writing, giving myself some processing time and time to reflect."

Experience of Child Disability Payment

"No one supported me when I advise do had mental health issues which prevented me from doing things online and understanding some things- staff also said they would support/call back resolve and contact me when done but no one has"

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods and Scottish Child Payment

Some respondents felt that Social Security Scotland policy and/or the eligibility criteria for certain benefits excluded certain groups of people:

"It is your definition of disability which fails those who are ill. It is outdated and narrow and just follows the old DWP. My child has ME and cannot do anything except sleep and lie on her bed. Lots of extra costs of heating. She doesn't need help getting out and about and doing things and everyday tasks. Because she is too ill to do them in the first place. Most of your questions assume someone can go out and about so they are hurtful to read. Most of your questions relate to physical or intellectual impairment, that is someone who isn't ill. So I/we feel excluded and invisible as if she isn't properly disabled. We/she would like money to buy all things she might want in future if when she gets better to catch up 5+ years of her life. A lot of the questions aren't relevant to this kind of disability and the relevant questions aren't in your form. So, she gets a low

rate even though her quality of life is really low compared to someone who is fine as long as they get the right aids eg cars or wheelchairs”

Experience of Child Disability Payment

“Not discriminated against but I do feel with sensory issues or autism or adhd there is this magic age of “3” that crops up for everything and I don’t get why! My son is nearly 2 and is more like mobility and mind wise 10 months carried everywhere doesn’t walk outside sleep issues food issues sensory issues with everything yet was told almost that’s not enough? I don’t get the system”

Woman, aged 25-34, experience of Best Start Grant / Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment

“I do feel discriminated against as I work and don’t claim benefits that’s why I wasn’t granted the help with funeral costs , because you work that doesn’t mean you have spare cash , I barely make enough to keep my own house running , that I feel is wrong , my mother was on benefits and it was her funeral service so I feel she should be entitled to the benefit”

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Funeral Support Payment

“With changes to Carers Allowance and the new Scottish Carers Assistance imminent SSS should take this opportunity to support all unpaid carers and remove the earnings threshold. With the cost of living crisis many of us are living on the breadline and can’t afford basics. I work for local government and provide vital services but I will soon be forced to leave employment and claim benefits as there is no financial support for families who work part time and just above the threshold. I can’t increase my hours due to caring responsibilities so I am stuck.”

Woman, aged 45-54, experience of Carer’s Allowance Supplement

13. Single benefit experience

This section presents top level results for respondents who had only experienced one benefit²⁹. A total of 4,092 respondents (54%) only had experience of one benefit.

This approach allows for exploration of views which are not influenced by the conflation of experiences with multiple benefits. Please note however, that for some benefits the number who only experienced these benefits is only a small proportion of all who experienced them. This is particularly the case for those with experience of either Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods (27%) and experience of only Scottish Child Payment (21%).³⁰

13.1 Overall experience

The proportion who rated their overall experience as 'very good' or 'good' was lowest amongst respondents with experience of Child Winter Heating Assistance (84%) or Job Start Payment (84%). Rating was highest from respondents with experience of Young Carer Grant (93%) and Scottish Child Payment (94%), as shown in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1: Overall rating of experience with Social Security Scotland, by single benefit experience

All respondents with single experience of each benefit; row percentages

Single benefit experience	Very good or good	Neither poor nor good	Poor or very poor	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	88%	10%	2%	1,088
Best Start Grant / Foods	86%	9%	4%	824
Funeral Support Payment	88%	9%	3%	569
Young Carer Grant	93%	7%	-	135
Job Start Payment	84%	#	#	70
Scottish Child Payment	94%	5%	2%	801
Child Winter Heating Assistance	84%	13%	3%	145
Child Disability Payment ³¹	90%	7%	3%	353

²⁹ This includes those who only applied for Best Start Grant / Best Start Foods or only received either Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods, given the fact that these two benefits are so closely linked.

³⁰ Of those who experienced each benefit, the following proportions only experienced: Carer's Allowance Supplement (67%), Best Start Grant/ Foods (27%), Funeral Support Payment (84%), Young Carer Grant (68%), Job Start Payment (69%), Scottish Child Payment (21%), Child Winter Heating Assistance (39%), Child Disability Payment (46%).

³¹ This includes clients who had either applied for or been case transferred onto Child Disability Payment

Table 13.2 shows results for the more detailed questions on respondents' overall experience with a single benefit. Across all statements, agreement was lowest among Job Start Payment applicants and Child Winter Heating Assistance recipients. Broadly, respondents with experience of only one benefit were less positive about their experience, compared with all respondents (shown in Table 3.4).

Table 13.2: Views on overall experience with Social Security Scotland, by single benefit experience

All respondents with single experience of each benefit

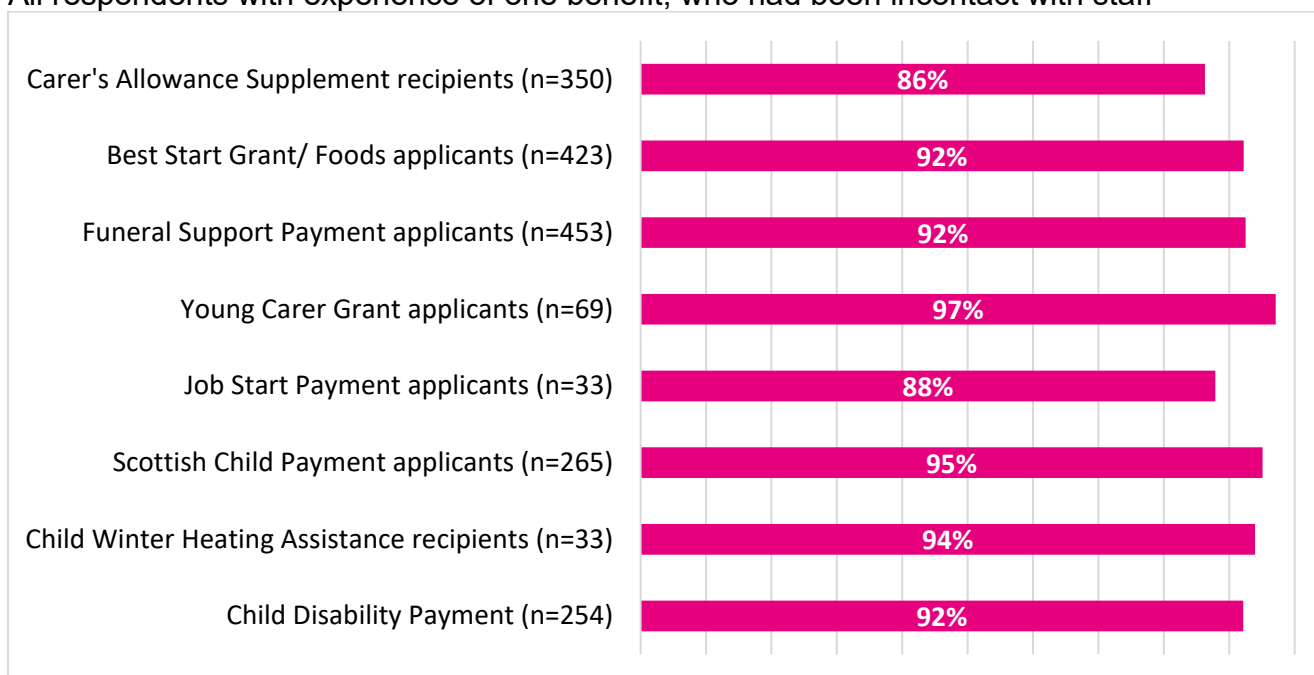
Strongly agree or agree that...	Carer's Allowance Supplement	Best Start Grant / Foods	Funeral Support Payment	Young Carer Grant	Job Start Payment	Scottish Child Payment	Child Winter Heating Assistance	Child Disability Payment
Social Security Scotland treated me with dignity	80%	88%	90%	94%	78%	89%	82%	92%
Social Security Scotland treated me fairly	83%	84%	87%	95%	81%	91%	83%	89%
Social Security Scotland treated me with respect	81%	89%	92%	95%	77%	92%	84%	92%
I understand what Social Security Scotland does	76%	89%	84%	86%	76%	90%	77%	90%
Social Security Scotland is an open organisation	64%	85%	78%	86%	75%	86%	70%	81%
I feel I can trust Social Security Scotland	71%	85%	81%	87%	77%	87%	74%	83%
Social Security Scotland did not waste my time	81%	84%	86%	89%	77%	91%	81%	86%
Social Security Scotland is an honest organisation	74%	87%	83%	88%	74%	88%	77%	82%
Total	1,013	794	565	130	69	776	111	346

13.2 Experience with staff

Almost all (97%) respondents with experience of Young Carer Grant described their overall experience with staff as 'very good' or 'good', as did 95% of respondents who only experienced Scottish Child Payment (see Figure 13.1). More than nine-in-ten rated their experience of staff as 'very good' or 'good' across most benefit groups, with the exception those who only experienced Job Start Payment (88%) or received Carer's Allowance Supplement (86%).

Figure 13.1: Overall rating of experience with staff by single benefit experience (% strongly agreeing or agreeing with each statement)

All respondents with experience of one benefit, who had been incontact with staff



Looking at more specific questions regarding interactions with staff, those with experience of Young Carer Grant were particularly likely to reflect well. However, the relatively small number of respondents in this group should be taken into account. Most groups were highly likely to agree with the statement 'I was treated with kindness', but less likely to agree with the statements 'I felt trusted' and 'I trusted staff', as set out in Table 13.3. Respondents who only experienced Child Winter Heating Assistance were markedly less positive about their interactions with staff, compared with all Child Winter Heating Assistance recipients (see Table 7.1).

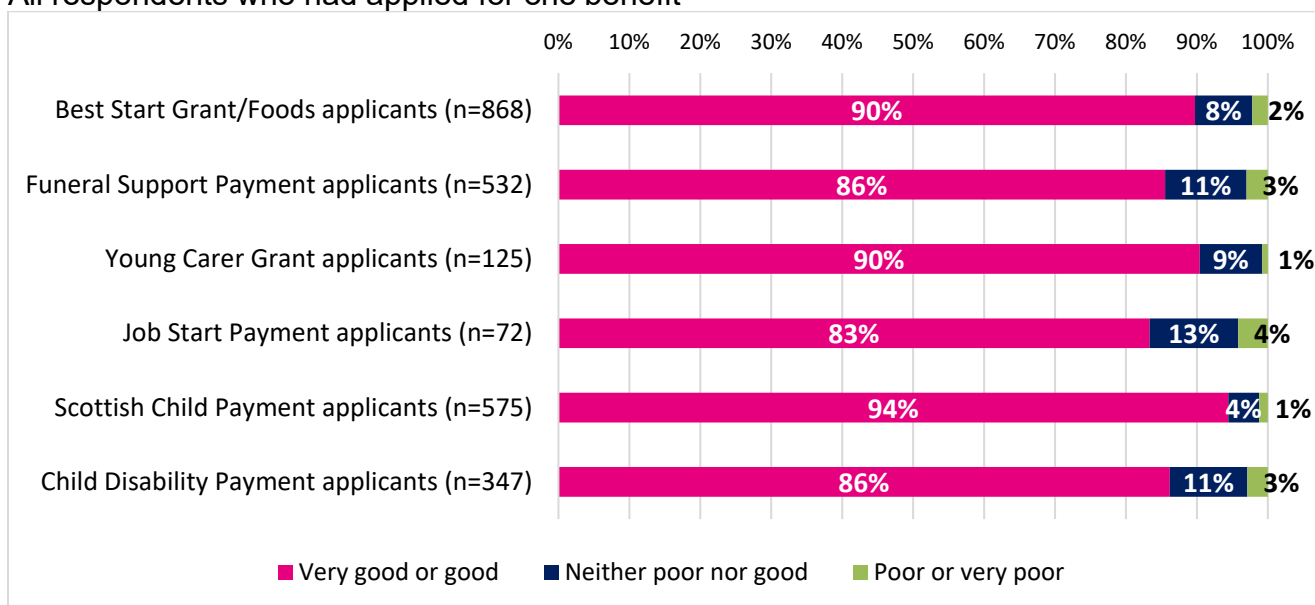
Table 13.3: Views on interactions with Social Security Scotland staff by single benefit experience. All respondents with experience of one benefit who had been in contact with Social Security Scotland staff

Proportion agreeing with statement:	I was treated with kindness	I felt trusted	I trusted staff	Staff listened to me	Staff made me feel comfortable	Staff were able to help me	Staff were knowledgeable about Social Security Scotland benefits	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	90%	79%	82%	89%	85%	88%	81%	348
Best Start Grant/Foods	93%	88%	88%	92%	91%	85%	90%	422
Funeral Support Payment	94%	88%	90%	92%	91%	91%	88%	446
Young Carer Grant	96%	96%	99%	99%	96%	97%	99%	69
Job Start Payment	85%	83%	88%	82%	79%	82%	82%	34
Scottish Child Payment	95%	88%	91%	92%	92%	90%	90%	261
Child Winter Heating Assistance	97%	73%	76%	88%	82%	85%	85%	149
Child Disability Payment	96%	90%	90%	91%	93%	88%	85%	258

13.3 Applying for Social Security benefits

Those who only applied for Scottish Child Payment were most likely to rate their application process as 'very good' or 'good' (94%). This was also the case for around nine-in-ten of those who only applied for Young Carer Grant (90%) or Best Start Grant/Foods (90%), yet fewer did so across other groups (see Figure 13.2). These findings broadly reflect responses given by all respondents with experience of each benefit, as shown in Figure 8.2.

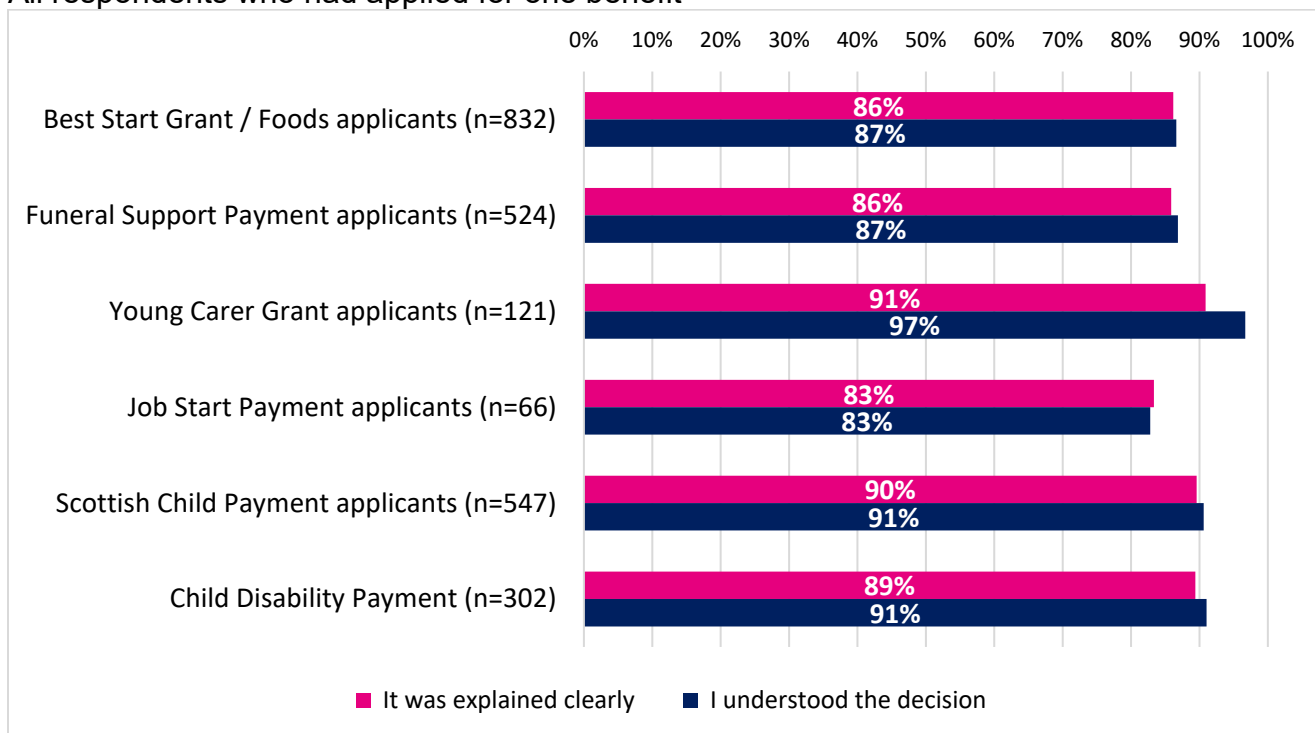
Figure 13.2: Overall rating of application process, by single benefit experience
All respondents who had applied for one benefit



13.4 Application decision

Around nine-in-ten of those who only applied for Young Carer Grant (91%), Scottish Child Payment (90%), and Child Disability Payment (89%) agreed that the decision they received was explained clearly, although other groups were less likely to do so. This pattern was also evident regarding whether the respondent understood their decision. However, Young Carer Grant recipients (97%) were distinctly more likely to agree with the statement "I understood the decision" compared with other groups, as shown in Figure 13.3.

Figure 13.3: Views on application decisions by single benefit experience
All respondents who had applied for one benefit



13.5 Receiving payment

Across all sole benefit recipient groups, a very high proportion received their payment on time; at least 91% did so for each group, and almost all respondents who only received Carer's Allowance Supplement (98%), Young Carer Grant (99%), and Scottish Child Payment (97%). This was also the case in relation to receiving the correct amount 'first time', and 'every time', as shown in Table 13.4.

Table 13.4: Whether payments were on time and accurate
All respondents with experience of receiving payments for one benefit only.

Only received...	Received payment when Social Security Scotland said they would	Received right amount first time	Received right amount every time	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	98%	98%	94%	1,017
Best Start Grant	94%	98%	86%	171
Best Start Foods	96%	96%	92%	108
Funeral Support Payment	94%	95%		359
Young Carer Grant	99%	100%	32	90
Job Start Payment	91%	98%		44
Scottish Child Payment	97%	97%	95%	1,003
Child Winter Heating Assistance	96%	96%	91%	109
Child Disability Payment	95%	99%	99%	353

³² Whilst Young Carer Grant is a recurring benefit, it is paid once a year and so the majority of survey respondents should have only received one Young Carer Grant payment

Overall, the large majority of respondents who received payment(s) for one benefit said that it was a 'very good' or 'good' experience. Those who only received Scottish Child Payment (94%) or Child Disability Payment (96%) were most likely to rate their experience of receiving these payments as 'very good' or 'good'. Those who only received Best Start Foods (88%) or Job Start Payments (88%) were least likely to rate as 'very good' or 'good' (see Table 13.5). Those who only received Best Start Foods comprise just 9% of all respondents who received Best Start Foods, so these findings should be interpreted with caution. The same applies to those who only received Best Start Grant (13% of all Best Start Grant recipients).

Table 13.5: Overall rating of experience of receiving payments, by single benefit received
All respondents with experience of receiving payment(s) for one benefit

Only received...	Very good or good	Neither poor nor good	Poor or very poor	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement	91%	7%	2%	1,111
Best Start Grant	92%	6%	2%	210
Best Start Food	88%	7%	5%	136
Funeral Support Payment	92%	7%	1%	412
Young Carer Grant	94%	6%	-	99
Job Start Payment	88%	10%	2%	49
Scottish Child Payment	94%	5%	1%	1,098
Child Winter Heating Assistance	90%	8%	2%	131
Child Disability Payment	96%	4%	1%	346

13.6 Barriers

There was some disparity in the likelihood of experiencing barriers getting help from Social Security Scotland by single benefit experience. Around one-in-eight of those who only experienced Scottish Child Payment (14%), Child Winter Heating Assistance (13%), Carer's Allowance Supplement (13%), or Job Start Payment (12%) said that they experienced a barrier getting help from Social Security Scotland. However, around one-in-five of those who only experienced Funeral Support Payment (19%), Young Carer Grant (20%), or Best Start Grant/Foods (23%) said that they did (see Table 12.7).

Table 12.7: Whether respondents faced any barriers getting help from Social Security Scotland, by single benefit experience
All respondents with experience of one benefit

Single benefit experience	Faced barrier getting help from Social Security Scotland	Total
Carer's Allowance Supplement recipients	13%	1,111
Best Start Grant/ Foods applicants	23%	855
Funeral Support Payment applicants	19%	590
Young Carer Grant applicants	20%	137
Job Start Payment applicants	12%	74
Scottish Child Payment applicants	14%	815
Child Winter Heating Assistance recipients	13%	149
Child Disability Payment	16%	356

14. Next steps

The survey results provide rich insight into some of the experiences of Social Security Scotland clients. The results will be used alongside other evidence to populate the [Charter Measurement Framework](#) which reports on Social Security Scotland's performance. The findings will also support Social Security Scotland's continuous improvement. They have also highlighted areas where more research may be useful to further explore clients' experiences, views and expectations.

We're also planning for the future of the survey. The intention is for the survey to be issued on a rolling basis to all applicants following a decision on an application. Invites will also be sent annually to people receiving recurring benefits.

We will also consider lessons learned from the initial round of the survey and whether any changes are required for future versions. [Please get in touch](#) with any feedback, comments or suggestions you have on this report or any aspect of the survey.

Annex A: Client Panels - characteristics of members

As outlined in Section 2.1, around 1,600 Social Security Scotland clients signed up to the Client Panels through the 2021/22 Client Survey. An overview of the demographic characteristics of respondents who joined the Client Panels is provided in the tables below.

Table A1.1: Gender identity of respondents who joined the Client Panels

Gender identity	Proportion of Client Panels joiners
Man	19%
Woman	79%
In another way	0%
Prefer not to say	0%
Skipped question	2%

Table A1.2: Age group of respondents who joined the Client Panels

Age group	Proportion of Client Panels joiners
16-24	6%
25-34	32%
35-44	32%
45-54	14%
55-64	9%
65+	3%
Skipped question	4%

Table A1.3: Ethnicity of respondents who joined the Client Panels

Ethnic group	Proportion of Client Panels joiners
White	73%
Minority ethnic	13%
Prefer not to say	3%
Skipped question / could not categorise	11%

Table A1.4: Long-term physical or mental health condition of respondents who joined the Client Panels

Health status	Proportion of Client Panels joiners
With long-term physical/mental health condition	41%
No condition	52%
Prefer not to say	5%
Skipped question	2%

Table A1.5: Sexual orientation of respondents who joined the Client Panels

Sexual orientation	Proportion of Client Panels joiners
Heterosexual	86%
Gay / lesbian / bisexual	3%
In another way	1%
Prefer not to say	7%
Skipped question	3%

Table A1.6: Whether respondents who joined the Client Panels identified as ‘trans’

Whether identified as ‘trans’	Proportion of Client Panels joiners
Yes	2%
No	92%
Prefer not to say	3%
Skipped question	3%

Table A1.7: Geographic spread of respondents who joined the Client Panels

Urban or rural area	Proportion of Client Panels joiners
Urban	78%
Rural	13%
Skipped question / Partial or non-matching postcode	9%

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this report:

- ☐ are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- ☐ are available via an alternative route
- ☒ may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact ResearchRequests@socialsecurity.gov.scot for further information.
- ☐ cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

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