

Client Survey - Adult and Child Disability Payment April - August 2023

Summary report

Dignity,
fairness,
respect.

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Background

- This report presents the results from the Social Security Scotland Disability Payments Client Survey. Fieldwork ran from 10 October to 6 November 2023.
- All Adult Disability Payment or Child Disability Payment applicants who received a decision between 1 April 2023 and 31 August 2023 were invited to take part in the survey. Those who had completed a Case Transfer for either benefit, and received their first payment during the same period were invited also.

About the survey respondents

- The report is based on responses from 11,488 clients. Of these, 3,169 respondents had completed a Case Transfer and 8,368 had applied for either Adult or Child Disability Payment.
 - Most described their ethnicity as 'white' (94%, compared to 3% minority ethnic).
 - Most described their gender identity as 'woman' (62%, compared to 36% 'man').
 - Most said their age was 55-64 (43%), 45-54 (26%) or 35-44 (14%).
 - Around half lived at a postcode categorised as SIMD quintile 1 (most deprived) (33%) or quintile 2 (25%).

Executive Summary

- The majority of respondents who had completed a Case Transfer agreed or strongly agreed that they had felt 'informed' (83%) and 'reassured' (74%) about the process.
- A similar proportion felt that the communication they received about their Case Transfer was 'clear and easy to understand' (78%) and that 'the tone was friendly' (81%).
- Around eight-in-ten Adult and Child Disability Payment applicants (74% and 86% respectively) felt that they were 'treated fairly and respectfully throughout the application process'.
- Half of Adult and Child Disability Payment applicants (49% and 54% respectively) felt that 'filling in and submitting the application did not take too long'.
- Nearly seven-in-ten Adult and Child Disability Payment applicants who provided Supporting Information (70% and 75% respectively) felt that 'it was easy to provide Supporting Information'.

Most respondents who had applied for Adult Disability Payment agreed or strongly agreed that their application process.



66%

was clear



60%

asked only relevant questions



67%

enabled them to fully explain their daily living and mobility needs

Of those who had completed a consultation, the majority agreed or strongly agreed that:



87%

I understood why the consultation was needed



88%

The appointment was at a convenient time for me



90%

I was treated with dignity and respect

Case Transfer experience

Adult Disability Payment

- 83% agreed or strongly agreed that they had 'felt informed about the process' of their Case Transfer.
- 73% agreed or strongly agreed that they had 'felt reassured about the process' of their Case Transfer.
- More than half (57%) agreed or strongly agreed that 'being Case Transferred made me feel anxious'. Around a quarter (22%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.

Child Disability Payment

- 86% agreed or strongly agreed that they had 'felt informed about the process' of their Case Transfer.
- 82% agreed or strongly agreed that they had 'felt reassured about the process' of their Case Transfer.
- Around four-in-ten (42%) agreed or strongly agreed that 'being Case Transferred made me feel anxious'. A smaller proportion (32%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.

Some groups were more likely to agree or strongly agree that 'being Case Transferred to Adult Disability Payment made them feel anxious', including:

- Those aged 16-54 (62%), compared to those aged 55 and older (52%).
- Those who lived at a postcode categorised as SIMD quintile 1 and 2 (58%) compared to others (52%).



Some groups were more likely to agree or strongly agree that 'being Case Transferred to Child Disability Payment made them feel anxious', including:

- Those aged 25-34 (56%), compared to those aged 35-44 (41%) and 45-54 (36%).
- Those who lived at a postcode categorised as SIMD quintile 2 (50%), compared to those in quintile 1 (37%) and 3 (42%).

Case Transfer communication

Adult Disability Payment

- 80% agreed or strongly agreed that the communication they received from Social Security Scotland about their Case Transfer was 'clear and easy to understand'. 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.
- 80% agreed or strongly agreed that 'the tone was friendly'. 2% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.
- 78% agreed or strongly agreed that the communication they received 'helped them to understand what was happening and why'. 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.
- 73% agreed or strongly agreed that the communication they received 'made them feel confident that they could approach Social Security Scotland if they had a query'. 8% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.

Child Disability Payment

- 86% agreed or strongly agreed that the communication they received from Social Security Scotland about their Case Transfer was 'clear and easy to understand'. 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.
- 84% agreed or strongly agreed that 'the tone was friendly'.
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that the communication they received 'helped them to understand what was happening and why'. 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.
- 81% agreed or strongly agreed that the communication they received 'made them feel confident that they could approach Social Security Scotland if they had a query'. 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this.

Case Transfer comments

Respondents were asked to tell us about their overall experience of the Case Transfer process, including anything that could be improved, and around 2,233 did so.

The majority of comments were positive. Many of the positive comments referred to the friendly and helpful manner of staff. Others described having experienced a smooth transfer process.

I cannot fault Social Security Scotland the people I spoke with [were] very kind very helpful and very supportive. I would not hesitate to contact them in the future very kind and understanding considering my conditions and anxiety levels with also support of my son. Thank you so much.

It was very good. Everything went smoothly and I was treated with the utmost respect and kindness.

A minority of comments were negative or identified potential areas for improvement. One issue mentioned in the negative comments was the length of time taken for change of circumstances documentation to be processed as part of the case transfer process. Some also suggested having more updates during the process.

Has taken a long time then I had to fill out change of circumstances and still waiting for result, could do with speeding up process.

I sent back my transfer pack in the post with my new medical details. I received no confirmation that it had arrived with Social Security Scotland. [...] Why not send a confirmation email/text to let people know that you have their documents? Also I had to call the phone line multiple times as the waiting times were so long.

Comments given also provided further insight into the anxiousness experienced by some clients during their Case Transfer. Some reported having initially felt anxious. However, communications received from Social Security Scotland, as well as the help and support of case advisors, were mentioned as factors that subsequently reduced their anxiety.

During my case transfer I was sent correspondence to inform me that my case was getting transferred. I was given information about what was happening and about Social Security Scotland. The process did not cause any problems in my payments. Which was great as I have complex PTSD, I was initially little anxious. However, the process was very effective where I encountered no issues in the transfer of my case. Thank you.

Having received PIP before I was assuming that Adult Disability Payment would be much the same in style and process. After speaking directly to an adviser my anxieties and fears where allayed and I felt more trusting of your claims to provide a compassionate service, thank you for that it really means a lot when you are going through physical and mental difficulties.

I was nervous about everything being transferred properly but having spoken to a member of your staff I was reassured.

Application

Most Adult Disability Payment applicants agreed or strongly agreed that:

The eligibility criteria was clear before they applied

61%

The application process enabled them to fully explain their care and mobility needs

67%

They were treated fairly and respectfully throughout the application process

74%

- Those who lived at a postcode categorised as SIMD quintile 1 (most deprived) were more likely to agree or strongly agree that 'the eligibility criteria was clear before they applied' for Adult Disability Payment (66%, compared to 58% of others).

Most Child Disability Payment applicants agreed or strongly agreed that:

The eligibility criteria was clear before they applied

74%

The application process enabled them to fully explain their child's care and mobility needs

78%

They were treated fairly and respectfully throughout the application process

86%

- There wasn't a wide difference between the five SIMD quintiles with 79% of respondents in quintile 1 and 75% of respondents in quintile 5 agreeing or strongly agreeing that 'the eligibility criteria was clear before they applied' for Child Disability Payment.

Many Adult Disability Payment applicants agreed or strongly agreed that:

The application process was clear

66%

The application asked only relevant questions

60%

Filling in and submitting the application did not take too long

49%

Many Child Disability Payment applicants agreed or strongly agreed that:

The application process was clear

76%

The application asked only relevant questions

72%

Filling in and submitting the application did not take too long

54%

- Those who lived at a postcode categorised as SIMD quintile 1 or 2 (most deprived) were more likely to agree or strongly agree that 'Filling in and submitting the application did not take too long' for Child Disability Payment (57%, compared to 51% of others).

Support to complete application

Adult Disability Payment

- Almost half of respondents (48%) received help to complete their Adult Disability Payment application.
- Over a third (37%) of those who received help with their application got help from a friend or family member. One-in-four (25%) got help from Social Security Scotland.
- Of those who received help from Social Security Scotland, the vast majority (91%) agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to get that support.

Child Disability Payment

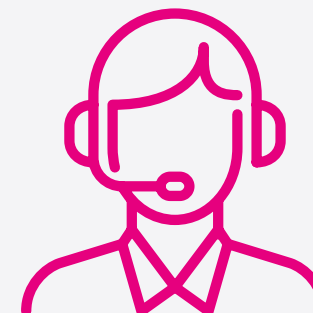
- Three-in-ten respondents (30%) received help to complete their application.
- Almost four-in-ten (38%) of those who received help with their application got help from Social Security Scotland. Around a quarter (24%) got help from a friend or family member.
- Of those who received help from Social Security Scotland, the vast majority (95%) agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to get that support.

Some groups of respondents were more likely to have received support with their Adult Disability Payment application. These included:

53% of respondents aged 16-24

52% of respondents aged 55+

53% of male respondents



Some groups of respondents were more likely to have received support with their Child Disability Payment application. These included:

46% of minority ethnic respondents

34% of respondents who lived at a postcode categorised as SIMD quintile 1

Supporting Information – how, what, when and why

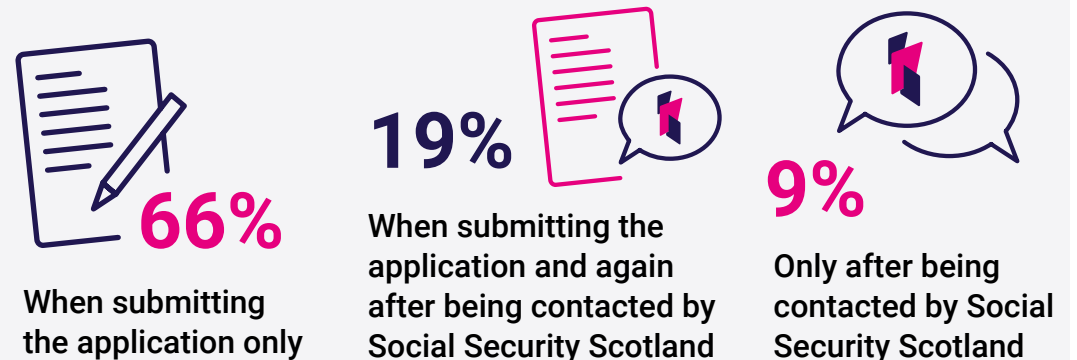
Adult Disability Payment

- A majority of respondents who applied for Adult Disability Payment provided Supporting Information (70%), whilst 15% did not.
- Two-in-five respondents (40%) received a call from Social Security Scotland after they had submitted their application, to ask for more information or to clarify something.
- The most common forms of Supporting Information provided were: 'medical or social work reports' (59%), 'confirmation of diagnosis' (29%) and 'test results' (29%).
- Respondents most often got their Supporting Information from: 'a GP' (67%), 'a hospital (including from doctors, consultants or nurses)' (60%), and 'a therapist' (21%).
- More than a third (39%) asked Social Security Scotland to collect Supporting Information on their behalf. The most common reasons were that Social Security Scotland 'could collect the information faster' (47%) and 'would know better what information to collect' (45%).

How did respondents provide Supporting Information?



At what point did respondents provide their Supporting Information to Social Security Scotland?



- Respondents who lived at a postcode categorised as SIMD quintile 4 or 5 (least deprived) were more likely to have provided Supporting Information (75%, compared to 73% of others).
- When asked why did they chose not to provide supporting information one-in-three (31%) respondents said 'I gave contacts so Social Security Scotland could do it for me', 27% 'I didn't think it was needed' and 15% 'I didn't know what to provide'.

Supporting Information – how, what, when and why

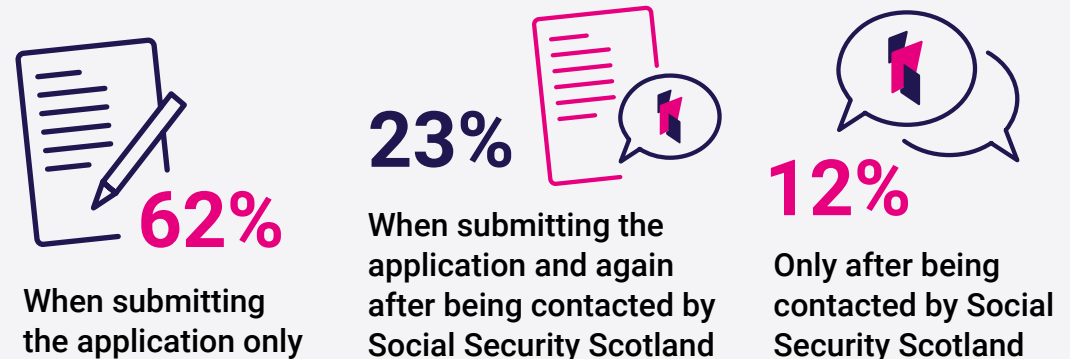
Child Disability Payment

- Most respondents who applied for Child Disability Payment provided Supporting Information (85%), whilst 8% did not.
- Nearly half of respondents (48%) received a call from Social Security Scotland after they had submitted their application, to ask for more information or to clarify something.
- The most common forms of Supporting Information provided were: 'confirmation of diagnosis' (64%), 'medical or social work reports' (57%), and 'information from another person who knows you / your child' (40%).
- Respondents most often got their Supporting Information from: 'a hospital (including from doctors, consultants or nurses)' (62%), and 'school, college or nursery' (39%), 'a therapist' (31%) or 'a GP' (29%).
- Three-in-ten (31%) asked Social Security Scotland to collect Supporting Information on their behalf. Common reasons were that Social Security Scotland 'could collect the information faster' (45%) and 'would know better what information to collect' (38%).

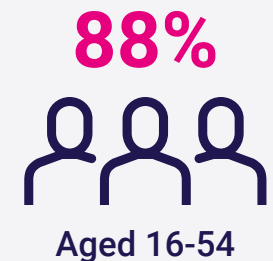
How did respondents provide Supporting Information?



At what point did respondents provide their Supporting Information to Social Security Scotland?



Those aged between 16-54 years of age were slightly more likely to provide supporting information with their application than those aged 55+ (88%, compared to 83%).



Supporting Information experience

Adult Disability Payment

Most respondents who provided Supporting Information as part of their application for Adult Disability Payment agreed or strongly agreed that:

It was clear what information they should supply **74%**

It was easy to get the Supporting Information they wanted **62%**

It was clear how to include the Supporting Information **79%**

It was easy to provide Supporting Information **70%**

Respondents aged 25-34 were less likely to agree or strongly agreed that:



70%

it was clear what information they should supply



57%

it was easy to get the supporting information

- Just over three quarters of respondents (77%) felt that the supporting information they provided reflected their situation / disability / condition 'very well' or 'well'.

Supporting Information experience

Child Disability Payment

Most respondents who provided Supporting Information as part of their application for Child Disability Payment agreed or strongly agreed that:

It was clear what information they should supply **80%**

It was easy to get the Supporting Information they wanted **69%**

It was clear how to include the Supporting Information **84%**

It was easy to provide Supporting Information **75%**

Whilst the number of minority ethnic respondents who had applied for Child Disability Payment was low, a higher proportion of this group agreed or strongly agreed that:



73% it was easy to get the Supporting Information they wanted



At the same time, a smaller proportion of minority ethnic respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was clear what information they should supply (74%, compared to 80% of others).

- Nearly nine-in-ten respondents (86%) felt that the supporting information they provided reflected their situation / disability / condition 'very well' or 'well'.
- Respondents aged 55+ were less likely to agree or strongly agree that 'it was easy to provide supporting information (56%, compared to 76% of respondents aged 16-54).

Experience of a consultation

- Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents who had applied for Adult Disability Payment told us they had had a consultation.
- The majority (89%) had completed their consultation via a phone call. The remaining 11% had completed their consultation via a video call.
- Those aged 16-24 were more likely to have completed a consultation (29%, compared to 24% of those aged 25 and older).
- The majority of respondents (85%) rated their overall experience of the consultation as very good or good.



Most respondents who completed a consultation agreed or strongly agreed with the statements:

I understood why the consultation was needed

87%

The appointment was at a convenient time for me

88%

The type of appointment was convenient for me

88%

I felt the practitioner understood me

81%

I was treated with dignity and respect

90%

I felt listened to

84%

My practitioner communicated with me in a way that was clear and I could understand

88%

Consultation comments

Overwhelmingly, comments relating to experience of a consultation were positive. Many of the positive comments referred to the practitioner:

The consultation was excellent. I was made to feel understood, relaxed and not judged.

Overall it was an excellent provision of service, although personally upsetting the health professional helped so much in regards to empathy and understanding.

Felt listened to and felt at ease explaining my situation.

I think my consultant were very professional and understanding.

The person I spoke with really gave me time to explain my condition and didn't rush me.



Some respondents also had more negative views or suggestions for improvement:

The staff who liaised with me on the consultation were restricted to those boxes of questions which do not capture my condition correctly.

The consultant spoke well and in a nice manner but I feel my illness is misunderstood and I didn't feel the consultant knew enough about my condition.

In some cases I think claimants would be better to (be seen in) person rather than a phone call. Staff numbers do not help though.



Overall improvements

Clients were asked if they would you like to make any suggestions for improvement or further comments about their overall experience.

Overwhelmingly, comments spoke of the need for improvements to communication. Notably the need for more regular updates on the progression of cases, as well as improvements to call/webchat wait times.

Overall, my experience was OK but the length of time the application took to be processed and the lack of any communication until the final decision was made was stressful and disappointing. Clarity over the process when my application is reviewed in the future would also have been appreciated.

If anything maybe a text update on maybe mid-way through await decision letter to let you know how its progressing as it might save a bit of worry for some and put their mind at rest.[..]

1. Get phone calls, and online chats answered efficiently, within a short time period 2. Advise callers what the wait time is or where they are in a queue.[..]

Other suggestions for improvement include having a dedicated phone line and/or advisor for ongoing clients.

Whilst the contact centres are essential they should be used as points of initial contact and as a backup method. Ongoing customers should have a dedicated system, like that used by the DWP, which is online, sequential, date wise, referenced uniquely, secure and auditable. Communicating via the contact centres is inefficient as [..] the subject matter has to be communicated, all over again very often, for something that has already been discussed in detail earlier.

I also think a dedicated adviser line would be extremely helpful as I can spend hours of my day or week trying to speak with someone regarding claims and whether the person speaks to me and furthermore whether they give correct advice is inconsistent.

When comments were positive, many praised Social Security Scotland staff regarding their empathy and understanding.

Really just communication regarding the application and waiting times. The staff can only do so much but they have been polite and understanding when I have contacted them.

You're awesome! Keep doing what you're doing and keep the dignity of applicants as your guiding principle. I never thought I could be enthusiastic about a government agency, but it just shows the difference when things are done well.

Any staff member I have spoken with have been helpful considerate and understanding, it's the timescale that causes the problems.





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