



Audit and Assurance Committee

Date of Meeting	20 August 2024
Subject	Recoveries and Recharge Highlight Report – Quarter 1 2024-25
Agenda No.	
Paper No.	
Prepared By	Recoveries and Recharge Team, Fraud and Error Resolution
Purpose	Monitor

Background

1.1 The attached report details key highlights of activities undertaken by Social Security Scotland's Recoveries and Recharge Team throughout Quarter 1 of the 2024-25 reporting year.

Key Points

2.1 Key highlights are shared in the first part of the report.

Conclusion/ Recommendation

3.1 The Committee is asked to review and comment on progress made during Quarter 1 of 2024-25.

Key Highlights

- 300 Repayment Plans were agreed with clients during Quarter 1, representing 20% of all recoverable overpayment referrals processed during this period.
- The automated bank reconciliation functionality released during Quarter 1 did not perform as anticipated, and is not yet fully functional. Programme colleagues are attempting to rectify this during Quarter 2.
- The Recoveries and Recharge Team have continued with the onboarding and recruitment of new colleagues during this quarter and are anticipated to achieve target headcount during Quarter 2.
- The Recoveries and Recharge team implemented a Recovery Plan in order to better address our current head of work and anticipated increases in referral volumes expected in Quarter 2. This has resulted in a 59% increase in volume of recoverable referrals being actioned in comparison to Quarter 4 2023/24.
- On inbound payments received, we saw an 11% increase in volume, which included a 104% increase by volume in payments made through voluntary deductions from ongoing benefit awards, in comparison to the previous quarter. Deductions from ongoing benefit awards is our most cost-effective recovery method available and the team are promoting this to clients when agreeing new repayment plans.

Performance Information

Inbound Payments:

A total of [REDACTED] inbound payments with a cumulative value of [REDACTED] were received as repayment against benefit overpayment debts. This includes [REDACTED] payments, with a total value of [REDACTED], made via voluntary deductions from ongoing Scottish benefit awards.

On recharge of Funeral Support Payment awards to estates of deceased, [REDACTED] payments with a total sum of [REDACTED] were received from Executors.

This gives a total sum of [REDACTED] of inbound payments.

[REDACTED GRAPH]

[REDACTED]. This head of work will comprise a mixture of recoverable and write-off cases. This is an increase of 28% (volume) and 135% (value) over the last quarter.

This increase is due to Client Service Delivery colleagues approving an increased volume of overpayment referrals, predominately within the Disability Benefits caseload. As previously mentioned, we have implemented a plan to help us maximise our throughput and prioritise our work effectively, to address the increased demand.

However, we have been advised that the Low Income Benefits Error Interventions Team and Adult Disability Payment teams in Client Services Delivery are also undertaking work which we anticipate will result in further increased volumes of referrals for Recoveries Team action – therefore we expect our outstanding head of work to increase further despite the performance improvements we have effected this quarter.

[REDACTED GRAPH]

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE



Volumes of referrals for Funeral Support Recharge have continued to fall as expected, due to Policy changes previously explained. Volumes of successful recharges have also fallen, this is partly due to limited capacity within the team to process these cases. The full training and consolidation of newly recruited Recoveries Officers continues, which will complete in September and will address this.

[REDACTED GRAPH]

There was a 68% increase in the number of Best Start Foods overpayment referrals processed during Quarter 1. This is simply because new team members are trained and then consolidate their learning on these types of tasks at the beginning of their training routeway. During Quarter 2, we anticipate a return to average throughput for these cases as our new cohort of colleagues develop further capability and can complete other, higher priority activities.