



Social Security
Scotland

Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba



Client Satisfaction Survey 2024-2025

Summary report

Dignity,
fairness,
respect.

Contents

Background	2
About the survey respondents	3
Overall experience	4
Contact with Social Security Scotland	5
Experiences with staff	6
Applying for benefits	7
Application decisions	8
Case Transfer	9
Barriers	10
Discrimination	11

Background

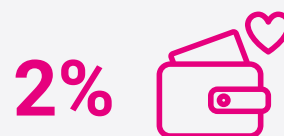
- This report presents the summarised results of the 2024-25 Client Satisfaction Survey.
- Everyone who received an application decision, had their award transferred to Social Security Scotland or a benefit payment between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 was invited to take part in the survey.



About the survey respondents

- The report is based on a total of 36,589 responses.
 - Most described their ethnicity as 'white' (92%, compared to 5% minority ethnic)
 - Most described their gender identity as 'woman' (62%, compared to 36% 'man' and 0.5% 'in another way')
 - Over a third said their age was 55-64 (36%)
 - A greater number had a physical or mental health condition lasting or expected to last 12 months or more (79%), than those that did not (21%)
 - Over half of respondents (58%) were in the lower 2 quintiles of deprivation according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.
 - 30% of respondents said that they had some form of communication need
- Most lived in an urban area (85% compared to 15% in a rural area).
- A third of respondents (34%) said they were unpaid carers to someone else.

Of survey respondents:



had received
Carer's Allowance
Supplement



had experience
of Five Family
Payments



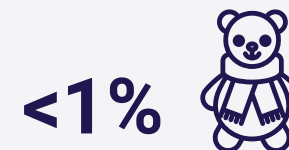
had experience of
Funeral Support
Payment



had experience of
Young Carer Grant



had experience of
Job Start Payment



had received Child
Winter Heating
Payment



had experience
of Winter Heating
Payment



had experience
of Child Disability
Payment application



had experience
of Adult Disability
Payment application



had experience
of Carer Support
Payment



had Case Transferred
to Carer Support
Payment



had Case Transferred
to Adult Disability
Payment

Overall experience

- Around eight-in-ten believed that they had been treated with dignity (79%), fairness (76%) and respect (80%). Seven-in-ten respondents also agreed they could trust Social Security Scotland (72%) and Social Security Scotland is an open and honest organisation (69%).
- Those with experience of Child Winter Heating Payment (92%) and Funeral Support Payment (90%) were more likely to rate their overall experience as 'very good' or 'good'. Those with experience of applying for Adult Disability Payment (75%) and Job Start Payment (71%) had the lowest overall satisfaction rates.



Over three quarters of respondents said their overall experience was 'very good' or 'good'.

8% described their experience as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Respondents were asked to make any suggestions for improvement or further comment on their overall experience.

Respondents reflected on the professionalism of the service received. They also suggested the reduction of call wait times and asked for better communication on the progress of applications/reviews.

The phone lines although a freephone number are soul destroying with an average waiting time of 45 to 60 minutes.

Keep doing what you're doing! Staff are friendly and talk to you as a real person, not just a number/statistic.

The service provided is highly professional. I felt that my concerns were genuinely acknowledged, and all of my inquiries were addressed in a clear and comprehensible manner...

Wait times far too long and staff not able to give updates which results in claimants feeling unimportant and stressed not knowing what is happening.

Contact with Social Security Scotland

- Almost two-in-five (38%) of all respondents said they had tried to contact Social Security Scotland at some point since 1 April 2024.
- Respondents most commonly made contact with us via: the phone helpline (45%), sending a letter (22%), the webchat (14%), or a phone appointment (7%).
- Most respondents felt they had enough choice about how they communicated with Social Security Scotland (76%). A slightly lower proportion (70%) said they got the support they needed.
- Respondents with experience of having their award transferred to Adult Disability Payment were less likely to agree with each of the statements regarding communication choices and support received, whereas agreement was highest among five family payment applicants.
- Two-in-three (68%) respondents who had used the webchat service said their experience was 'good' or 'very good', while one-in-five (20%) said their experience was 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- The most common reason for using webchat was to check the progress of an application with 61% of respondents selecting it.



71%

Seven-in-ten respondents agreed that 'received the right level of communication from Social Security Scotland'.

When respondents were asked how they first heard about us...

31%



said it was by word-of-mouth

20%



said it was through a health service (e.g. NHS worker, GP, health Practitioner, Psychologist).

10%



said the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), including Jobcentre Plus

Prompt courteous advisor, who answered my query, a easy to use service to use even from a non computer user.

Experiences with staff

- Just over a third (36%) of respondents said they had been in contact with a member of Social Security Scotland staff.
- The majority of respondents who had been in contact said their overall experience with staff was 'very good' or 'good' (84%) while 7% rated their experience with staff as 'poor' or 'very poor'.
- A large proportion of respondents said staff listened to them (87%) and made them feel comfortable (86%), while 91% of respondents said staff treated them with kindness.
- 82% of respondents said they trusted staff and a similar proportion felt like they were trusted by staff (82%).
- 2% of respondents said they had been in contact with Local Delivery staff. 92% rated their experience as 'very good' or 'good', with 3% rating it as 'poor' or 'very poor'.



84%

Most respondents said their experience with staff was 'very good' or 'good'.

Most comments about staff were positive and complimented their manner and helpfulness. This was invariably across the phone helpline, web chat and Local Delivery staff.

Every person I spoke to has been polite and professional and friendly.

I have never been so impressed with a service. (...). She was very kind and I felt very listened too. I was embarrassed about applying and she really made me feel comfortable and not judged.

A minority had a mixed or negative experience with staff.

I phoned last week about my application. They said someone would call me back. They didn't I phone again they said I would get a letter but I haven't. (...)

My experience is a fairly poor one. Any time I called I was given different information, every time it was different information.

Applying for benefits

- Just under half (49%) of the total respondents to the Client Survey had experience of applying for Social Security Scotland benefits.
- Seven-in-ten respondents (72%) said their experience of the application process overall was 'very good' or 'good' while over one-in-ten (12%), described their experience as 'very poor' or 'poor'.
- Around three quarters of respondents who had applied for a benefit agreed or strongly agreed that the application process was clear (74%) and that they were treated fairly during the application process (78%).
- A slightly lower proportion felt that they were only asked relevant questions (68%), that the eligibility criteria were clear before they applied (66%) and that the application form allowed them to fully explain their or their child's circumstances (64%).



72%

Three quarters of respondents said their overall experience of applying for a benefit was 'very good' or 'good'.

While respondents sometimes experienced occasional issues, such as processing errors or finding the process to be somewhat complex or confusing, these were generally forgiving and described having a positive experience overall.

Despite some processing issues you were still swift and helpful! Thank you for making the process not stressful. I find paperwork overwhelming so it was a lot easier due to how straightforward it was.

I believe this process is as straight forward as something so complex can be, there was points I was confused but I am not sure how you could make it any clearer due to the vast net the application form catches.

My application left me confused and I was thank full for the help I [received] to apply for this grant it wasn't clear that I would need to wait a year to re apply for the grant.

Easy, timely and discrete application process.

Application decisions

- Around three quarters (73%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their decision was explained clearly, while 15% of them disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.
- A similar proportion of respondents (72%) agreed or strongly agreed that they 'understood the decision' and 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.
- Two thirds (66%) of respondents agreed that their application was handled within a reasonable timeframe, while a fifth (19%) disagreed with that statement.
- Around two thirds (64%) of respondents agreed with the decision by Social Security Scotland, 12% neither agreed nor disagreed with it and 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the decision on their application.



73%

Most respondents agreed that the decision on their application was 'explained clearly'.

In this section respondents reflected on their experience of receiving a decision. They discussed the decision letter's clarity, while also expressing the emotional impact a decision has.

I felt that the letter explaining the decision was very well done. It gave me lots of detail about how the decision had been reached (...)

I appreciated the clarity of the decision and explanation of the points process. I found the additional information about other support helpful. The language of the decision made me feel respected.

I felt quite emotional receiving a letter acknowledging my disability. The letter treated me with dignity (...)

I thought it was an unfair decision, but I am too stressed to appeal the decision.

Case Transfer

- 15,800 survey respondents had experienced a transfer, which equates to over four-in-ten (43%) of all respondents. Respondents who had their award transferred to Adult Disability Payment represent almost three quarters (73%) of this respondent group. Respondents who had their award transferred to Carer Support Payment make up over a quarter (27%) and Child Disability Payment only 0.1%.
- Of those who experienced a transfer, eight-in-ten (80%) agreed with the statement 'I felt informed about the process' and seven-in-ten (72%) agreed that they 'felt reassured about the process'.
- When respondents were asked if having their award transferred made them feel anxious, almost half (47%) strongly agreed or agreed that it did. Half (51%) of respondents transferred to Adult Disability Payment agreed they felt anxious about this process compared to just over a third (36%) of respondents transferred to Carer Support Payment.

Thinking about the communication you received from Social Security Scotland about your case transfer...



77%

agree it was
clear and easy
to understand



74%

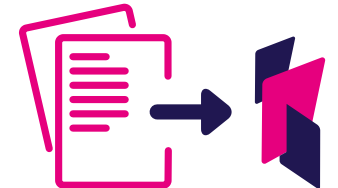
agree it helped them
understand what
was happening
and why



77

agree the tone
was friendly

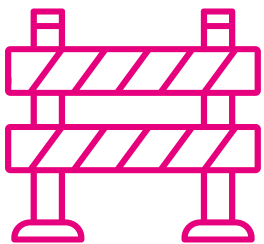
I have no complaints at all. I was kept informed and there was no change in benefit payments. It all went very smoothly.



Excellent. You kept me fully informed in comprehensive yet easy to understand letters.

Barriers

- 23% of respondents said they had faced some form of barrier getting help from Social Security Scotland.
- Around one-in-twelve respondents (8%) across all benefits said 'I could not get the information or updates I needed'; and the same proportion (8%) said 'I could not communicate with Social Security Scotland how I wanted to'; one-in-sixteen (6%) said 'I could not communicate with Social Security Scotland when I wanted to' and 6% selected the option 'other'.
- Most respondents (54%) who experienced a barrier said they had not told Social Security Scotland about the barrier they faced; one-in-five (21%) said they had told Social Security Scotland but they weren't helped to overcome it, and one-in-ten (11%) said they told Social Security Scotland and they were helped to overcome it.



The most frequently mentioned barrier was difficulties relating to communication.

Phones are no answered and I was on hold 3x for over 35 mins before I gave up calling. Text service and web chat is not great either as there are never advisors available.

I wasn't even aware that I was eligible for a benefit, I went to Citizens Advice for something else and they told me to apply.

Your webchat service is what removed my barrier to effective communication.

Your online portal does not work or your system lost most of my supporting evidence. A rather large barrier.

Discrimination

- 5% of respondents said they had been discriminated against during their experience with Social Security Scotland, and 5% preferred not to say.
- Of the respondents who said they had experienced discrimination, 64% said it related to Social Security Scotland's process; 57% to its policies; and 30% said it related to staff.
- Of those who had experienced discrimination, 52% disagreed that it was 'clear how to challenge it'.
- 58% also disagreed with the statement 'I felt I could challenge it', and around a quarter (28%) said they told Social Security Scotland about the discrimination.



Some discriminations comments centered around specific benefit experiences while others related to respondent's conditions and characteristics.

Staff were poorly informed on how immigration status and experience of domestic violence affected my application.

When reading my decision letter I felt like I was being discriminated by as someone who works. Was not aware that this was a benefit that you could only get if you were already on benefits. Was very disappointed, there needs to be more help and support out there for self employed individuals/sole traders on low incomes when pregnant.

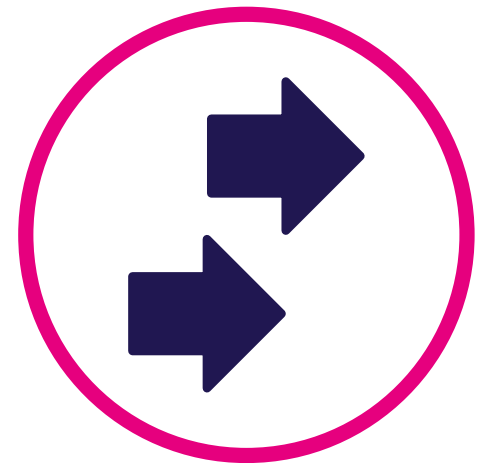
The application form is designed for neurotypical people and the questions are asked in such a way that anyone that is neurodivergent won't always fully understand the type or level of details needs to help support their application.

Next steps

The results of the Client Survey provide rich insight into the experiences of Social Security Scotland clients. The results will be used alongside other sources of evidence to populate the Charter Measurement Framework which measures Social Security Scotland's performance against our Charter commitments. The findings will also, more broadly, support Social Security Scotland's continuous improvement. Moreover, they have highlighted areas where more research may be useful to further explore clients' experiences, views and expectations.

If you would like to explore topics like trends across the year, intersectionality and seldom heard groups please go to the main report.

In the same place you'll find the Supplementary tables report 2024-25 with further data on the experiences of subgroups (i.e. minority ethnic respondents, people with long-term health conditions, etc.).





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