

## Social Security Scotland Statistics

# Social Security Scotland Feedback Statistics to 31 March 2025

### Key Figures

In 2024-2025:

- 2,840 Stage 1 complaints were received
- 1,170 Stage 2 complaints were received
- 160 compliments were received
- 95 suggestions were received.

Frequency of publications:

The next publication will cover up to the end of March 2026 and will be released in June 2026.

Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics<sup>1</sup> we publish a timetable of statistical releases for the twelve months ahead<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Code of Practice for Statistics is available on the [UK Statistics Authority website](#).

<sup>2</sup> The forthcoming publication timetable is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

# Introduction

This report covers feedback (complaints, compliments, and suggestions) received by Social Security Scotland since it was introduced on 4 September 2018, until 31 March 2025. It includes statistics for specific benefits as well as feedback that was not benefit specific. In this publication, information relating to the latest reporting year 2024-2025 relates to information covering 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

The volume of feedback received will be related to the number of live benefits and clients. New benefits have launched over time, bringing more people in touch with Social Security Scotland. The benefits included within the time period covered by the report are: Carer's Allowance Supplement, Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, Funeral Support Payment, Young Carer Grant, Job Start Payment, Child Winter Heating Payment, Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment, Adult Disability Payment, Winter Heating Payment, Carer Support Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment.

All tables and charts relating to this publication can be found at the [Social Security Scotland](#) website.

These statistics are being published as official statistics, in line with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). The UK Statistics Authority has not yet assessed these statistics. They have not been designated as Accredited Official Statistics<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on Official Statistics in development please see the [Office for Statistics Regulation website](#).

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Main findings</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Complaints</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Compliments</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Background to Feedback</b>	<b>19</b>
Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints	19
Number of clients paid by Social Security Scotland	20
Complaint reasons	21
Complaint outcomes	22
Compliments and suggestions	22
<b>About the data</b>	<b>23</b>
How the data is collected	23
Quality assurance	23
Data Quality	24
Comparisons with DWP complaints statistics	26
Related Social Security Scotland publications	26

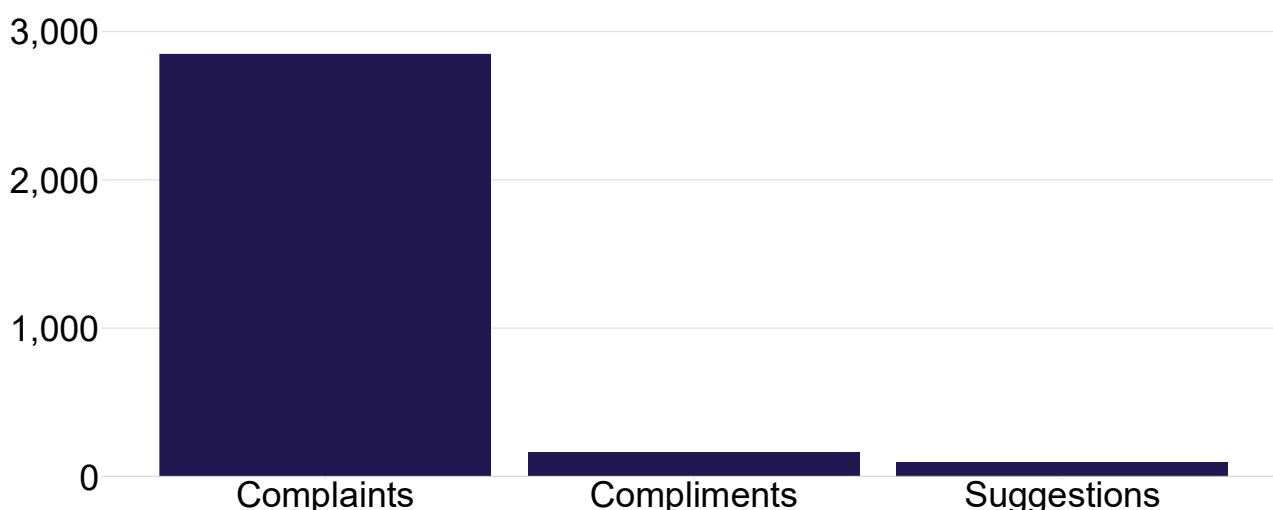
# Main findings

In 2024-2025, a total of 2,850 complaints, 160 compliments and 95 suggestions were received. The most common type of feedback received was complaints, in line with previous years **[Chart 1]**. The total number of complaints consists of all Stage 1 complaints received as well as a small number that were initially recorded as Stage 2.

In the time period of the publication, 15 benefits were being delivered by Social Security Scotland. The national launch of Carer Support Payment and the pilot phase launch of Pension Age Disability Payment took place during the 2024-2025 financial year.

Adult Disability Payment continued to account for more than half of feedback in every category for the 2024-2025 financial year.

**Chart 1: Feedback in 2024-2025**



Complaints include all Stage 1 complaints, plus complaints received at Stage 2.

Overall, the number of complaints, compliments and suggestions received in 2024-2025 all decreased compared to 2023-2024.

There were 3,340 complaints received in 2023-2024 and 2,850 complaints received in 2024-2025, meaning there was a 15% reduction in total complaints between the two years.

The number of compliments received decreased from 290 in 2023-2024 to 160 in 2024-2025, a 44% reduction, and suggestions received decreased from 140 in 2023-2024 to 95 in 2024-2025, a 32% reduction.

# Complaints

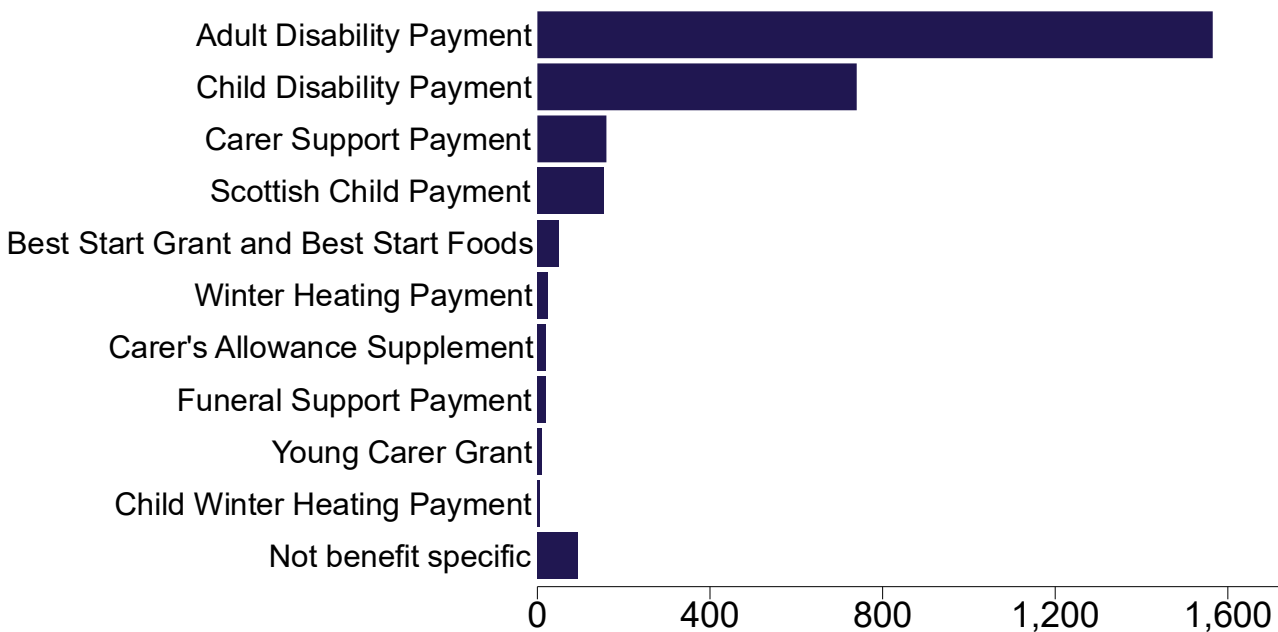
## Complaints received in 2024-2025

Social Security Scotland received 2,850 complaints in 2024-2025. The complaints received in the period include **[Table 1]**:

- 1,565 for Adult Disability Payment
- 740 for Child Disability Payment
- 160 for Carer Support Payment
- 155 for Scottish Child Payment
- 230 for other benefits and non-benefit specific

Table 10 in the supporting tables has the launch dates for each benefit.

**Chart 2: Complaints received by benefit\* in 2024-2025**



\*Complaint numbers for Job Start Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment in 2024-2025 are too small to display.

Complaint numbers remain low compared to the number of clients receiving payments. For 2024-2025, 2,850 complaints were received by Social Security Scotland whilst in comparison 962,525 clients were paid in the same time period. This is a 25% increase since 2023-2024.

More information on the number of clients paid can be found in the Social Security Scotland Number of Individual Clients Paid publication available on the [Social Security Scotland Publication page](#).

Below is a table showing three benefits with largest number of complaints in 2024-2025 and the corresponding number of clients who were paid for those benefits in the same time period. Information on numbers of applications received can be found in table 10 of the supporting tables.

#### Complaints by benefit and number of clients paid in 2024-2025

	Benefit		
	Adult Disability Payment	Child Disability Payment	Carer Support Payment
Complaints	1,565	740	160
Number of clients paid <sup>4</sup>	465,295	97,290	77,380

Complaints can come from people that did not make an application for a benefit, or did not receive a payment (for example, for Carer's Allowance Supplement where there is no application process). It is therefore not possible to calculate a rate of complaints per applications or payments.

In 2024-2025, Social Security Scotland received 2,840 Stage 1 complaints, which was a decrease from 3,330 in 2023-2024. It also received 1,170 Stage 2 complaints in 2024-2025. Stage 2 complaints includes those that progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 and a small number that were initially recorded as Stage 2.

For more information on Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints, see the [background section](#).

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<sup>4</sup> Figures based on the People Paid publication available on the Social Security Scotland website.

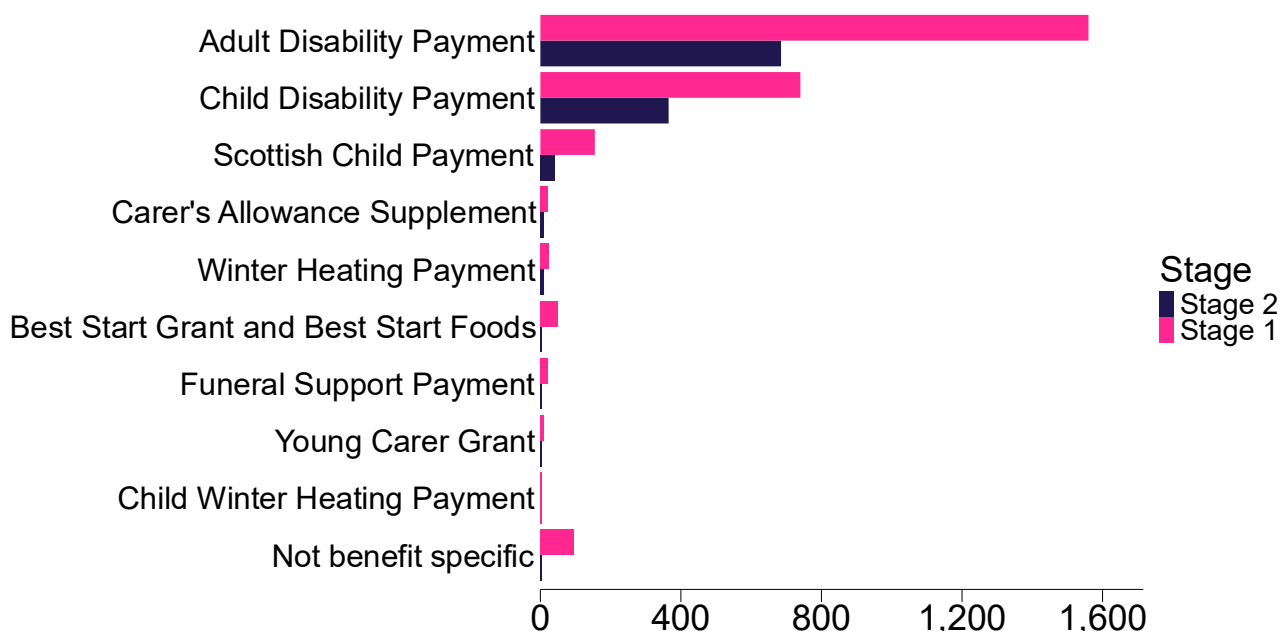
## Complaints reaching Stage 2

In 2024-2025, 41% of complaints reached Stage 2. This means either progressing from Stage 1 to Stage 2, or being received at Stage 2. This is higher than in 2023-2024 when 33% of complaints reached Stage 2 **[Table 1]**.

The number of complaints reaching Stage 2 increased over the last year, from 1,120 in 2023-2024 to 1,170 in 2024-2025. The change in percentage above is mainly driven by the reduction in the number of Stage 1 complaints received in 2024-2025. The [background section](#) explains the difference between Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints.

The highest number of complaints that reached Stage 2 was for Adult Disability Payment at 685, followed by Child Disability Payment at 365 and Scottish Child Payment at 40 **[Table 1, Chart 3]**. This may relate to both Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment being more complex benefits in terms of both processing and decision making.

**Chart 3: Complaints by benefit and stage\* in 2024-2025**



\*Stage 2 figures include a small number of complaints that went straight to Stage 2, as well as complaints progressing from Stage 1 to Stage 2. Figures may not sum to those in Table 1 due to rounding. Stage 2 complaint numbers for Child Winter Heating Payment are too small to display. Complaint numbers for Job Start Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment for all stages are too small to display.

# Complaints channels

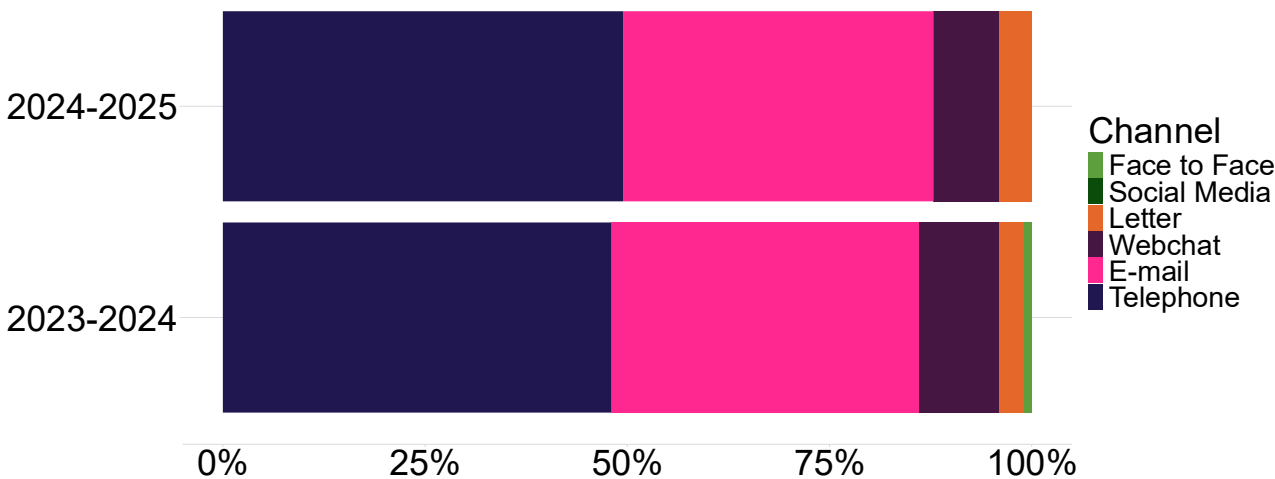
In 2024-2025, telephone remained the most common channel for complaints. The percentage of complaints received this way increased from 48% in 2023-2024 to 49%.

The proportion of complaints received by e-mail was 38% in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, while those received by webchat decreased from 10% to 8% in the same period. The proportion received by letter increased from 3% in 2023-2024 to 4% in 2024-2025. [Table 2, Chart 4].

The number of complaints received via social media was previously too small to be reported. In 2024-2025 this was less than 1% [Table 2, Chart 4].

The [background section](#) gives further details on communication channels and when they have been introduced.

Chart 4: Complaints by channel





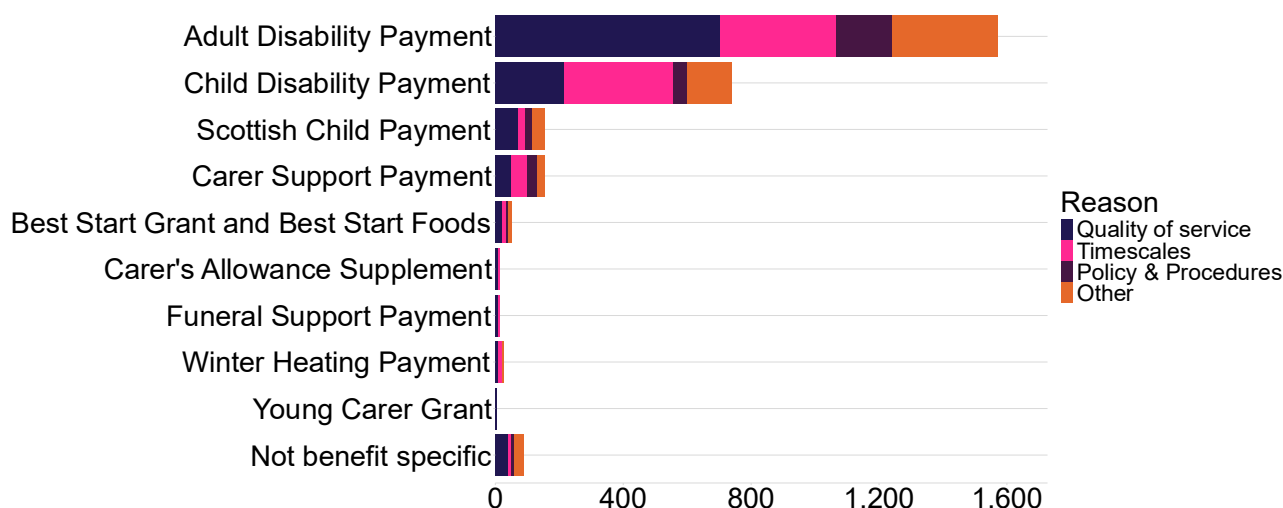
## Reasons for complaints

In 2024-2025, the most common reasons for complaints were 'Quality of service' and 'Timescales' which accounted for 40% and 29% of complaints received, respectively. These were followed by 'Policy and Procedures' which accounted for 10%. Each other reason accounted for 5% **[Table 3a]**. More information about complaint reasons is found in the [background section](#).

The most common reason for complaints across most benefits, including Adult Disability Payment, was 'Quality of service'. For Child Disability Payment, the most common reason for complaints was 'Timescales' **[Table 3a, Chart 5]**.

Overall, the proportion of complaints relating to 'Quality of service' decreased from 41% in 2023-2024 to 40% in 2024-2025. The proportion of complaints relating to 'Timescales' decreased from 37% in 2023-2024 to 29% in 2024-2025, with small increases seen in other reasons. **[Table 3b]**.

**Chart 5: Complaint reasons by benefit\* in 2024-2025**



\*Complaint numbers for Child Winter Heating Payment, Job Start Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment are too small to display.

## Complaints response times

In 2024-2025, 2,840 Stage 1 and 1,250 Stage 2 complaints had been closed, leaving 25 outstanding Stage 1 complaints and 15 outstanding Stage 2 complaints at the end of the reporting period **[Table 4]**.

The median response time was four working days for Stage 1 complaints, and 20 days for Stage 2 complaints. An extension of five working days can be added to these initial timescales by Social Security Scotland if it will benefit the client. More information can be found in the [background section](#).

The proportion of Stage 1 complaints closed within the initial five working day timescale increased from 67% in 2023-2024 to 70% in 2024-2025. The proportion closed within an agreed extended timescale increased from 72% in 2023-2024 to 78% in 2024-2025 **[Table 4]**.

The proportion of Stage 2 complaints closed within the initial 20 working day timescale decreased from 93% in 2023-2024 to 80% in 2024-2025. The proportion closed within an agreed extended timescale increased from 99% in 2023-2024 to 100% in 2024-2025 **[Table 4]**.

## Complaint outcomes

### Stage 1 complaint outcomes in 2024-2025

Complaint outcomes are counted separately for Stage 1 and 2 – a complaint that progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 will have two outcomes – therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. A number of complaints were outstanding at 31 March 2025 and are not included in the tables below. Additionally, figures may not sum due to rounding.

For more information on the outcome categories see the [background information](#). Outcomes of 2,880 Stage 1 complaints that were closed in 2024-2025 are shown in the table below [Table 5c].

#### Excerpt from table 5c: Stage 1 complaints in 2024-2025 by outcome

Stage 1 outcome in 2024-2025				
Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Resolved	Withdrawn
1,115	495	455	795	20

### Stage 2 complaint outcomes in 2024-2025

Outcomes of the 1,250 Stage 2 complaints that were closed in 2024-2025 are shown in the table below [Table 5c].

#### Excerpt from table 5c: Stage 2 complaints in 2024-2025 by outcome

Stage 2 outcome in 2024-2025				
Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Resolved	Withdrawn
650	220	210	150	20

## Stage 1 complaint outcomes by benefit in 2024-2025

Of Stage 1 complaints made for Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment, the most common outcome was 'upheld'. The most common outcome for Carer Support Payment was 'resolved'. **[Table 5a]**.

The excerpt below from Table 5a summarises the outcomes of Stage 1 complaints completed in 2024-2025 by benefit for the five benefits with largest number of complaints.

**Excerpt from table 5a: Complaints by benefit and outcome in the first half of 2024-2025 for the five benefits with largest number of complaints.**

Stage 1 complaint outcome	Benefit				
	Adult Disability Payment	Child Disability Payment	Scottish Child Payment	Carer Support Payment	Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,585</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>50</b>
Upheld	645	295	45	45	20
Partially upheld	305	120	30	20	5
Not upheld	230	135	35	15	5
Resolved	395	195	45	75	15
Withdrawn	10	10	[c]	[c]	[c]

[c] indicates figures suppressed for disclosure control.

## Stage 2 complaint outcomes by benefit in 2024-2025

The majority of Stage 2 complaints were upheld for all benefits overall, with 52% having this outcome. For Adult Disability Payment, 49% of Stage 2 complaints were upheld and for Child Disability Payment, 63% of Stage 2 complaints were upheld [Table 5a].

The excerpt below from Table 5a summarises the outcomes of Stage 2 complaints completed in 2024-2025 by benefit for the five benefits with largest number of complaints.

**Excerpt from table 5a: Complaints by benefit and outcome in 2024-2025 for the five benefits with largest number of complaints**

Stage 2 complaint outcome	Benefit				
	Adult Disability Payment	Child Disability Payment	Scottish Child Payment	Carer Support Payment	Winter Heating Payment
<b>Total</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>
Upheld	360	255	5	15	5
Partially upheld	125	55	15	5	[c]
Not upheld	140	40	10	5	[c]
Resolved	90	50	5	5	0
Withdrawn	15	5	0	[c]	[c]

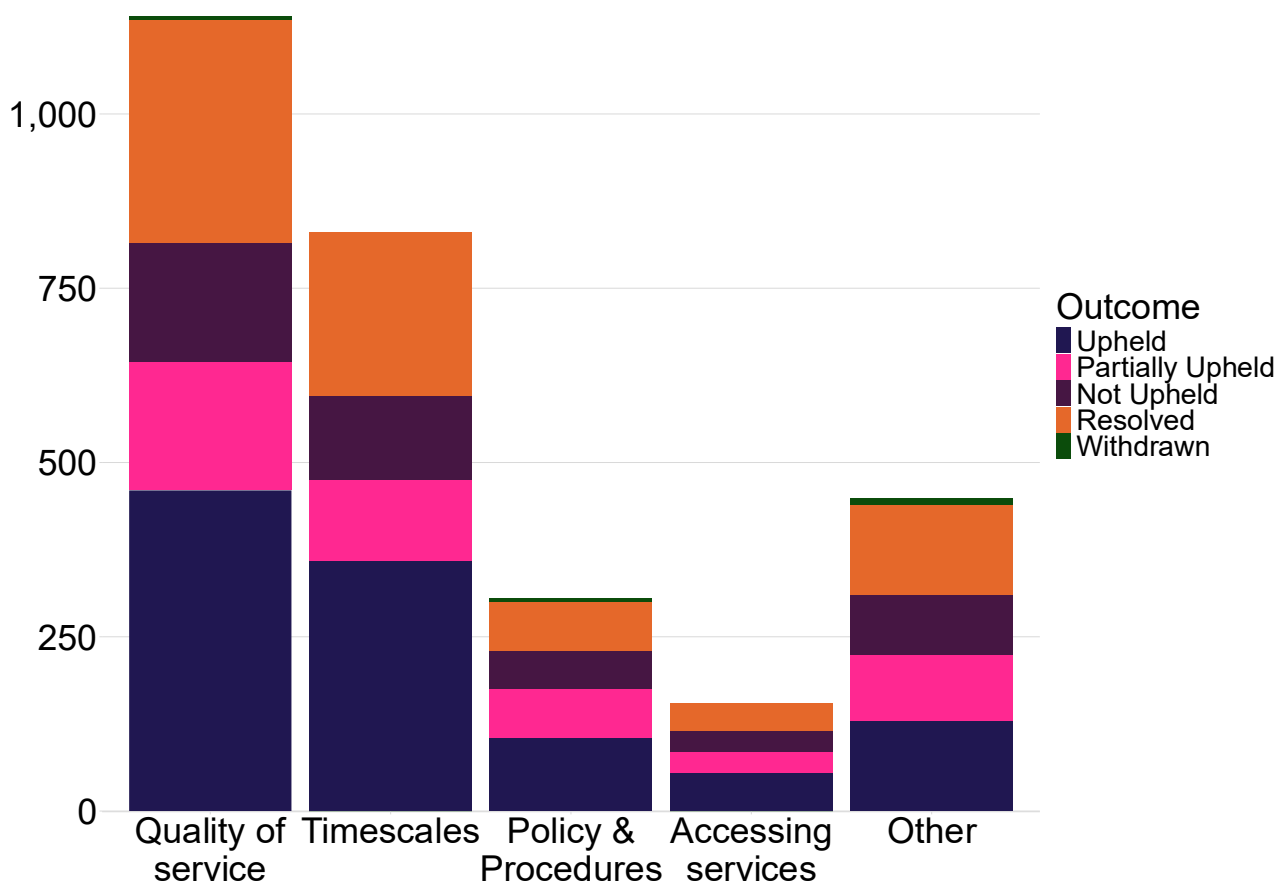
[c] indicates figures suppressed for disclosure control.

## Stage 1 complaint outcomes by complaint reason in 2024-2025

For Stage 1 complaints, the highest proportion which were upheld was for those about 'Timescales' with 43%, followed by 'Quality of service' with 40%, and 'Information provided' with 38% [Table 5b, Chart 6a].

For Stage 1 complaints, the highest proportion which were resolved were for those about 'Information provided' with 33% and 'Treatment by member of staff' with 30% [Table 5b, Chart 6a].

**Chart 6a: Stage 1 complaint outcomes by complaint reason in 2024-2025**

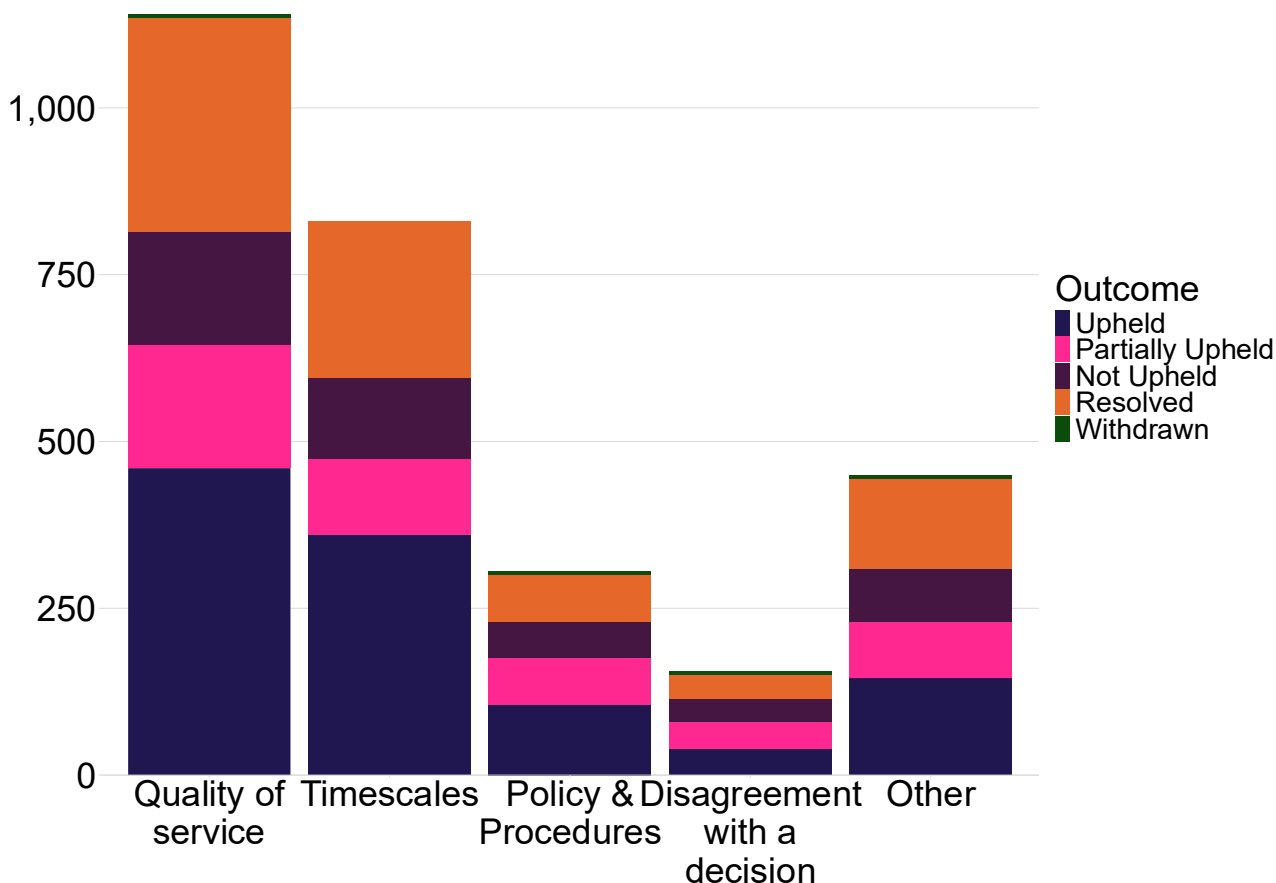


'Other' includes 'Disagreement with a Decision', 'Information provided' and 'Treatment by Member of Staff'. Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. A number of complaints were outstanding at 31 March 2025 and are not included. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

## Stage 2 complaint outcomes by complaint reason in 2024-2025

For Stage 2 complaints, the highest proportion of upheld was for complaints about 'Timescales' with 65%, 'Information provided' and 'Accessing services' with 58% each and 'Quality of Service' with 51% upheld [Table 5b, Chart 6b].

**Chart 6b Stage 2 complaint outcomes by complaint reason in 2024-2025**



'Other' includes 'Accessing services', 'Information provided' and 'Treatment by Member of Staff'. Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. A number of complaints were outstanding at 31 March 2025 and are not included. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

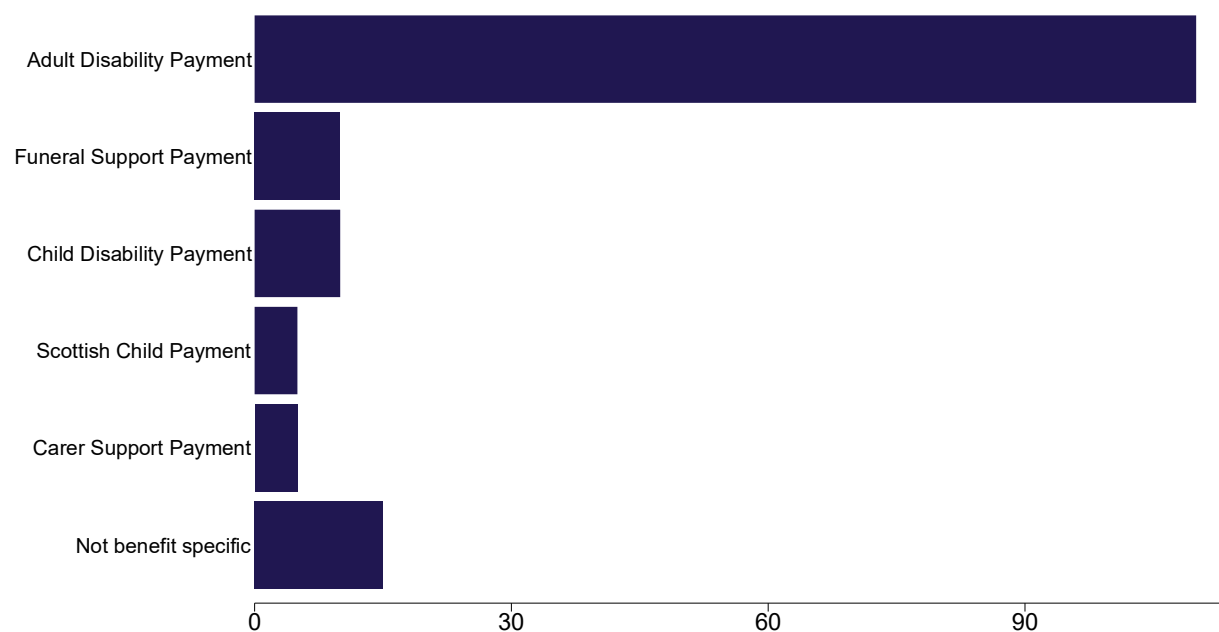
# Compliments

In 2024-2025, a total of 160 compliments were received including:

- 110 for Adult Disability Payment
- 10 each for Child Disability Payment and Funeral Support Payment
- 5 each for Scottish Child Payment and Carer Support Payment
- 15 not benefit specific compliments **[Table 6, Chart 7]**.

The number of compliments received decreased from 290 in 2023-2024.

**Chart 7: Total compliments received by benefit\* in 2024-2025**

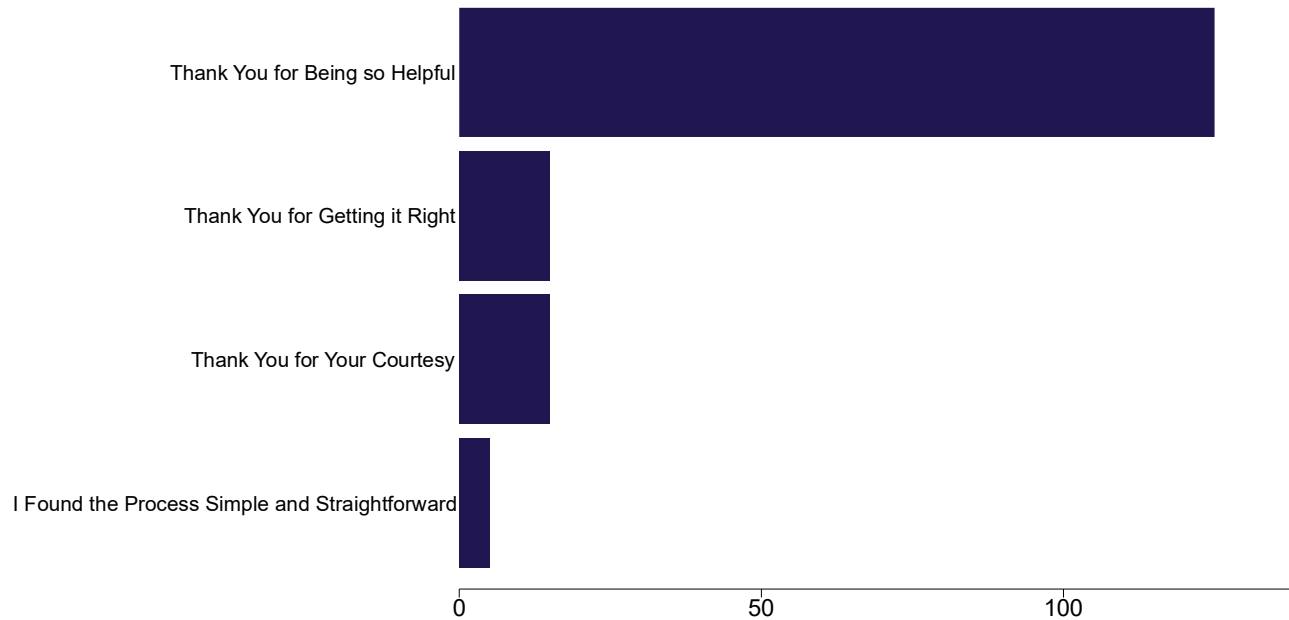


\*Compliment numbers for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, Child Winter Heating Payment, Winter Heating Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment are too small to display.



In 2024-2025, the most common reason for compliments has been 'Thank you for being so helpful', accounting for 78% of compliments, with 11% of compliments being 'Thank You for Your Courtesy' [Table 7].

**Chart 8: Compliments by reason in 2024-2025**



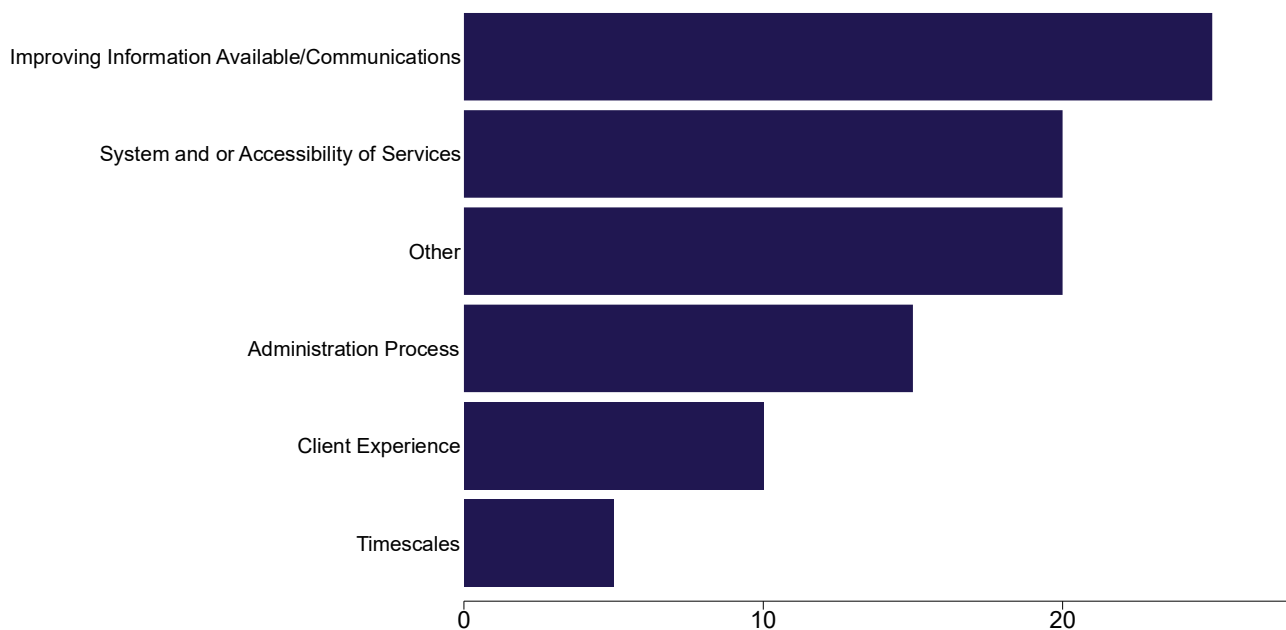
# Suggestions

In 2024-2025, a total of 95 suggestions were received. This is fewer than the 140 suggestions received in 2023-2024 [Table 8].

Around 55% of suggestions were about Adult Disability Payment, followed by 24% not specific to a benefit [Table 8].

The largest proportion of suggestions were about ‘Improving information available/ Communications’, which accounted for 28% of all suggestions received, followed by 21% of suggestions about ‘System and or Accessibility of Services’ [Table 9, Chart 9].

**Chart 9: Suggestions by reason in 2024-2025**



# Background to Feedback

Social Security Scotland is the executive agency of Scottish Government which is responsible for delivering social security benefits for Scotland. Feedback (complaints, compliments, and suggestions) has been received by Social Security Scotland since it was introduced on 4 September 2018. Feedback can be about a particular benefit or not specific to a benefit.

Initially feedback was received by telephone, email or letter. Webchat was introduced as a communication channel to Social Security Scotland from 1 May 2020. Social media was added to the feedback recording system from April 2021, and includes complaints received through telephone, email, letter or webchat that were originally signposted via social media. From 2022-2023, feedback was also received face to face.

The volume of feedback received will be related to the number of live benefits and clients. New benefits have launched over time, bringing more people in touch with Social Security Scotland. Benefit launch dates and application/payment volumes are summarised in table 10 of the supporting tables.

Previous versions of this publication were designated “official statistics in development”. This publication is now released as “official statistics”, as future changes are expected to take the form of continuous improvement, rather than substantial changes to presentation or methodology.

## Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints

Complaints fall under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and their complaints handling procedure. This sets out a two Stage internal complaints process. Frontline resolution – Stage 1, allows five working days to respond to the client’s complaint. From January 2020, an extension of five working days can be added to this initial timescale by Social Security Scotland where it will be beneficial to the client. Prior to this, extensions had to be agreed with the client. For Stage 1 complaints it may be more appropriate to escalate the complaint to Stage 2 rather than applying an extension. Where a client remains unhappy with the response to a Stage 1 complaint, they can proceed to investigation – Stage 2, which allows 20 working days to investigate and provide a response. Again, since January 2020 an extension of five working days can be added to this timescale by Social Security Scotland if required, whereas prior to this extensions were agreed with the client.

If the client still remains unhappy then they can choose to take their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Complaints taken to Scottish Public Services Ombudsman are not included in the publication.

A small number of complaints went straight to investigation – Stage 2. Not all complaints are suitable for frontline resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints handled at the investigation stage of the complaints handling procedure are typically complex or require a detailed examination. Examples of this include:

- the client/appointee refuses to take part in frontline resolution
- the issues raised are complex and require detailed investigation
- the complaint relates to serious, high-risk, or high-profile issues

## **Number of clients paid by Social Security Scotland**

The number of clients paid across all benefits and breakdown per benefit figures was previously calculated as new analysis in 2023-2024, for purposes of the previous version of this publication. This analysis has been moved to a standalone publication, Social Security Scotland Number of Individual Clients Paid to 31 March 2025, available on the [Social Security Scotland Publication page](#).

## **Number of applications by benefit**

The table of applications by benefit found in previous iterations of this publication has been moved to the supporting tables (table 10). Future versions of this publication will no longer report the number of applications by benefit, however the information will still be available in the individual benefit publications available on the [Social Security Scotland Publication page](#).

## Complaint reasons

Complaint reasons are categorised by Social Security Scotland staff based on the information received from clients. Complaint reasons were amended from 12 March 2021 to better reflect types of complaints received and provide more focussed data to inform improvement activity. In the table below, complaints received prior to 12 March 2021 have been mapped to new categories as set out below. 'Client expectation not met - Information provided' is a new category that does not map onto previous complaint reasons.

Previous categories	New categories	Description
Inadequate standard of service	Client expectations not met – Quality of service	Should be used where we have provided the client with a service which is below the expected standard.
Failure to provide a service	Client expectations not met – Accessing services	Should be used where we have not delivered a service e.g. online application form unavailable
Dissatisfaction with Scottish Government policy	Client expectations not met - Policy and procedures	Should be used when client is unhappy with Social Security Scotland's policy or procedures.
Disagreement with a decision	Disagreement with a decision	Use only for benefits with no right of appeal
Failure to follow the appropriate process	Client expectations not met – Timescales	Should be used where we did not meet published timescales.
Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff	Client expectations not met - Treatment by member of staff	Should be used where the service provided by a staff member was not at the expected standard.
N/a	Client expectations not met - Information provided	Should be used where the client is unhappy about information provided on Social Security Scotland websites, social media, advertising or letters.

For the purposes of this publication we have removed the prefix 'Client expectations not met' from these categories.

## **Complaint outcomes**

Possible outcomes for complaints are:

- Upheld – the client's complaint has been upheld, as it meets the terms in the definition of a complaint.
- Not upheld – the client's complaint was not upheld because it did not meet the terms in the definition of a complaint.
- Partially upheld – if the client makes a complaint raising more than one issue, one part (or parts) of the complaint may meet the terms in the definition of a complaint, and other(s) do not. In this case the complaint would be partially upheld.
- Resolved - if a client has made a complaint and their complaint is resolved without the need to look further into why something went wrong or to mark it as upheld or not upheld. This outcome was introduced on 12 April 2021.
- Withdrawn – client has withdrawn their complaint. This includes those withdrawn at the acknowledgement call as they are raised in error. No further processing is undertaken on withdrawn complaints and they are not included in the response times analysis in this report.

In this publication complaint outcomes are counted separately for Stage 1 and Stage 2. A complaint that progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 will have two outcomes.

## **Compliments and suggestions**

Compliments and suggestions should be recorded within five working days. Suggestions are investigated and the outcome is provided directly to the client.

# About the data

## How the data is collected

The data in this publication is primarily sourced from Social Security Scotland's case management system. The system holds information on all feedback received, including:

- type of feedback (complaint, compliment, suggestion)
- date received
- channel by which feedback was received (e-mail, telephone, letter, webchat, social media, face to face)
- benefit (or no specific benefit)
- reason for feedback, chosen from defined lists of possible categories
- where applicable, the date that feedback was actioned
- outcome of any decisions, selected from a defined list of possible outcomes

The information is held across multiple tables within the system. The data cut used to produce statistics for this publication was taken on 8 April 2025.

## Quality assurance

The data used to produce the figures has been checked where anomalies were discovered and discrepancies investigated.

Due to the increasing volume of feedback, for data from 1 April 2023 onwards, clerical records were not used for comparison. Instead, spot checking of anomalous records had been carried out with the client experience team:

- The dataset has been checked for duplicate records based on Case ID number.
- Anomalous data has been checked and investigated (e.g. where a decision date falls before received date)
- For complaints with decision date is after the deadline as prescribed by Scottish Public Services Ombudsman complaints handling procedure, it was investigated whether extension had been granted

The quality assurance process might result in revision of figures published previously.

Once the data is aggregated and copied into the publication and supporting Excel tables, the final statistics are quality assured by a different member of the statistics team. The final documents are checked by the lead statistician.

## **Data Quality**

### **Comparison to clerical data**

For historic data to the end of the 2021-2022 financial year, data from the case management system was compared to clerical records. Discrepancies were investigated with the Client Experience team, and errors in case management system data were manually fixed to match the clerical record where necessary. Discrepancies included:

A small number of items of feedback received had a date before September 2018, or had the date of feedback being recorded rather than date received. There were also errors in date feedback was received and decisions were made on the case management system compared to the clerical records. Dates have been amended on a case by case basis as decided with reference to the clerical records.

Some feedback had discrepancies in channel, reason or outcome between the case management system and clerical records. Each of these cases have been investigated with the Client Experience team and corrected.

Some feedback on the case management system is recorded as being not benefit specific. While this is true in some cases, in others this occurs where benefit information is missing. Missing benefit information has been completed with reference to clerical records.

In a small number of cases the Stage 1 and Stage 2 of one complaint have been recorded as two separate complaints on the case management system. These have been merged back into one complaint where necessary.

The case management system includes a number of complaints where the outcome is recorded as 'Deleted'. In some cases these are complaints that have been created in error, and these have been removed from the dataset used to produce the figures in this publication. In others cases the outcome of the complaint has been amended from 'Deleted' to the correct outcome of the complaint.

For the 2022-2023 financial year, records that were missing from either the case management system or clerical records were investigated with the Client Experience Team. A small number of duplicate cases were also identified and checked with the Client Experience Team.

For the 2023-2024 financial year, anomalous records have been checked with the Client Experience Team when required.

For the 2024-2025 financial year, individual records are no longer being checked with the Client Experience Team due to the volume of feedback received. The analysis that underpins this publication has been moved to open source software as part of a larger body of work in Social Security Scotland to improve openness and transparency. Small changes in methodology may have occurred, particularly in the calculation of processing times and medians. Additionally, an error was corrected in the processing time calculations which affected the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 figures found in table 4. This publication replaces all previous versions.



## **Rounding and disclosure control**

Feedback numbers have been rounded to the nearest five for disclosure control. Figures may not sum due to rounding. Percentages are based on actual figures and rounded to the nearest percent. Some percentages have been suppressed to prevent back-calculation of small numbers.

## **Channel**

Complaint channel is based on the first channel given for a complaint when it was received at either Stage 1 or 2.

Telephone, email and letter have been available for clients to use to complain since 2018. Telephone was unavailable from mid-March to mid-April 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. Following the launch of Child Disability Payment, we have seen face to face complaints recorded through local delivery interaction with clients.

Webchat was introduced as a communication channel from 1 May 2020. However, webchat was only added to the feedback recording system in February 2021. Where a complaint was received before February 2021, but the complaint notes indicate the complaint was received through webchat, we have counted this complaint as being received by webchat. It is possible that there were further complaints by webchat that have not been identified – these will be counted under ‘telephone’.

Social media complaints have been recorded since 12 April 2021. Complaints are classed as ‘social media’ when a client complains through a social media platform and is signposted by Social Security Scotland communications to make a complaint through one of the other channels, and the client does so. If a client is signposted but does not make a complaint through one of the other channels, their complaint is not recorded. Prior to 12 April 2021, social media was monitored but this type of complaint could not be recorded, and will have been counted as telephone, email, letter or webchat.

## **Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints**

For complaint benefit and reason, we have used the first recorded benefit or reason with a complaint. In general, benefit and reason are not expected to change between Stage 1 and Stage 2, although this may be possible in some cases.

For complaint outcomes, if an application had both a Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint outcome, we have counted this as two separate outcomes – a complaint that progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 will have two outcomes.

Complaints that went straight to Stage 2 are included in total complaints and Stage 2 complaints figures, and used to calculate the percentage of complaints reaching Stage 2.

## **Response time**

In previous reports, this was referred to as ‘processing time’. This change has been made to better align with the language used across Social Security Scotland in relation to feedback.

Response time is the number of days from the complaint being received to a decision being made. It is calculated in working days. Weekends and public holidays are excluded. The time of day that a complaint was received or processed is not taken into account. The day the complaint was received is counted as 'day one' of processing, regardless of the time of day a complaint was received. For example, a complaint received and processed on the same day would have a response time of one working day. A complaint received on one day and processed on the next working day would have a response time of two working days.

Withdrawn complaints have not been included in median response times statistics. Numbers of withdrawn complaints are relatively small **[Table 5]**, therefore this has had little impact on average response times.

Response times are calculated separately for each complaint stage. Where an extension has been agreed on a Stage 1 or Stage 2 complaint, complaints will be classed as having been processed 'within agreed timescales' if they were processed within these extensions **[Table 4]**. Complaints classed as not being closed within an extension include those that were completed after the extension end date, or completed after the initial timescale without an extension being applied.

### **Compliments and suggestions recording**

Compliments and suggestions are passed on to the Client Experience team to be recorded. When Social Security Scotland staff have high work volumes it is possible that fewer compliments and suggestions will be passed on. This may be the reason for lower volumes of compliments and suggestions received during 2020-2021, as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

### **Comparisons with DWP complaints statistics**

The Department for Work and Pensions has a different feedback process to Social Security Scotland, and as such, the Department for Work and Pensions complaints, compliments and suggestions statistics are not directly comparable to these statistics.

Further information about complaints at the Department for Work and Pensions and links to their latest statistics are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/complaints-about-the-department-for-work-and-pensions>.

### **Related Social Security Scotland publications**

Statistics about individual benefits are published at:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/about/statistics/social-security-scotland-statistics-publications>

All research and statistics publications will be available through the Social Security Scotland 'Publications' webpage at:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications>. This includes qualitative analysis of feedback comments made by clients during the application process for benefits.

## **An Official Statistics publication for Scotland**

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The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available via an alternative route. Summary tables are available at: [Social Security Scotland statistics](#).
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact [MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot](mailto:MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot) for further information.

### **Complaints and suggestions**

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, 3WR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail [ChiefStatistician@gov.scot](mailto:ChiefStatistician@gov.scot).

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