

## Social Security Scotland Statistics

# Social Security Scotland feedback statistics to 31 March 2019

### Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering up to end June 2019 will be released in September 2019.

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 is found online at: <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> The forthcoming publication timetable is available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/03/18798>

# 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 2019. Carer's Allowance Supplement (CAS) was launched in September 2018, followed by Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment (BSG), which was launched on 10 December 2018.

All tables and charts relating to this publication can be found at:

[www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland](http://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland)

These statistics are being published as experimental statistics. Experimental statistics are defined in the Code of Practice for Statistics as "*new official statistics undergoing evaluation. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.*" These statistics have not yet been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority. They have not been designated as National Statistics<sup>3</sup>.

## Main findings

### Complaints

- In total 75 complaints were received by 31 March 2019, including 45 for CAS and 30 for BSG [**Table 1, Chart 1**]. This compares to 83,000 carers receiving CAS payments by 31 March<sup>4</sup> and 16,490 BSG applications made by 28 February 2019<sup>5</sup>.
- Overall, 22% of complaints reached stage 2 (either progressing from stage 1 to stage 2, or being received at stage 2 – the [background section](#) explains the difference between stage 1 and 2 complaints) [**Table 1**]. A higher proportion of CAS complaints reached Stage 2 (24%) than for BSG (19%). This may be due to CAS being live since September, while BSG has only been live since December. No cases were referred to Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

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<sup>3</sup> Carer's Allowance at November 2018 and Carer's Allowance Supplement, October eligibility date 2018  
<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland/CASOct2018>

<sup>4</sup> Best Start Grant: high level statistics to 28 February 2019 <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland/BSGFeb2019>

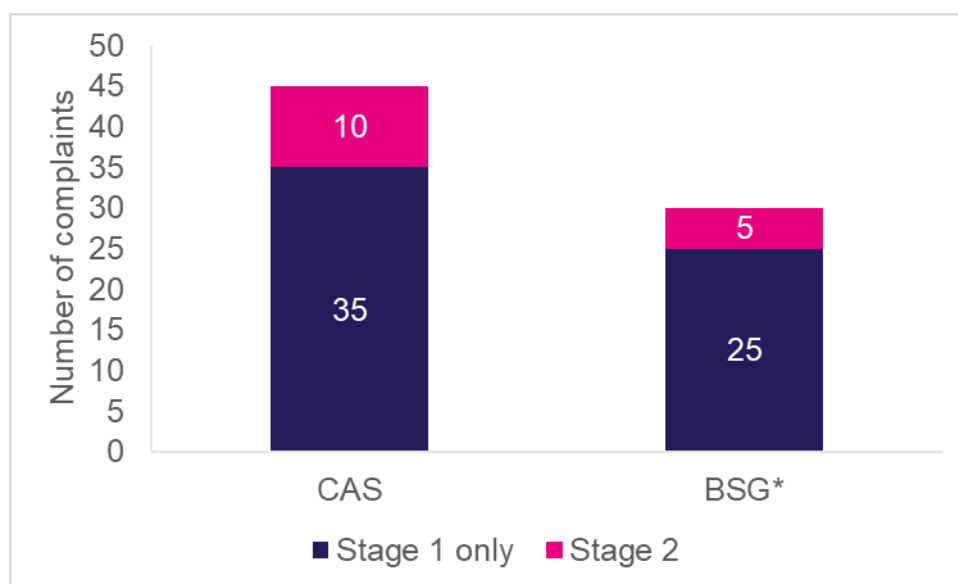
<sup>5</sup> For more information on experimental statistics please see:  
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/assessment-and-designation-of-experimental-statistics.html>

**Table 1: Complaints by benefit and stage**

Benefit	Total*	% of all benefits	Stage 1	Stage 2	% progressed to Stage 2
CAS	45	60%	45	10	24%
BSG	30	40%	30	5	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22%</b>

The majority of Stage 2 complaints were initially received at stage 1 and later progressed to stage 2. A small number of BSG complaints went straight to Stage 2, however, because of rounding this is not evident in the table.

**Chart 1: Complaints by benefit and stage**



\*stage 2 figures include complaints progressing from stage 1 to stage 2, and a small number of complaints went straight to stage 2

- The most common reason for complaints was 'Inadequate standard of service' (45, 57%), followed by 'Dissatisfaction with SG policy' (15, 17%), and 'Failure to provide a service' (10, 16%) [Table 2, Chart 2].

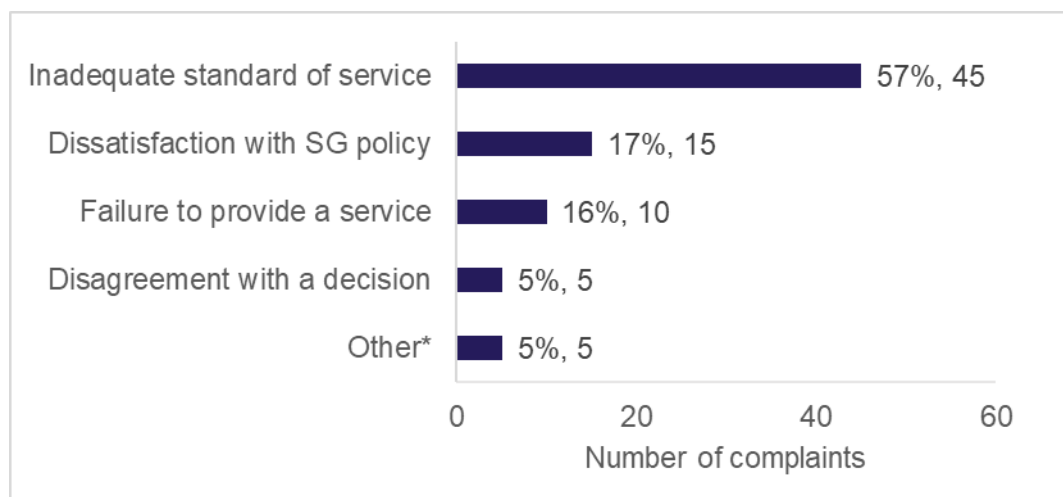
**Table 2: Complaints by reason**

Reason	Total	%
Inadequate standard of service	45	57%
Dissatisfaction with SG policy	15	17%
Failure to provide a service	10	16%
Disagreement with a decision	5	5%
Other*	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Other includes 'SG failure to follow the appropriate process' and 'Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff'.

Complaint reason is based on the first reason given for a complaint when it was received. Figures do not sum due to rounding.

## Chart 2: Complaints by reason



\*Other includes 'SG failure to follow the appropriate process' and 'Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff'.

- By the end of March, 75 complaints had been responded to and five were outstanding and did not have an outcome. These figures do not sum due to rounding.
- All complaints were dealt with within the appropriate timescales. For stage 1, the median average processing time was zero days (meaning that on average complaints were decided on the same day they were received). For stage 2, the median average processing time was 17 days.
- In total, over all benefits and both stages, 40 complaints were upheld (44%), 45 were not upheld (50%) and 5 were partially upheld (6%). For CAS, the majority of complaints were not upheld (64%), while for BSG the majority were upheld (72%) [Table 3, Chart 3]. Complaint outcomes are counted separately for stage 1 and 2 – a complaint that progressed from stage 1 to stage 2 will have two outcomes.

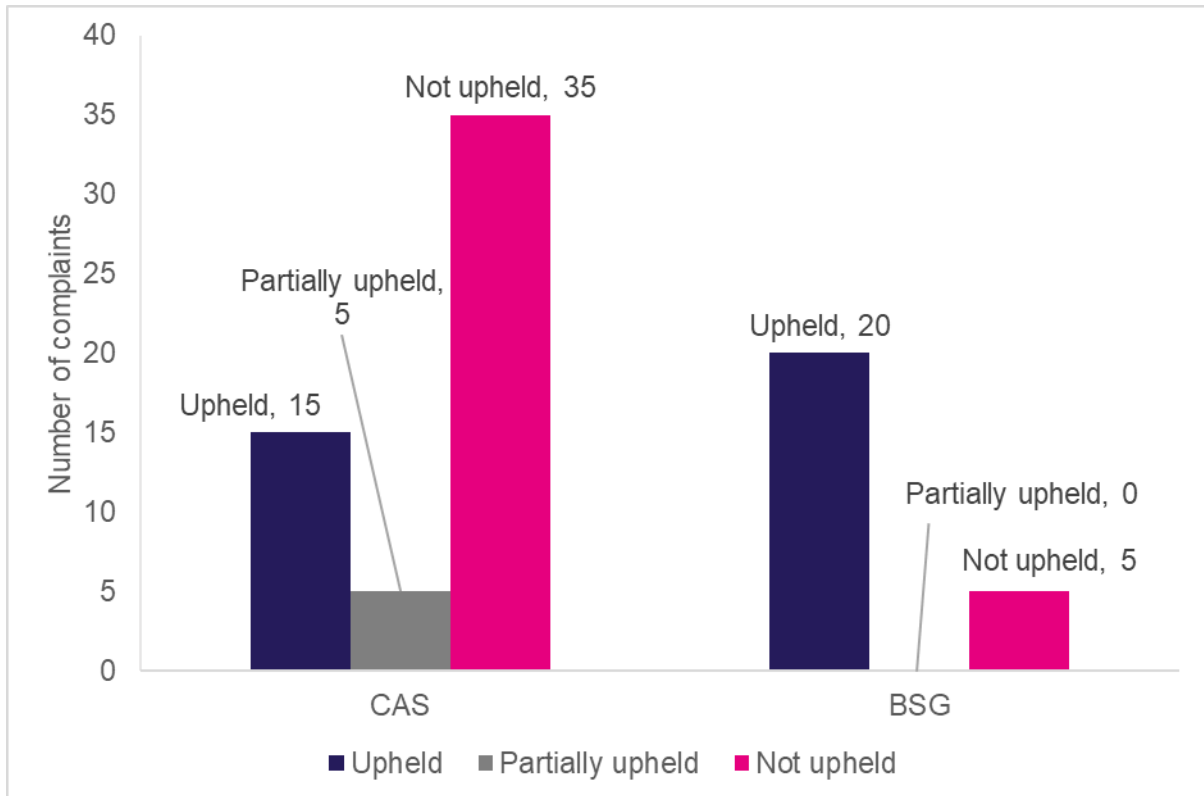
**Table 3: Complaints by outcome**

Outcome	All benefits	CAS	BSG	% all benefits	% CAS	% BSG
Upheld	40	15	20	44%	29%	72%
Partially upheld	5	5	0	6%	7%	*
Not upheld	45	35	5	50%	64%	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*suppressed for disclosure control

Five complaints were outstanding as of 31 March 2019, and therefore are not counted in this table. Additionally a small number of complaints were withdrawn. Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. Figures do not sum due to rounding.

**Chart 3: Complaints by outcome**



Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received.

## Compliments and suggestions

- From September 2018 to end March 2019 a total of 60 compliments were received, including 35 (55%) for CAS, 15 (22%) for BSG and 15 (23%) that were not specific to a benefit [Table 4].
- The most common reason for compliments was 'Thank you for being so helpful' (25, 43%), followed by 'Thank you for getting it right (20, 33%) [Table 5, Chart 4].
- In total 5 suggestions were received, mostly on 'Improving information available'.

**Table 4: Compliments by benefit**

	All	CAS	BSG	Not benefit specific
Number	60	35	15	15
%	100%	55%	22%	23%

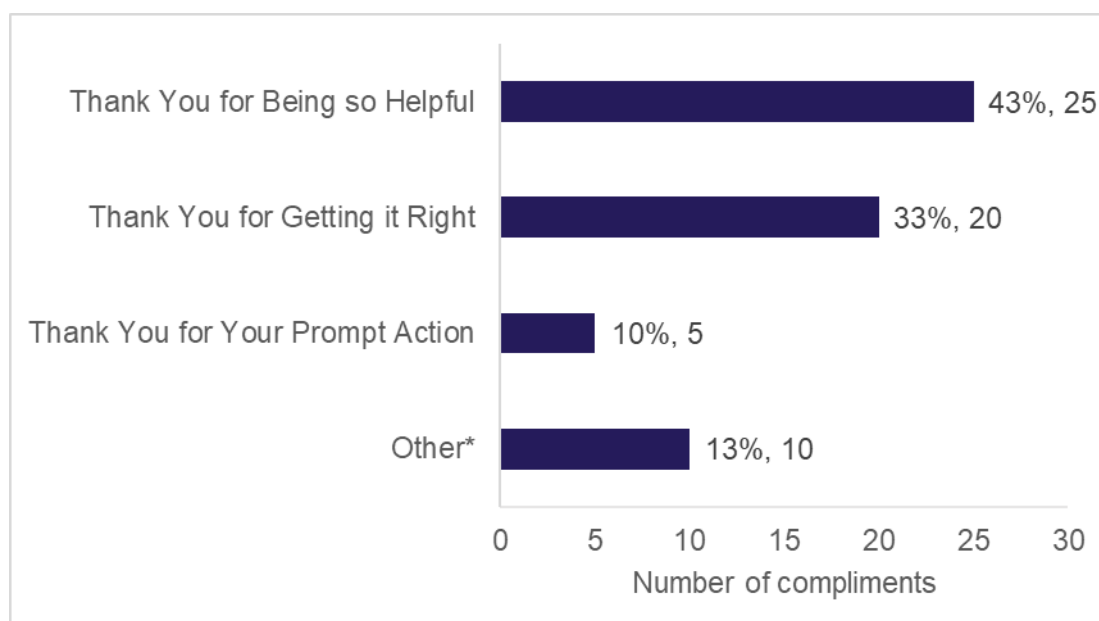
Figures do not sum due to rounding.

**Table 5: Compliments by reason**

Reason	Number	%
Thank You for Being so Helpful	25	43%
Thank You for Getting it Right	20	33%
Thank You for Your Prompt Action	5	10%
Other*	10	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Other includes 'Standard of facilities', 'Thank you for your courtesy' and 'I found the process simple and straightforward'.

**Chart 4: Compliments by reason**



# Background to Feedback

Social Security Scotland is the executive agency of Scottish Government which is responsible for delivering social security benefits for Scotland. Social Security Scotland was introduced on 4 September 2018 and began making Carer's Allowance Supplement payments in September. Following this, Social Security Scotland began taking applications for BSG Pregnancy and Baby payment on 10 December 2018. Feedback (complaints, compliments and suggestions) has been received by Social Security Scotland since it was introduced in September 2018.

## Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints

Complaints fall under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and their complaints handling procedure. This sets out a 2 stage internal complaints process. Frontline resolution – stage 1, allows 5 working days to respond to the client's complaint. Where a client remains unhappy with this response they can proceed to investigation – stage 2, which allows 20 working days to investigate and provide a response. If the client still remains unhappy then they can choose to take their complaint to the SPSO.

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

## 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.

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**

For compliments and suggestions all feedback should be recorded within 5 working days. Suggestions are investigated and outcome is provided directly to the client.

## **About the data**

### **How the data is collected**

The data in this publication is sourced from Social Security Scotland's case management system. The system holds information on all feedback received, and includes type of feedback (complaint, compliment, suggestion), date received, channel by which feedback was received (e-mail, telephone, letter), benefit (CAS, BSG, or no specific benefit), reason for feedback (chosen from defined lists of possible categories), and where applicable, the date that feedback was actioned and the outcome of any decisions (again selected from a defined list of possible outcomes).

The information is held across multiple tables within the system. 100% extracts of administrative data are taken from this system every month for internal reporting purposes. Data cuts combine information from the different tables in the system into one monthly extract which includes details of all feedback made since September 2018. The data cut used to produce statistics for this publication was taken on 4 June 2019.

### **Quality assurance**

The data used to produce the official statistics are the same as the data extracted from the case management system on a monthly basis that is used for internal reporting within Social Security Scotland. As such, the data is checked monthly for consistency with previous extracts (for example, do numbers of complaints, compliments and suggestions received increase as expected over time). Summary figures for number of complaints, compliments and suggestions have been compared to equivalent summary figures produced from clerical records, and discrepancies investigated.

Additional quality assurance and cleaning has been carried out on specific variables:

- The dataset has been checked for duplicate records based on Case ID number.
- Variables have been checked for missing information.
- Feedback received dates and decisions dates have been checked to see whether they fall within expected ranges (e.g. after September 2018) and are consistent with those produced by clerical records.
- For complaints, the benefit that a complaint refers to and reason for the complaint have been checked for consistency between stage 1 and stage 2.



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**

### *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. The number of suggestions is very small and therefore cannot currently be broken down by benefit or reason.

### *Missing, duplicate and erroneous feedback*

The data comes from 100% data cut of the case management system. The case management system includes a small number of complaints where the outcome is 'Deleted'. These are complaints that were created in error. They have not been counted in the statistics. There is also a small number of complaints with outcome 'Withdrawn', and these have been retained in the dataset used to produce the statistics as they have been withdrawn by the client.

### *Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints*

For complaint benefit and reason, we have used the first recorded benefit or reason with a complaint. 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.

### *Feedback received date and decision date*

A small number of items of feedback received had a date before September 2018. These were investigated with the Client Experience team, and errors in feedback received date manually fixed.

For around 60% CAS feedback (stage 1 complaints, stage 2 complaints, compliments and suggestions), comparison to clerical records indicated that the date that feedback was received and the dates that decisions had been made were incorrect on the case management system. This may have been due to migration of feedback information onto the case management system during the first months following the launch of CAS. Where dates were identified as incorrect these have been corrected based on clerical records.

### *Processing time*

Processing time is the number of days from the application being received to a decision being made or the application being withdrawn. It is calculated in working days. Weekends and public holidays (Christmas, Boxing Day, New Year, 2nd January) are excluded. The time of day that an application was received or processed is not taken into account. Processing times are calculated separately for each complaint stage.

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

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has a different complaints process to Social Security Scotland, and as such, DWP complaints statistics are not directly comparable to these statistics. Further information about complaints at DWP 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**

Future research and statistics publications will be available through the Social Security Scotland 'Reporting' webpage at: <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/what-we-do/reporting>.

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

Official and National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Both undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference.

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### **How to access background or source data**

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

are available in more detail through [statistics.gov.scot](http://statistics.gov.scot)

are available via an alternative route. Summary tables are available at:

[//www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland](http://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland)

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact [SocialSecurityStats@gov.scot](mailto:SocialSecurityStats@gov.scot) for further information.

cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

### **Complaints and suggestions**

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