Social Security Scotland – Insights Research client feedback April 2021 to March 2022

1. Introduction

Social Security Scotland runs an insights research programme to continuously improve its services. Part of that involves surveying people following their contact with Social Security Scotland.

This publication covers the period 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, during which Job Start Payment, Scottish Child Payment, Child Winter Heating Assistance, Carer's Allowance Supplement, Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, Funeral Support Payment, and Young Carer Grant were live.

This publication also covers Child Disability Payment, which went live July 2021, and Child Disability Payment Case Transfers which went live in November 2021. Although Adult Disability Payment went into Pilot in March 2022, no feedback data was received for that month.

2. Key Findings

- In total, 2,134 clients left a feedback rating following a telephone call to Social Security Scotland for the period 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

- 153,626 applicants left experience ratings following a benefit application between April 2021 and March 2022.

- The majority of feedback following an application was from online applications (143,946 feedback ratings), followed by telephony (8,022) and postal feedback (1,658). Local Delivery also began in the same period where 202 applicants left experience ratings.

- A subset of clients left feedback in the form of open text comments following applications for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, Funeral Support Payment, Young Carer Grant, Job Start Payment, Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment and joint Scottish Child Payment and Best Start Grant/Foods, totalling 4,931 comments.

- The majority of comments across all benefits were positive. Positive responses generally fell into three broad categories: finding the form easy to fill in, being happy with the service received and appreciating being able to choose how to complete the application.

- Negative responses could most commonly be placed into two broad categories: issues with the application form or process, including long wait times and technical problems, and disagreement with the equalities questions at the end of the application.

- Neutral comments commonly expressed that applicants had no further comment, or noted matters not related to the benefit application process.

3. Background

An analytical team within Social Security Scotland runs a programme of insights research.

The programme includes collecting, analysing and publishing management information, research and statistics that relate to the delivery and performance of Social Security Scotland.

The aim of the programme is to gather the experiences, needs and priorities of those who use and deliver social security in Scotland. This information, in turn, is fed back into the organisation's processes, policy and practice, to facilitate continuous improvement.

The Insights research programme includes this publication of Insights Research Findings that covers client point of contact with the organisation by: telephone; mail; online; or through the Local Delivery service.

Other publications included as part of the Insights research programme can be found [here](). This includes telephony and application channel data for 2022-23, which can be found [here]().

4. Methodology

This insights research features a collection of feedback directly asking clients about their experiences when interacting with the organisation and applying for benefits. The following section outlines the methods used to collect insights data for this report.

4.1 Client Insights

To capture client interactions and experiences with Social Security Scotland, research mechanisms have been built into telephony, postal, online and Local Delivery channels.

4.1.2 Telephony – general call experience

An automated survey mechanism is in place to gain insights from clients about how well telephony services are being received. Clients have the option of completing the survey following any telephone interaction (e.g. from general enquiry to benefit-specific contact). The focus for this survey is experience of the call.

Full telephony experience questions and response options are detailed in section 5.1.

4.1.3 Applications – telephone, online, postal and Local Delivery

Clients' immediate views and feelings on the process of applying for benefits, across telephone, online, paper and Local Delivery have also been gathered.

For the current reporting period, this has taken the form of two client satisfaction questions embedded within a questionnaire. For online and postal applications clients complete these questions at the end of benefit applications. For clients applying over the telephone or through Local Delivery, a client advisor takes the client through the questionnaire.

For clients applying via postal application, the questionnaire is included in their application pack with a freepost envelope for returning both forms. For clients applying online, the questionnaire is available prior to submitting the application.

Full application experience questions and response options are detailed in Annex B.
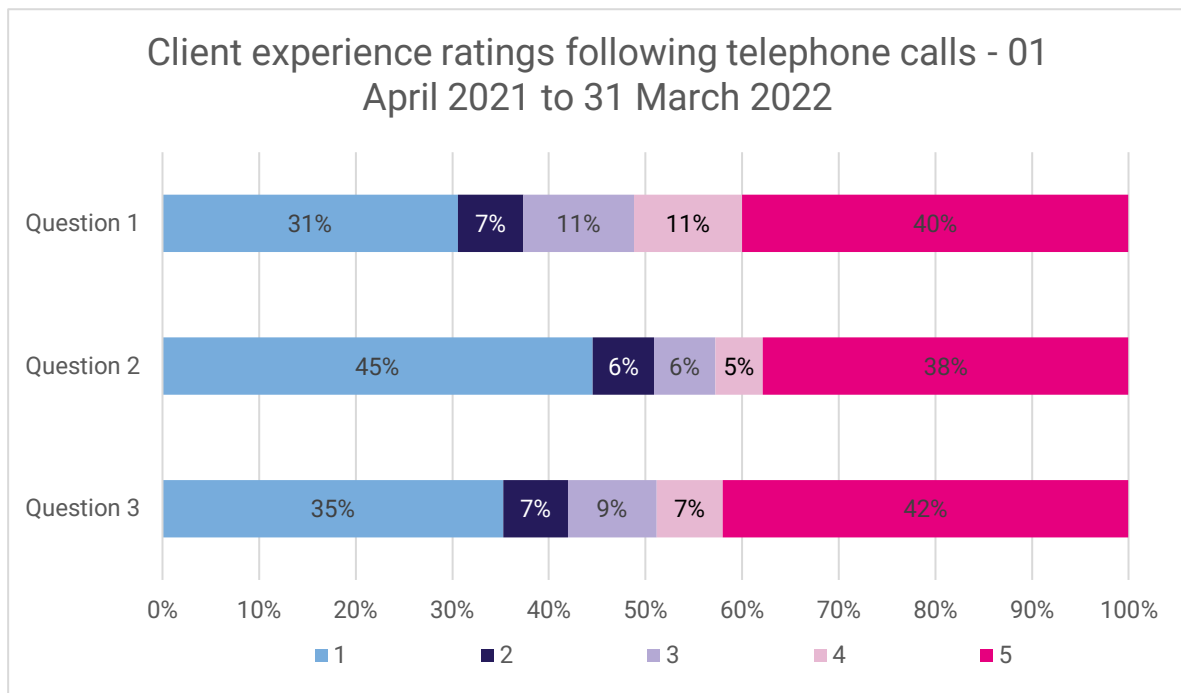
5. Findings

5.1 Client Insights – telephony contacts

After any phone call with a client advisor, clients can stay on the line and answer a series of three questions about their experience with Social Security Scotland. The automated survey asks:

- How quickly did we answer your call today? Press a number from 1 to 5, where 1 is not quickly at all and 5 is very quickly.

- Did you get what you needed from this call? Press a number from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is you got everything you needed.

- How would you rate our service today? Press a number from 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.

In total 2,134 clients left a rating for the period 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Of those who left a rating, 40% felt their call had been answered very quickly, 38% felt that they got everything they needed from the call, and 42% rated the service as excellent.

Client experience ratings following telephone calls - 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1	31%	7%	11%	11%	40%
Question 2	45%	6%	6%	5%	38%
Question 3	35%	7%	9%	7%	42%

5.2 Client Insights – Satisfaction following applications

5.2.1 Experience ratings following Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods applications

79,577 applicants left experience ratings following a Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods application between April 2021 and end of March 2022 – this includes joint Best Start Grant/Scottish Child Payment applications. A comparison of the volume of Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods insights data from April 2021 to March 2022 is provided in the table below.
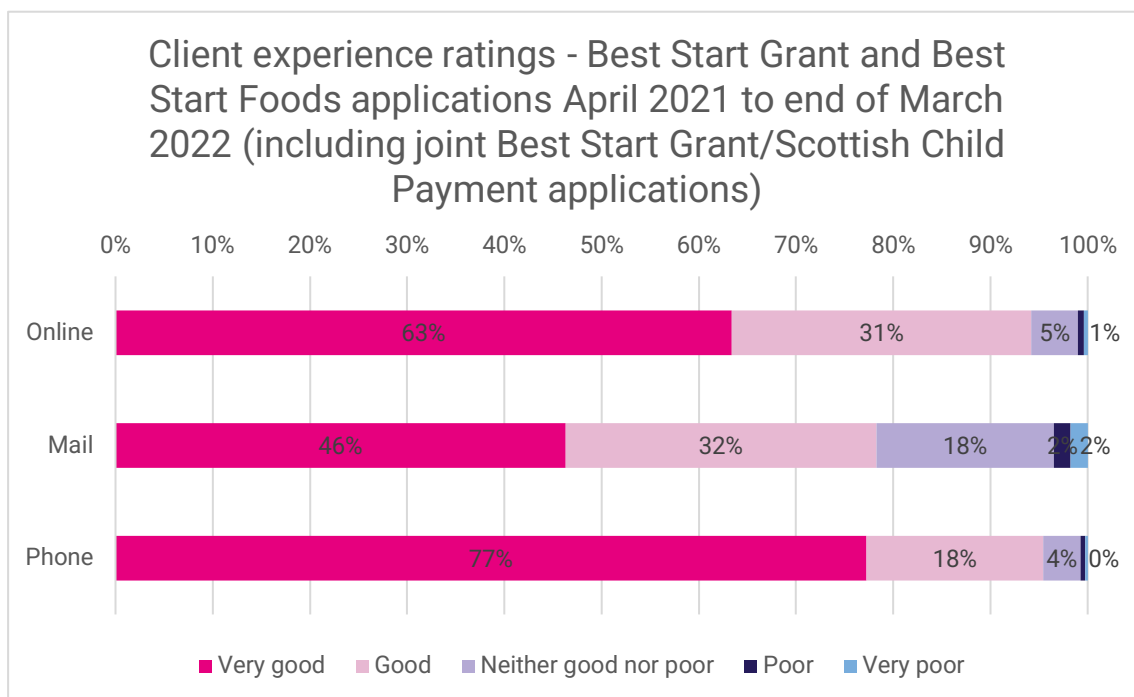
Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods –Insights data April 21 to March 22	
Number of online feedback ratings	74,701
Number of telephony feedback responses	3,781
Number of postal feedback ratings	1,095

Joint Best Start Grant/Foods and Scottish Child Payment applications are recorded differently on phone/mail and online applications. For online applications, joint Best Start Grant/Foods and Scottish Child Payment applications were recorded as two separate applications. Therefore when looking at online ratings we are unable to tell if someone who applied for Best Start Grant/Foods or Scottish Child Payment made a joint application or if they applied for Best Start Grant/Foods or Scottish Child Payment only.

For online Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods applicants, 94% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

Of postal Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods applicants who left a rating during this period, 78% rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

For telephony Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods applicants, 95% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

Client experience ratings - Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods applications April 2021 to end of March 2022 (including joint Best Start Grant/Scottish Child Payment applications)

	Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor
Online	63%	31%	5%		1%
Mail	46%	32%	18%	2%	2%
Phone	77%	18%	4%		0%

5.2.2 Experience ratings following Child Disability Payment applications

3,446 applicants left experience ratings following a Child Disability Payment application between 26 July 2021 and 31 March 2022. A comparison of the volume of Child Disability Payment insights data from 26 July 2021 to 31 March 2022 is provided in the table below.
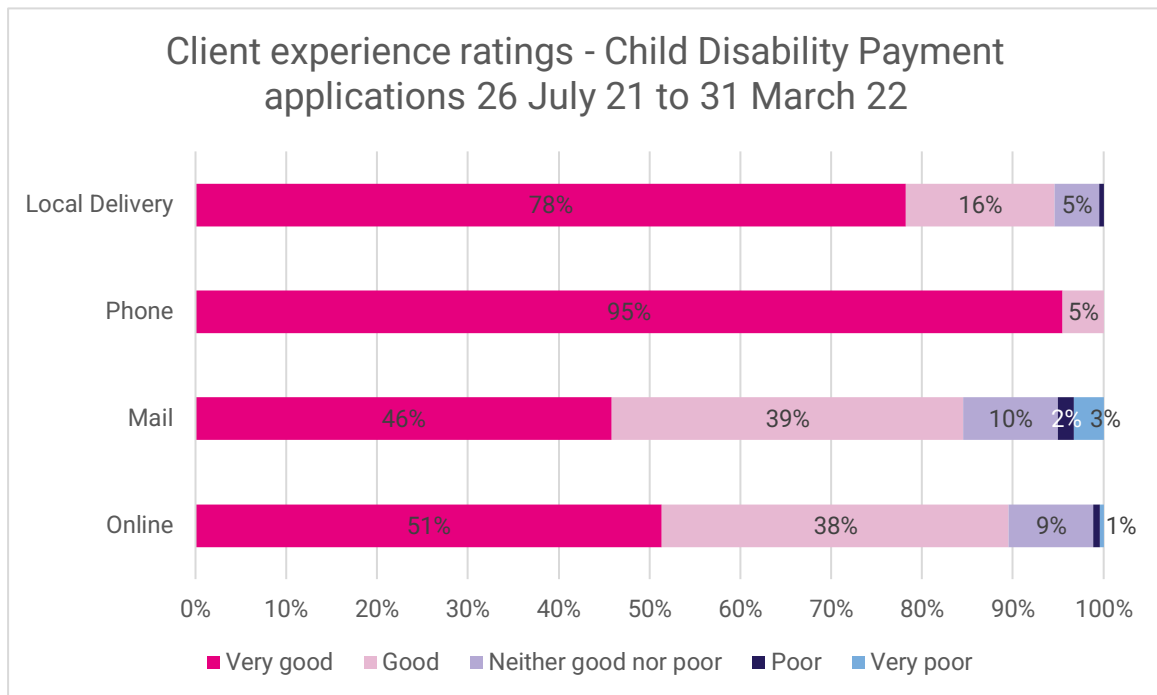
Child Disability Payment –Insights data 26 July 21 to 31 March 22	
Number of online feedback ratings	3,222
Number of telephony feedback responses	202
Number of postal feedback ratings	22
Number of Local Delivery responses	221

Of Child Disability Payment applicants through Local Delivery, 95% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

For telephony Child Disability Payment applicants, 100% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

Of postal Child Disability Payment applicants who left a rating during this period, 85% rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

For online Child Disability Payment applicants, 90% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

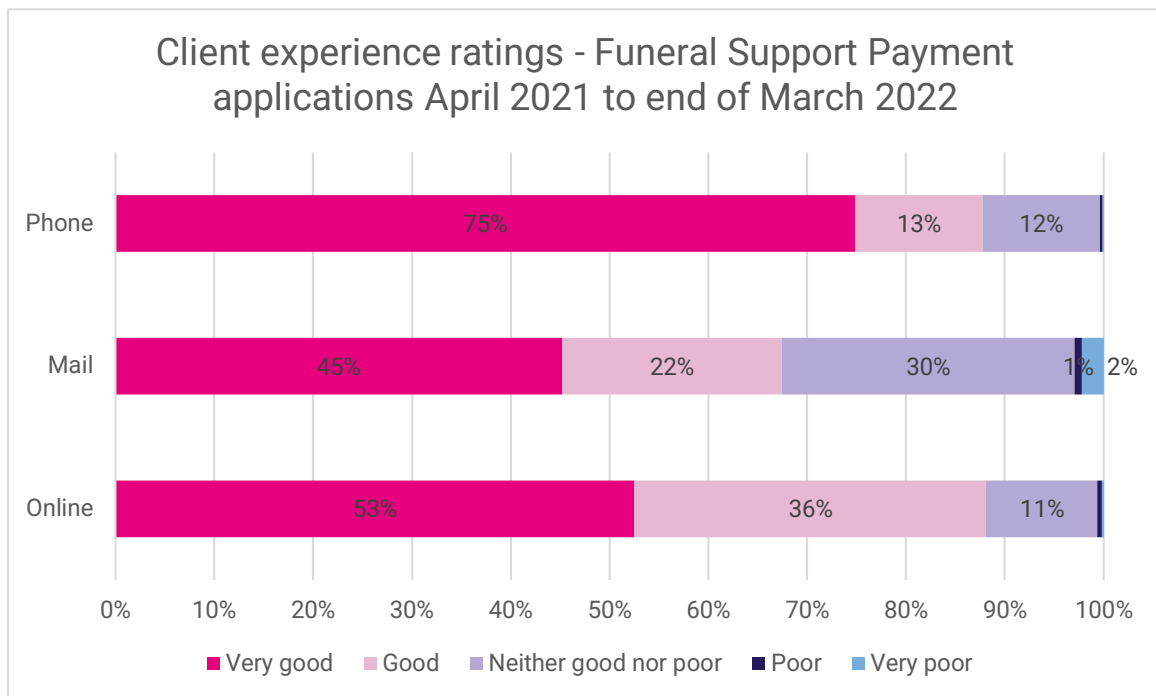Client experience ratings - Child Disability Payment applications 26 July 21 to 31 March 22

Method	Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor
Local Delivery	78%	16%	5%		
Phone	95%	5%			
Mail	46%	39%	10%	2%	3%
Online	51%	38%	9%		1%

5.2.3 Experience ratings following Funeral Support Payment applications
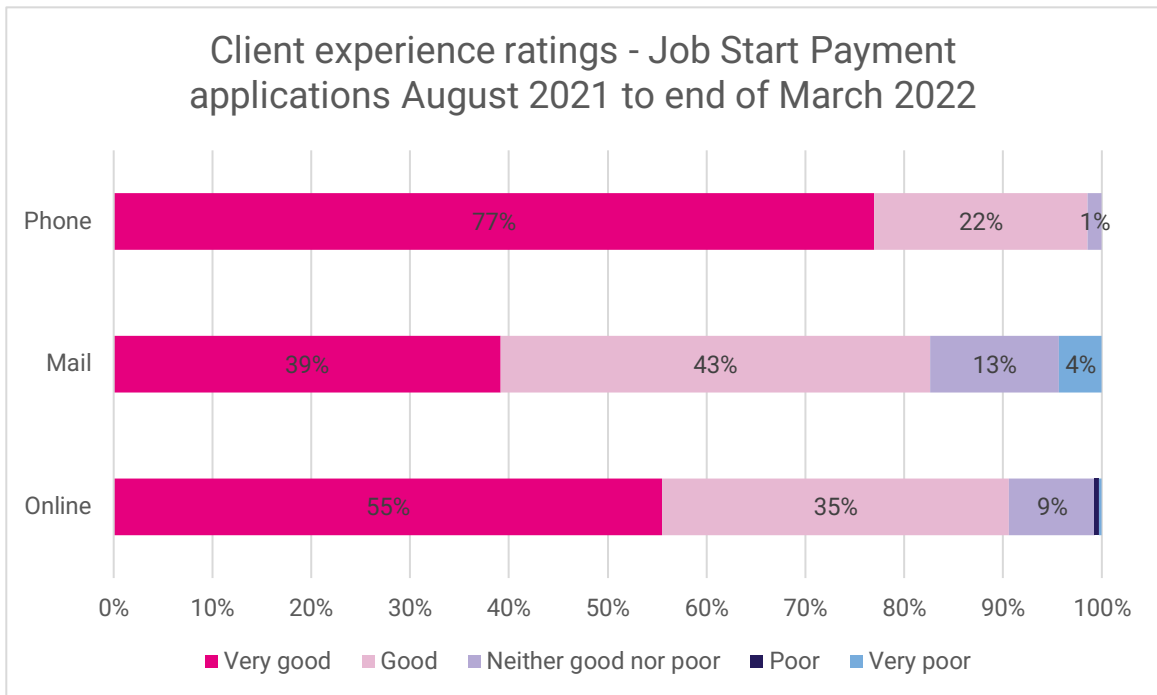
7,899 applicants left experience ratings following a Funeral Support Payment application between April 2021 and end of March 2022. A comparison of the volume of Funeral Support Payment insights data from April 2021 to March 2022 is provided in the table below.

Funeral Support Payment – Insights data April 21 to March 22	
Number of online feedback ratings	5,778
Number of telephony feedback responses	1,986
Number of postal feedback ratings	135

For telephony Funeral Support Payment applicants, 88% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

Of postal Funeral Support Payment applicants who left a rating during this period, 67% rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

For online Funeral Support Payment applicants, 89% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

Client experience ratings - Funeral Support Payment applications April 2021 to end of March 2022

Phone: Very good 75%, Good 13%, Neither good nor poor 12%
Mail: Very good 45%, Good 22%, Neither good nor poor 30%, Poor 1%, Very poor 2%
Online: Very good 53%, Good 36%, Neither good nor poor 11%

Legend: Very good, Good, Neither good nor poor, Poor, Very poor

5.2.4 Experience ratings following Job Start Payment applications

7,736 applicants left experience ratings following a Job Start Payment application between April 2021 and end of March 2022. A comparison of the volume of Job Start Payment insights data from April 2021 to March 2022 is provided in the table below.

Job Start Payment – Insights data April 21 to March 22	
Number of online feedback ratings	3,222
Number of telephony feedback responses	202
Number of postal feedback ratings	22
Number of Local Delivery responses	221

For telephony Job Start Payment applicants, 99% rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

For postal Job Start Payment applicants, 83% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

For online Job Start Payment applicants, 91% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

Client experience ratings - Job Start Payment applications August 2021 to end of March 2022

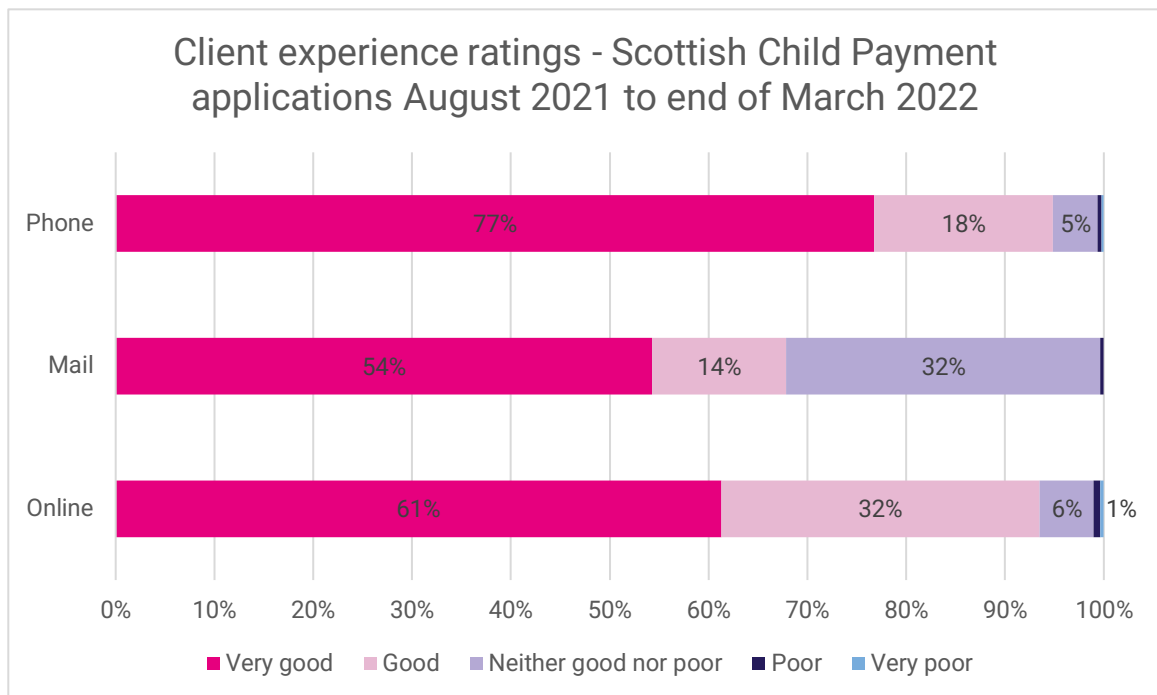### 5.2.5 Experience ratings following Scottish Child Payment applications

50,201 applicants left experience ratings following a Scottish Child Payment application from April 2021 to end of March 2022. A comparison of the volume of Scottish Child Payment insights data from April 2021 to March 2022 is provided in the table below.

Scottish Child Payment – Insights data April 21 to March 22	
Number of online feedback ratings	48,197
Number of telephony feedback responses	1,724
Number of postal feedback ratings	280

For telephony Scottish Child Payment applicants, 95% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

Of postal Scottish Child Payment applicants who left a rating during this period, 68% rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

For online Scottish Child Payment applicants, 93% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

Client experience ratings - Scottish Child Payment applications August 2021 to end of March 2022

### 5.2.6 Experience ratings following Young Carer Grant applications

4,767 applicants left experience ratings following a Young Carer Grant application between April 2021 and end of March 2022. A comparison of the volume of Young Carer Grant insights data from April 2021 to March 2022 is provided in the table below.

Young Carer Grant – Insights data April 21 to March 22	
Number of online feedback ratings	3,222
Number of telephony feedback responses	202
Number of postal feedback ratings	22

For telephony Young Carer Grant applicants, 95% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

For postal Young Carer Grant applicants, 87% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

For online Young Carer Grant applicants, 93% of those who left a rating rated the service as 'Very good' or 'Good'.

Client experience rating - Young Carer Grant applications April 2021 to end of March 2022
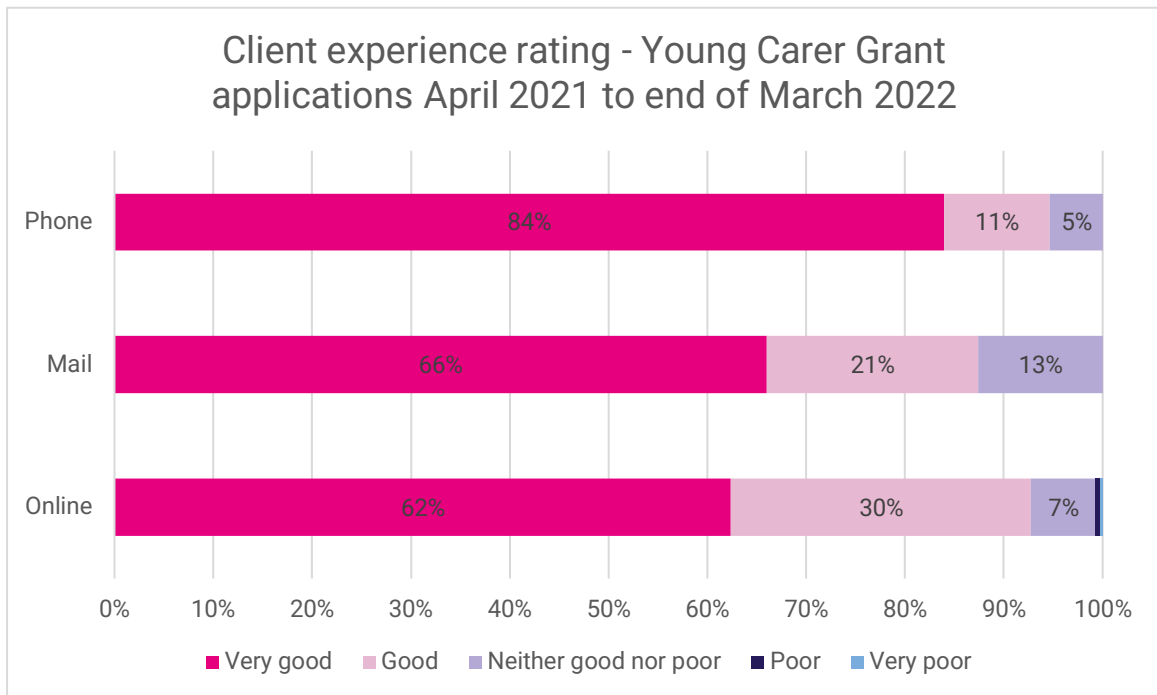
5.2.7 Open text responses

In addition to making a rating, applicants have the opportunity to leave an open text comment about their application experience in response to the question: "Is there any further feedback you would like to provide?"

5.2.8 Open text responses following Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods applications

Of those who applied for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods between April 2021 and the end of March 2022, 2,026 chose to answer the further feedback question. The majority of responses were positive, and negative and neutral responses were roughly equal in proportion. There were some mixed responses.

Positive responses fell into two broad categories: applicants finding the form easy to fill in and applicants being happy with the service they received. Applicants commented on how straightforward the application process was and how easy the questions were to understand. They also appreciated the mode in which they completed the application – online or by telephone. Client Advisors were described as polite, professional and helpful.

Negative responses fell into four broad categories: dissatisfaction with being asked equalities questions at the end of the application, issues experienced with the application form, dissatisfaction with the service received and not receiving a decision after applying.

Neutral responses commonly expressed that applicants had no further comment, or noted matters not related to the Best Start Grant and Best Start Food application. Others contained suggestions for service improvement.

Most often applicants suggested having separate applications for these benefits. Other common suggestions were for more advertising of Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods and the option to see what the applicant has already applied for.

Mixed responses were varied but focused on issues with the application form, dissatisfaction with the length of call wait or application processing times and suggestions for improvements. Many applicants also felt the service provision was good or the application was easy. Some commented that applying online was either easier or more difficult than applying by phone.

Some illustrative examples of each classification are provided below.

Category	Example
Positive response	"Always panicked when filling in forms but this was easy " "I think applying online is fast efficient and very easy to do" "Really polite client advisor keen to make sure I got the benefits I was entitled to." "The advisors on your live chat service are absolutely fantastic" "Very good service, very happy. Short time to do phone application, very happy with the service today." "It nice to have someone you can have a giggle with when making an application." "I am really impressed by this service Even though I dont need it I am really happy to see you helping people who cant speak English with their own language"
Negative response	"The questions in this survey are an invasion of privacy and I don't understand the link between my sexuality and applying for my child." "I applied when I was 24 weeks pregnant and have uploaded my documents twice and have still not heard anything back." "I tried to submit an application before but there is no record of it, so I would like potential technical problems to be looked into"

Category	Example
	"I do really think that every child should be entitled to the best start grant regarding if theyre parents receive benefits or not the parents that dont receive Benefits because they work and pay bills still struggle worse off than people who do receive benefits" "Lack of communication. I wasn't told until today that my previous application was too early. If I had been told during any of the many previous contacts I have had I could have reapplied earlier. For people who don't have family to help, it is not good enough to leave them in this position so close to when their bay is due."
Neutral response	"I would prefer if there was an option to just apply for the grand you want instead of applying for everything" "To advertise these grants more" "An accessible list so i know what i have applied for and what payments i have received"
Mixed response	"I find it more difficult doing it online. Application over the phone easier than I thought it would be." "Easy, but it took a long time to get through on the phone." "due to the slow progress of this application I couldnt rate it highly The online service is nice and easy to use"

5.2.9 Open text responses following Child Disability Payment applications

Of those who applied for Child Disability Payment between 26 July 2021 and 31 March 2022, 717 chose to answer the further feedback question. Responses were mostly positive, although a considerable number of applicants reported negative experiences. Some applicants left a mixed response, with even fewer leaving a neutral response.

Positive responses left by applicants fell into three broad categories: finding the application easy to understand, finding the service helpful and appreciating the option to choose how to apply for Child Disability Payment. Applicants found the application straightforward and the questions clear. Responses also highly commended the service, especially Local Delivery support. Many compared experiences with that of other benefits favourably.

Negative responses fell into three broad categories: issues with submitting applications, call wait times and disagreements with elements of policy.

Applicants experienced technical faults, had issues with how questions were asked and found the form repetitive. Applicants disagreed with having to apply for Child Disability Payment every year and having to complete equalities questions for their child.

Mixed responses covered a wide variety of themes. Some felt the service was good but experienced issues with the online application. Others felt the application was easy but experienced issues with long processing times.

Most neutral responses raised topics not related to the Child Disability Payment application and that were personal to the applicant. In other responses, applicants had no further comments or said it was too early to comment. Some made suggestions for improvements to the service, in particular an additional information section where applicants could share information that did not fit elsewhere on the form.

Some illustrative examples of each classification are provided below.

Category	Example
Positive response	"Process has been great the whole way through. Liked that the application had tick box options as they covered most of the points. Local Delivery appointment was so helpful."

"I'm grateful that you provide a service where someone is available to help with the application. I was never left in any doubt of where I was with my application and each time I asked for a call back, this happened, exceeding my expectations. When I initially asked for support, it was via webchat and we got disconnected so I was unsure if I would have to request help again, however the person I was speaking to, followed up and organised support for me."

"the support has been very helpful, I would have struggled to put it on the paper, taking me through each step made it so much easier"

"you made everything, questions that I didn't understand, you didn't make me feel silly I really appreciate it. I get really shy but I felt like I could open up to you. It's really different from PIP it's taken such a massive strain off of it. I went through a lot with PIP and I was putting it off but you've made it so much easier."

"This form is very good and relatively easy to fill out and very clear or questions" |

Category	Example
Negative response	"Bit confused with the questions, my child's main issues are mental and I struggled to answer." "Incredibly intrusive and invasive questions asked which if I'm being honest I'd never thought in my life to answer." "It has been difficult as there were quite a few technical difficulties throughout the process. Also I found it difficult to fit my daughters complex needs into the different categories." "Questions aimed at all ages of children so quite difficult to answer when you would be helping a 2 year old do most of the day to day tasks anyway ." "Can never get through on the phone. Requested a call back twice and it took over 2 ½ hours for my call to be returned. Phone lines are always so busy."
Mixed response	"I had IT issues with my initial application, so this has been a long process, but it has been easy enough to complete." "I found the application to be a bit confusing. There was no step by step instructions to fill out form myself. The UK version of the form was more explanatory. I certainly could not find step by step for the social security form. More documents for guidance would be helpful. It has been worthwhile having someone to help me complete this form. I found this very beneficial." "It has been good but very lengthy process. The experience with local delivery and client support advisor has been very helpful." "The form itself is generally user friendly and much nicer to use than DLA form but quite often it crashes and doesn't let me save and continue meaning I lose what I've written."
Neutral response	"A space for additional information would be good" "There should be a last box where any additional information can be added that maybe doesn't quite fit in any of the other categories." "It would be handy to be able to print it off as a pdf so its easier to discuss with other carers whilst completing."

5.2.10 Open text responses following Funeral Support Payment applications

Of those who applied for Funeral Support Payment between April 2021 and the end of March 2022, 364 chose to answer the further feedback question. The majority of responses were positive with most of the remainder being neutral. Few responses were negative comments and some comments contained a mix of positive and negative sentiments.

Positive responses left by clients fell into three broad categories: finding the form easy to fill in, satisfaction with the service and general positive sentiment. Applicants who found the form easy to fill in commented that it was easier than they thought it would be and that the online form was straightforward. Many found Client Advisors to be helpful and kind.

Most neutral responses raised topics not related to the Funeral Support Payment application and that were personal to the applicant. Other applicants had no further comments or said it was too early to comment. Some had suggestions for improvements to the service.

Negative responses fell into three broad categories: dissatisfaction with being asked equalities questions at the end of the application, dissatisfaction with the service received or how long the applicant waited for a response, and issues with the application form.

Mixed responses often involved issues with the online application or call wait times but otherwise good experiences. Other mixed responses suggested improvements to the Funeral Support Payment application.

Some illustrative examples of each classification are provided below.

Category	Example
Positive response	"Helped to apply by phone - very easy. Got straight through" "Straightforward questions clearly worded. Simple website layout which is easy to use" "It is a lot easier to do it over the phone and you explained everything so it is clear." "Very patient advisor and easy application process. Initially worried about the application process but found it a lot easier than thought it would be." "I like that its relatively straightforward and broken down into simple categories at a time when it is hard to focus and hold onto more complex information" "The operator made it very easy for me which I appreciate."

Category	Example
Neutral response	"I have had no earlier experience of Social Security Scotland and therefore do not feel in any way qualified to express my opinion. My experience will be informed by how you handle this application!" "Thank you in advance for considering me" "There should be an option to be contacted by email Its quicker than writing and so less likely to lead to delays I find making phone calls very difficult as Im autistic and email is a good option for people like me"
Negative response	"No condolences, found it difficult to go through application and was surprised no condolences and no personal interaction." "Two weeks of application process lost due to having already being taken through a lengthy phone application for Funeral Expenses Payment when it appears that I was not eligible due to living in Scotland I feel that the person taking the call should have known this and advised me correctly" "The bit that asks about the dead persons address was confusing by asking Your address"
Mixed response	"The form was easy to do my only negative is the postcode checker wheel when it finds address it wouldnt input on the form" "Application process itself is good but I don't think families should be asked questions of this nature at such a difficult time. I think this survey should be removed from the process." "Conversation with you is very good but took a very long time to get through to the right person."

5.2.11 Open text responses following Young Carer Grant applications

Of those who applied for Young Carer Grant between April 2021 and the end of March 2022, 183 chose to answer the further feedback question. The vast majority of responses were positive, with some neutral responses and relatively few negative or mixed responses.

Most positive responses fell into three broad categories: finding the application form easy to fill in, satisfaction with the service received from Social Security Scotland, and agreement with Young Carer Grant policy. Specifically, applicants to Young Carer Grant liked the ability to fill out the application online and found the questions clear. They also thought it was easy to communicate with Social Security Scotland.

Most neutral responses raised topics not directly related to Young Carer Grant application, or stated no further comments. Some applicants made suggestions for improvement to the service such as being able to print the summary page or having the option to see progress on filling out the online form.

Negative responses focused on applicants not receiving a decision after applying, and disagreement with elements of Young Carer Grant policy including equalities monitoring and deadlines.

Mixed responses often involved the applicant finding the application easy or the service good but also experiencing issues with other parts of the process such as the length of time to process applications.

Some illustrative examples of each classification are provided below.

Category	Example
Positive response	"Its so good we unpaid young carers are given the grant lets you feel your appreciated" "Really quick friendly service Application so easy to follow " "The online service is simple and clear I am dyslexic and found it easy to follow. Thank you" "I liked the way that when a question was asked there was always a little example of the format that you should use to answer the question. And how there where little descriptions of what the question was asking to minimise confusion and to quicken the process of application"
Neutral response	"ability to print summary" "No other feedback i would just like to say thank you" "Too early to say"

Category	Example
Negative response	"Applied already but was 2 days early Wasnt informed of this so waited from May until today until I phonedwas then told I should have had a letter If I had known I would have reapplied again sooner" "Remove the section about asking about sexuality as why does that need to be in an application about being a young carer"
Mixed response	"The application process is fine its the correspondence afterwards that not great. Twice applied and on both occasions have not heard anything at all"

5.2.12 Open text responses following Job Start Payment applications

Of those who applied for Job Start Payment between April 2021 and March 2022, 237 chose to answer the further feedback question. The majority of responses were positive, with a small proportion being neutral or negative. A few responses were a mix of positive and negative.

Positive responses left by clients fell into three broad categories: finding the form easy to fill in, satisfaction with the service received and agreement with the Job Start Payment policy. The application was seen as straightforward with adequate explanations for questions. Applicants appreciated the ability to choose how they completed their application. Client Advisors were highly praised for being helpful and humanising.

Most neutral responses fell into three broad categories: statements of no further comment, suggestions for service improvement, and mention of topics not related to Job Start Payment application. Service improvements included having more contact options, such as text or email, and greater advertisement of Job Start Payment.

Negative responses fell into two broad categories: issues with the online application form and disagreement with the policy of Job Start Payment.

Mixed responses usually involved finding the application straightforward but experiencing issues at some point in the application process or with the length of time to hear back.

Some illustrative examples of each classification are provided below.

Category	Example
Positive response	"Client advisor very helpful and gave good advice" "I felt your site was very easy to use i enjoyed the interactivity of each page it was set out wonderfully and really felt at ease answering these questions" "Very quick and easy. Was able to do it without to much mental strain or needing any additional information about myself that I dont know off the top of my head" "It was very straight forward and the wording easy to understand. Felt like it was to help you instead of trying to catch up out like some other forms can seem to do" "I think its great that they are help out there for young people to kick start there future and lifes with some help and hopefully yous can help me out it a great opportunity for me"
Neutral response	"Nothing I can think of right now" "Maybe a section to ask what time youd be free if theres a need to contact Just in case youve started work and cant answer any calls during certain times" "Send a text before calling so its easier to know who they are"
Negative response	"I think there should be a way where everyone get help even doesnt matter what ever age they are I have seen mostly help is available under 25 or over 55 I believe there should be space for everyone especially whats currently going on everyone inside feeling alone and worried thanks" "Application restarted every time I moved away from the browser on mobile" "Less question or easer read for learning disabilities"
Mixed response	"Very easy application had no worries with it at all only thing Id say is when you have to change something on the form once its completed it made me run through all

Category	Example
	the questions again an option just to go back out to the completed form after making a change would be useful"

5.2.13 Open text responses following Scottish Child Payment applications

Of those who applied for Scottish Child Payment between April 2021 and March 2022, 1,270 chose to answer the further feedback question. The majority of responses were positive yet there were a significant number of negative comments too. Some responses were neutral and fewer still were mixed.

Positive responses left by clients fell into three broad categories: satisfaction with the service received, satisfaction with the ease of the application process, and agreement with Social Security Scotland policy for the provision of Scottish Child Payment. Applicants liked having a choice of how they applied for Scottish Child Payment and Client Advisors were commended for their kindness.

Negative responses fell into three broad categories: disagreement with elements of the policy or equalities, issues with the online application form and issues with the length of the application process.

Most neutral responses fell into three broad categories: suggestions for service improvement, having no further comment, and topics not related to Scottish Child Payment application.

Mixed responses made by applicants mostly focused on issues with the equalities questionnaire or Scottish Child Payment policy. In other mixed responses, applicants found the application easy or the service good but had issues with the length of to the application process. Some had mixed experiences with services.

Some illustrative examples of each classification are provided below.

Category	Example
Positive response	"Very easy to use application form very easy to read and understand each section" "Excellent use of clear questions" "It is very helpful with the telephone line to help, while most of the other benefits only have online options. It is very helpful with telephone support as I have mental health problems. I think the advisers of Social Security Scotland are nicer people to deal with."

Category	Example
	"I came on the call very anxious and CA clarified all info and came off the call laughing."
Negative response	"Taken a long time to hear back about an application" "Stop asking identity politics questions in the survey what people believe in or what their sexual orientation is has nothing to do with anybody other than that person these are not the characteristics that define people" "Feel the system is very backwards Both me and my partner work so were not entitled to any help which means were both going to really struggle where as if you claim a benefit you can apply for everything and get everything handed to you house nursery placement money food vouchers Its just very unfair!" "Only trying to apply for a certain benefit and keep getting rejected for wrong benefit"
Neutral response	"IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO HAVE A PRINT OPTION ON THE SUMMARY PAGE" "Nothing at the moment" "It would be good to be able to check previous applications to make sure we can track back if we applied or not" "I wish there had been more guidance on what benefits I could have received when I had my first child"
Mixed response	"Over the last year it has been on and off Some people are fantastic to deal with but others make things very difficult at times Lately the service has improved dramatically for me" "Very easy use online however hard to get in contact with via telephone" "Everyone who has dealt with me has always helped to their fullest and made things a lot clearer for me if I have failed to understand anything However the only down fall is I have phones a few times and waited over an hour and once getting through the reception has been terrible"

5.2.14 Open text responses following joint Best Start Grant/Foods and Scottish Child Payment applications

Of those who applied for joint Best Start Grant/Foods and Scottish Child Payment between April 2021 and March 2022, 134 chose to answer the further feedback question.

Joint Best Start Grant/Foods and Scottish Child Payment applications are recorded differently on phone/mail and online applications. For online applications, joint Best Start Grant/Foods and Scottish Child Payment applications are recorded as two separate applications. Therefore when looking at online open text comments we are unable to tell if someone who applied for Best Start Grant/Foods or Scottish Child Payment made a joint application or if they applied for Best Start Grant/Foods or Scottish Child Payment only. For the purposes of this analysis, these comments are covered in Section 5.2.8 on Scottish Child Payment and Section 5.2.13 on Best Start Grant/Foods.

The majority of the joint Best Start Grant/Foods and Scottish Child Payment responses were positive yet there were a significant number of negative responses. There were also some neutral responses and a few responses that were mixed.

Positive responses fell into two broad categories: satisfaction with the service received and satisfaction with the ease of the application process. Applicants liked that they were able to choose how they applied and found the application process clear. Many were positive about their experience with Client Advisors.

Negative responses fell into three broad categories: issues with the online application form, dissatisfaction with service received, and long call and/or application wait times.

For most neutral responses applicants expressed that they had no further comments or commented on topics not related to the Best Start Grant/Foods and Scottish Child Payment application. There were some suggestions for improvement.

Mixed responses made by applicants largely focused on issues with online forms, the call and/or application wait time and good service provision.

Some illustrative examples of each classification are provided below.

Category	Example
Positive response	"Really helpful being able to complete application over the phone and nice to speak to someone who treats you like a person." "Very quick form to complete and easy to answer questions. Well printed and bold lettering making it easy to, also loads of helpful tips for answering questions correctly." "Always found it straight forward applying on website and on paper." "very kind and respectable and patient."
Negative response	"I put an application in over the phone a week back and when i called back for an update i was told there was an error however no one informed me about this." "Every time I make an online application I have had to make a second application by phone or written means. There seems to be an issue with online applications." "Can be better with time (application processing time)" "Better communication. I was not told there was an IT issue with my application, only sent a paper application with no information as to why and had to contact online chat to be told about this issue! This has made the process a lot longer."
Neutral response	"Identification to show up on phone before answering" "No, there is nothing."
Mixed response	"I originally completed this online but I was told the application went into an error queue. So I'm not overly impressed with the service so far, but the people I have spoken to on the phone have been lovely.

6. References

1) https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-security/engagement-on-social-security/

2) https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/about/our-charter

3) https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-security-scotland---workforce-information-march-2021/

10. Annex A – Application experience survey content

About your experience with Social Security Scotland

10 Overall, how would you rate the service provided by Social Security Scotland e.g. in making your application?

1 ☐ 1 – Very poor   2 ☐ 2 – Poor   3 ☐ 3 – Neither poor nor good

4 ☐ 4 – good   5 ☐ 5 – Very good

11 Is there any further feedback you would like provide?