

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

## Social Security Scotland Statistics

# Job Start Payment: high level statistics to 31 March 2024

## Key Figures

In the 2023/24 financial year to date, covering April 2023 to March 2024:

- 1,905 applications were received for Job Start Payment **[Table 1]**.
- 2,385 applications were processed, of which 33% were authorised, 62% were denied and 5% were withdrawn **[Table 1]**.
- £134,553 had been issued to clients by 31 March 2024 for Job Start Payment **[Table 7]**.

### Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering Job Start Payment to September 2024 will be released in December 2024.

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>.

<sup>1</sup> The Code of Practice is found online at: <https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> The forthcoming publication timetable is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/official-statistics-forthcoming-publications/>

# Introduction

This publication provides statistics on applications and payments for Job Start Payment made between 17 August 2020 and 31 March 2024.

Job Start Payment is a payment to help young people in Scotland with the costs associated with the transition into employment, after a period of time out of paid work.

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

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications/statistics>

If you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to provide us around these changes or other developments, please email [MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot](mailto:MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot).

These statistics are being published as experimental statistics, which 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, so have not been designated as National Statistics.

# Main findings

## Applications received and processed

- In the 2023/24 financial year, 1905 applications were received. In the same time period, 2,385 applications were processed, with 33% of applications authorised [Table 1].
- In the last six months, 235 applications were received in October, 220 in November, 105 in December, 105 in January, 125 in February and 170 in March. The 105 applications received in November and December 2024 are the lowest monthly totals to date [Table 1, Chart 1].
- In the last six months, the proportion of applications authorised was 35% in October, 36% in November, 31% in December, 24% in January, 30% in February and 34% in March 2024. The figure of 39% for July 2023 was the highest monthly authorisation rate across the 2023/24 financial year [Table 1].
- From launch to 31 March 2024, 14,310 applications were received for Job Start Payment and 14,140 applications had been processed. Of these all-time processed applications, 40% were authorised [Table 1].

## Application channel (method of application)

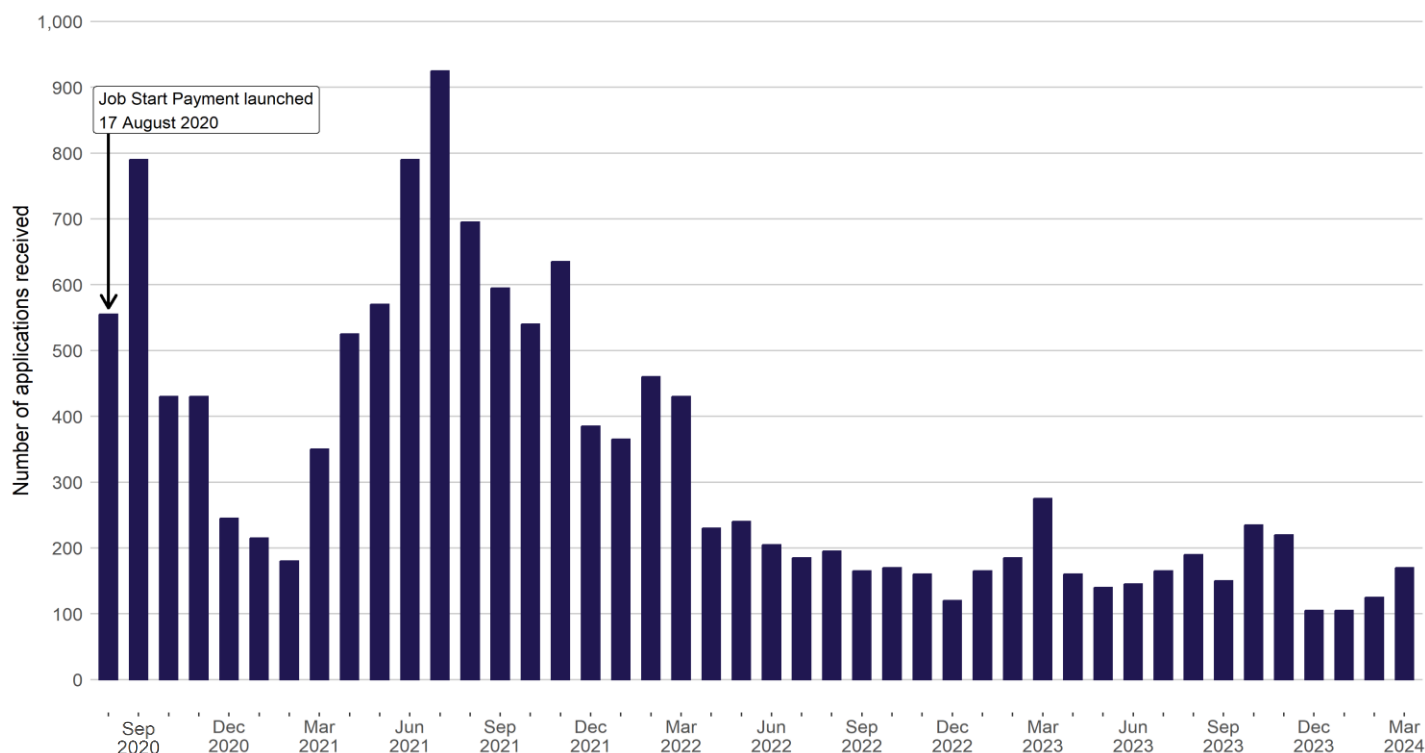
- Around 94% of applications received by 31 March 2024 were made online and 6% were made through a telephone application. A small number of applications were made through paper application [Table 2].

## Applications by age of applicant

- Of the 14,310 applications received, around 3% were for applicants aged 16 to 17 years, 47% were for applicants aged 18 to 21 years, 46% were for applicants aged 22 to 24 years, and 2% were for applicants aged 25 years. The remaining 2% of applications were for applicants out with the eligibility age range or where the age of the applicant was unknown [Table 3].

## Chart 1: Job Start Payment applications received, by month

Chart 1: Applications for Job Start Payment by month



## Applications by local authority and non-Scottish postcodes

- In the 2023/24 financial year to date, applications were received from people living in all local authority areas. The highest number of applications was 285 from Glasgow City, which accounted for 15% of applications received **[Table 4]**.
- While the proportion of processed applications authorised in the 2023/24 financial year to date was 33% overall, this varied between local authority areas.
- From launch until 31 March 2024, the authorisation rate has ranged from 33% in West Lothian, to 49% in Na h-Eileanan Siar. **[Table 4]**.
- More information on deriving the local authorities for applications can be found in the [Geography](#) section.

## Applications by care leaver status

- Around 7% of applications received by 31 March 2024 included evidence that the applicant was a care leaver. The remaining 93% of applications were from applicants who did not provide evidence of being a care leaver **[Table 5]**.
- An applicant is considered a care leaver within this publication if they provide evidence of their care leaver status when making an application. An applicant may be a care leaver but choose not to provide evidence of this if they qualify for the benefit under the standard eligibility criteria. See the [About the data](#) section for information on care leaver data and the [Background](#) section for information on the Job Start Payment eligibility criteria.

## Processing times

- In the last six months, the median processing time for applications to be processed was 29 days for October, 17 days for November, 25 days for December, 26 days for January, 17 days for February and 6 days for March 2024. The median for all applications processed in the 2023/24 financial year was 24 days **[Table 6]**.
- Processing times were calculated by determining the time between an application being received and a decision being made, or the application being withdrawn. This includes the time spent waiting to receive evidence from clients but does not include additional time to make payments. See the [About the data](#) section for further information on processing times.

## Payments

- A total of £272,115 was issued to clients in the 2023/24 financial year. This consisted of £134,553 in payments to clients with a child responsibility and £137,562 to clients without a child responsibility **[Table 7]**.
- Since launch, the total value of payments issued up to 31 March 2024 was £1.6 million. Of these payments, £578,205 were for clients with a child responsibility and £1 million were for clients without a child responsibility **[Table 7]**.
- In the 2023/24 financial year to date, at local authority area level, the highest total value of payments were £37,386 made to clients in Glasgow City, £30,232 to clients in Fife, and £17,589 to clients in North Lanarkshire **[Table 8]**.

## Clients paid

- In the 2023/24 financial year, 765 individual clients received Job Start Payment. In total, 5,400 individual clients had at least one payment issued since the launch of 17 August 2020 **[Table 9]**.
- In this section, a client refers to a person who has applied for the benefit and had a payment issued. A client may be included in multiple financial years if they have successfully applied and received payment for different applications. See [Data Quality](#) section for more detail.

## Internal reviews

- In the 2023/24 financial year, management information indicates that Social Security Scotland received 30 internal review requests by 31 March 2024. This represents around 1.3% of the total number of Job Start Payment applications processed during this period **[Table 10]**.
- In the 2023/24 financial year, 30 review requests had been completed. Of these completed reviews, 57% were disallowed **[Table 10]**.
- The median average processing time for internal reviews processed in the 2023/24 financial year was 9 days **[Table 10]**.
- From launch until 30 September 2023, Social Security Scotland received 335 internal review requests. Of these, 335 were completed by 31 March, with 31% allowed or partially allowed, 63% disallowed and 6% withdrawn **[Table 10]**.

# Background to Job Start Payment

As a result of the Scotland Act 2016 a wide range of powers, including welfare powers, have now been transferred to the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament.

An Order under section 63 of the Scotland Act 1998 gave the Scottish Government further powers to arrange assistance under section 2 of the Employment and Training Act 1973.

Social Security Scotland is the executive agency of Scottish Government that is responsible for delivering the social security benefits for Scotland.

The agency began taking applications for Job Start Payment on Monday 17 August 2020.

## Job Start Payment

Job Start Payment is a benefit that helps young people in Scotland, who are receiving certain benefits, with the costs of starting a new job. It is open to young people aged 16 to 24 who reside in Scotland. The upper age is extended to 25 if the young person is a care leaver.

The payment is a cash sum of either £294.70 for those who do not have responsibility for a child or a higher amount of £471.50 for those who do. Prior to 1 April 2023, the value of payments were £267.65 & £428.25 respectively. Prior to 1 April 2022, the value of payments were £252.50 & £404.00 respectively.

It is available to young people who have been out of paid work and receiving an eligible low income benefit for six months prior to finding employment.

To be eligible, they must, on the day of the job offer:

- be aged 16 to 24 years
- have been offered a paid job, which averages at least 12 hours per week over a four week period
- have been out of paid work and receiving an income related benefit continuously for six months or more; and
- be living in Scotland with a Scottish postcode.

Care leavers have slightly different eligibility in that they need only be out of work and in receipt of a qualifying benefit on the date of their job offer, not for the preceding six months, and will be eligible for a year longer until the day before their 26th birthday.

The qualifying benefits are:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support

- Income-related Employment Support Allowance
- Universal Credit.

Some 16 and 17 year olds can be in receipt of a qualifying benefit if they:

- are caring for a severely disabled person or
- have child responsibility and are the main carer of a child or
- are no longer in touch with their parents or
- are limited in their ability to work.

The payment can be used for any purpose by the recipient and could help with travel costs, clothing, lunches, and other expenses that need to be met before someone receives their first salary or in the first few weeks of employment.

Applications can be made up to six months after the date of the job offer. If a young person receives a Job Start Payment and subsequently finds themselves out of work, they will be able to receive another Job Start Payment but not until two years after their previous payment. However, this assumes all other eligibility criteria are met.

## **Application and decision making process**

The application channel can be online, by phone, or by paper form.

Social Security Scotland processes each application received and decides whether to approve or deny the application. An application will be denied if the client is not eligible to receive Job Start Payment. An application will be authorised if the applicant is eligible and provides the appropriate evidence to receive Job Start Payment. Applicants may also withdraw their application before a decision is made.

Applicants can choose to provide supporting evidence when making an application by post or through online document upload. If an applicant does not provide all the evidence required for an application, they will be contacted by a client advisor and asked to provide this. Once this evidence has been received, Social Security Scotland aims to decide as soon as possible with payments following soon thereafter.

In this publication, application processing time is calculated as the number of working days from the application being received by Social Security Scotland to the date that a decision was made by a client advisor or the application was withdrawn. The time to make payment is not included within processing times.

## **Internal Reviews**

Job Start Payment has no statutory right of appeal, which means it does not have a re-determination or appeal process. There is an internal review process, which means that applicants can request that their decision be looked at again.



# About the data

## How Job Start Payment data is collected

The data in this publication is sourced from Social Security Scotland's case management system. The system holds information on all applications, outcomes and payments. Data about the applicant is collected through the online application form, or is entered by client advisors during telephone applications, or the processing of paper applications. Information about the application outcome and payments is created in the case management system as an application is processed.

The information is held across multiple tables within the system. 100% extracts of administrative data are taken from this system every day for internal reporting purposes. Data cuts combine information from the different tables in the system into one daily extract that includes details of all Job Start Payment applications made since 17 August 2020.

To take into account backdating and delays between applications being authorised and payments being made, the data cut from 30 April 2024 has been used to produce statistics on applications received and decisions made up to 23:59 on 31 March 2024. Later data cuts may include additional retrospective changes to application details, including corrections to details in the case management system, and changes that have resulted from requests for internal reviews.

Where an internal review has been requested but not decided, the decision date, outcome, payment date, and payment value will be updated to reflect information about the internal review outcome, rather than the original application. If an internal review has been decided, the data in this publication will show the decision date, outcome, payment date, and payment value according to the new decision.

The Client Experience team at Social Security Scotland collect detailed internal review management information. This management information has been used to produce statistics on the number of internal review requests received and decided up to 23:59 on 31 March 2024.

Within our statistical reporting, key dates are used to assign applications received, applications processed and payments issued to time periods. This is a different methodology to that used in financial reporting and, as a result, there may be differences in the values reported for a given time period.

## Quality Assurance

The data used to produce the official statistics are the same as the data extracted from the case management system on a daily basis that is used for internal reporting within Social Security Scotland. As such, the data is checked daily for consistency with previous extracts (i.e. do applications, decisions, and payments figures increase as expected over time, and are they in proportion to each other) and compared to other sources of information such as the number of payment instructions reported by the finance team.

Additional quality assurance and cleaning has been carried out on the variables used in the official statistics:

- check for duplicate and missing application references
- check that application dates, processing times, and payment times are within the expected ranges
- check that payment date is present where a payment value is present
- check any postcodes that do not match to local authorities – see Geography section
- removal of a small number of test applications which were used to test the case management system.

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 lead statistician checks the final documents.

## Revisions

Each updated publication for Job Start Payment statistics will include revisions of the numbers of applications received and processed, processing times, and payment values going back to August 2020. This is because each time figures are published they will be based from a new 100% data cut from the case management system, which can include retrospective changes to data going back to August 2020 as described in the [How the data is collected section](#). Months that are more recent tend to be subject to a greater degree of revision than more distant ones.

## Data Quality

### Rounding and Disclosure Control

Application and outcome figures have been rounded to the nearest five for disclosure control. Data has been suppressed where it would disclose fewer than five applications or payments.

### Missing and Duplicate Applications

The data comes from 100% data cut of the case management system.

The data cut was checked for applications where the fields relating to application date, the outcome, and payment of the application were blank. These applications would represent temporary 'prospect cases', which are created when clients contact Social Security Scotland without a National Insurance number and are later replaced once a National Insurance number is received from the applicant. Any such applications are therefore duplicates and are excluded from the statistics.

## Number of clients who have received at least one Job Start Payment

The total number of clients to have been issued at least one Job Start Payment is calculated by summing up the number of unique individuals who have received at least one Job Start Payment since the benefit launched on 17 August 2020.

## Unverified Information from Application Form

Information about the client is taken from the application form completed by the client or by a client advisor over the telephone. This information may contain errors because it has not been verified by comparison to other sources of information such as records held by the Department for Work and Pensions. This means, for example, that it is possible to have authorised applications where the original application form did not include complete details for the applicant but was later amended as the application was processed.

## Application Authorisation and Payment

In this publication, the date that applications were processed by client advisors is the date used to produce statistics of processed applications by month. After applications are authorised for payment by client advisors, a manager approves the decision, and then a payment is issued. In some cases, payments will be issued on the same day that payments are authorised by client advisors. In other cases, there can be a delay before payments are issued. Clients should receive money in their nominated account within four working days after payment is issued.

In this publication, we report on the value of payments that have been issued by the end of each month and not the payments successfully received by the applicants.

A very small number of payments are made manually to clients. These manual payments do not appear in the administrative data extracts used for this publication and are therefore not counted in the payment statistics.

## Application Channel

Application channel is automatically entered into the case management system for online applications, and manually entered for applications taken by phone or paper. If ever an application channel has been manually entered incorrectly, the application channel will be treated as 'unknown' and excluded from table 2 of the publication tables.

## Geography

Applications are assigned to local authority by postcode using a Scottish Government lookup file. For some applications, the postcode will not match to the lookup file. This can be because the postcode is not in a Scottish local authority, or because the postcode has been introduced too recently to appear

on the lookup file, for example if a property is in a new development. For postcodes that could not be matched to a Scottish local authority, the postcode area was used to check whether the postcode was in Scotland or elsewhere.

Non-matching postcodes from Scottish border postcode areas (postcodes starting 'DG' and 'TD') were also checked individually and assigned to Scottish local authorities or as 'non-Scottish postcodes' manually.

A very small number of applications did not include address information and therefore could not be matched to a local authority or country.

Postcodes are linked to client profiles and data extracts are automatically updated in the case of a client changing address. As a result, postcodes reflect the latest address of clients and may not be the same as the address at the time of application.

## Internal Reviews

Application decision dates, outcomes, and payment amounts are updated to reflect information about internal reviews as described in the [How the data is collected section](#). Information in tables should therefore be viewed as the final decision, outcome, and payment value after an internal review request has been received and/or decided. This excludes the processing times table, where applications with internal reviews have been removed from processing time calculations. Due to the small number of internal reviews received during the period this publication covers, it is unlikely that internal reviews will have a significant impact on the data included.

## 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 includes time spent waiting to receive evidence from applicants through online upload or by post, but does not include additional time to make payments. It is calculated in working days. Weekends and public holidays are excluded from calculations, even if applications were processed by staff working overtime on these days. The time of day that an application was received or processed is not taken into account.

Processing times calculated do not include any applications that are flagged as having had an internal review request because the decision date for these applications will represent the internal review decision date, which can be some time after the original decision date. The number of applications in the processing times table is therefore lower than the number of applications shown as processed or decided in other tables.

Internal review requests are a very small proportion of the total applications processed, and the initial average processing times for applications that go on to request an internal review compared to other applications should not differ from

all other applications. Therefore, removal of these should not affect the average processing times shown in the table.

Processing time is only calculated for applications that were decided within the period being reported on. Data is presented by the month of decision rather than month the application was received.

## Care Leavers

When completing an application for Job Start Payment, care leavers can choose to provide evidence of their care leaver status if they would like their application to be considered under the specific care leaver eligibility criteria. However, it is possible that a care leaver will choose not to provide evidence of their care leaver status when making an application if they would qualify for the benefit under the standard eligibility criteria. As Social Security Scotland has no other means of determining whether an applicant is a care leaver, applicants are only considered a care leaver within the statistics in this publication if they provide evidence of this within their application. See the [background section](#) for full details on the Job Start Payment eligibility criteria.

## Future Developments

We will be seeking users' views on the content of this publication to ensure it best meets their requirements. If you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to provide us please email [MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot](mailto:MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot).

## Related Social Security Scotland Publications

Statistics published by Social Security Scotland can be found at:  
<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications>.

Statistics on Job Start Payment feedback (complaints, compliments and suggestions) are published at:  
<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications/statistics/statistics-collections>.

Information on client diversity and equality of application outcomes for clients applying to Social Security Scotland is published at:  
<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications/statistics/statistics-collections>.

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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:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications/statistics/statistics-collections>

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.

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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