



## Social Security Scotland Statistics

# Job Start Payment statistics to 31 March 2025

## Key findings

In the 2024/25 financial year:

- 1,900 applications were received
- 1,860 applications were processed, of which 39% were authorised, 59% were denied and 2% were withdrawn
- the average (median) processing time was 12 working days
- £264,450 had been issued to clients

## Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering up to the 30 September 2025, will be released in December 2025. 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 [Social Security Scotland website](#).

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# Introduction

This publication provides statistics on applications and payments for Job Start Payment made between 17 August 2020 and 31 March 2025.

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 [Social Security Scotland statistics website](#).

As part of the continuous improvement of our outputs, we have slightly improved the accessibility of three existing reference tables (Table 3 – Full Data, Table 4 – Full Data, and Table 8 – Full Data) by splitting the first (original) column into two columns for ‘Applicant age group’ or ‘local authority area’, and ‘Financial year’ groups separately. This change would make it easier for users of our statistics to filter specific data they are interested in more conveniently. Also, Table 7 has been expanded to provide the number of payments alongside the value of payments.

These statistics are being published as official statistics in development. Official statistics in development may be new or existing statistics, and will be tested with users, 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>.

The data and methods underpinning Social Security Scotland statistics are routinely reviewed in line with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Ongoing data quality issues and revisions made to the statistics are detailed in our [Data and Methodology Changes document](#). More information on how we create and use statistics can be found on our [About Statistics](#) page.

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<sup>3</sup> More information on official statistics in development is available on the [UK Statistics Authority website](#).

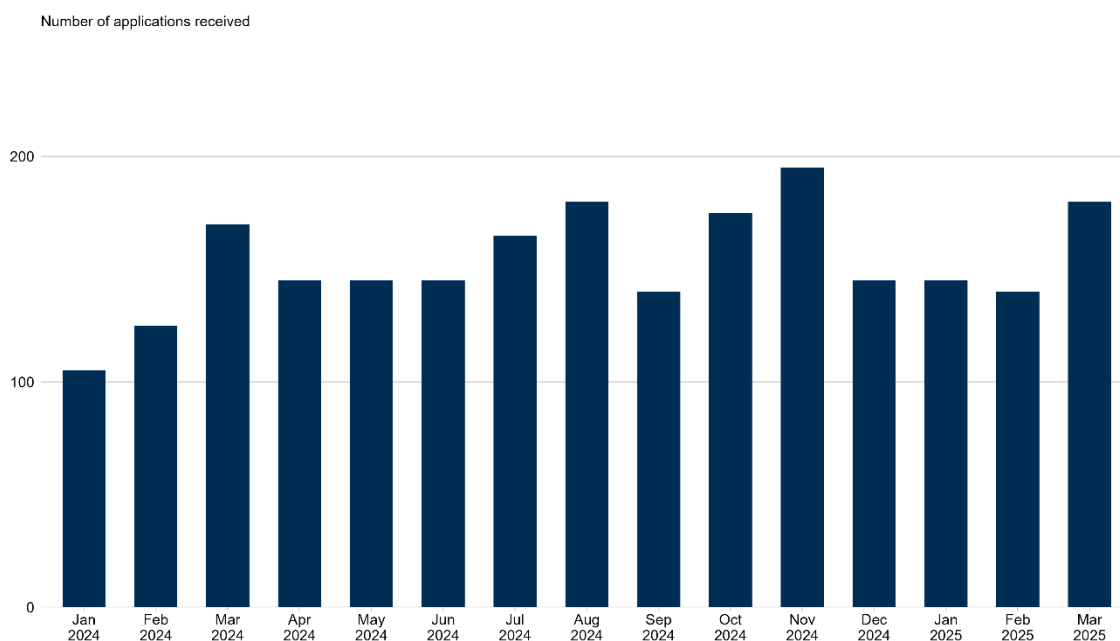
# Main findings

**16,210 applications for Job Start Payment have been received up to 31 March 2025.**

1,900 of those applications were received in the 2024/25 financial year.

**Figure 1: Applications have remained fairly stable over the last year, with around 160 received each month on average.**

Applications received by month, from January 2024 to March 2025.



**39% of processed applications have been authorised.**

From 17 August 2020 to 31 March 2025, there were 15,995 applications processed. Of these, 39% were authorised, 57% were denied and 3% were withdrawn.

**Most clients continue to apply online.**

Online applications continue to be the most common application channel each month. As of 31 March 2025, 94% of total applications received were made online, 6% through phone, and less than 1% through paper applications.

**Most applicants were between 18 and 24 years old.**

Of the applications received from launch, 3% were for applicants aged 16 to 17 years, 47% for aged 18 to 21 years, 46% for aged 22 to 24 years, and 2% for aged 25 years. The remaining 2% of applications were for applicants outwith the eligibility age range or where the age was unknown.

**More applications were from Glasgow City than any other local authority area.**

15% of all applications received to date have come from Glasgow City. This is consistent with Glasgow City being the local authority area with the highest population<sup>4</sup>.

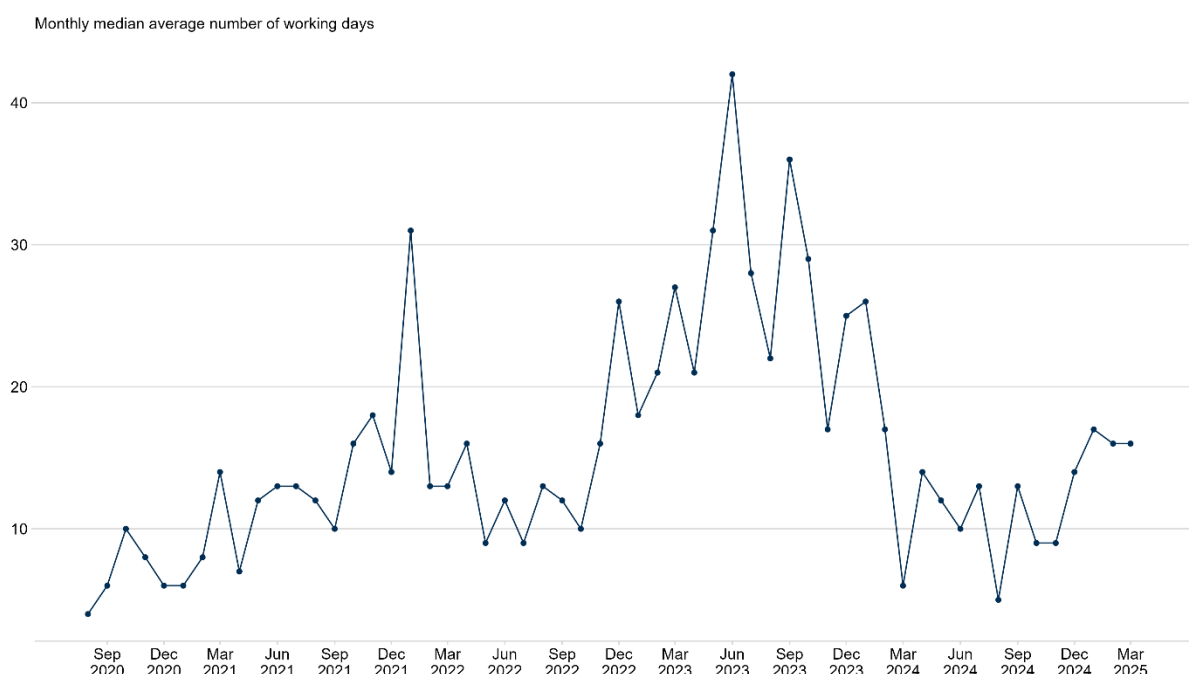
**Around 8% of all applications received included evidence that the applicant was a care leaver.**

The remaining 92% of applications were from applicants who did not provide evidence of being a care leaver<sup>5</sup>.

**The median average processing time for the latest financial year was 12 working days.**

This compares to the median average processing time of 24 working days in the 2023/24 financial year and an all-time median average of 13 working days.

**Figure 2: Processing times have decreased after peaking in June 2023.**  
Median average number of working days taken to process applications for Job Start Payment.



<sup>4</sup> Information about the population of the local authority areas can be found on the [National Records of Scotland website](#).

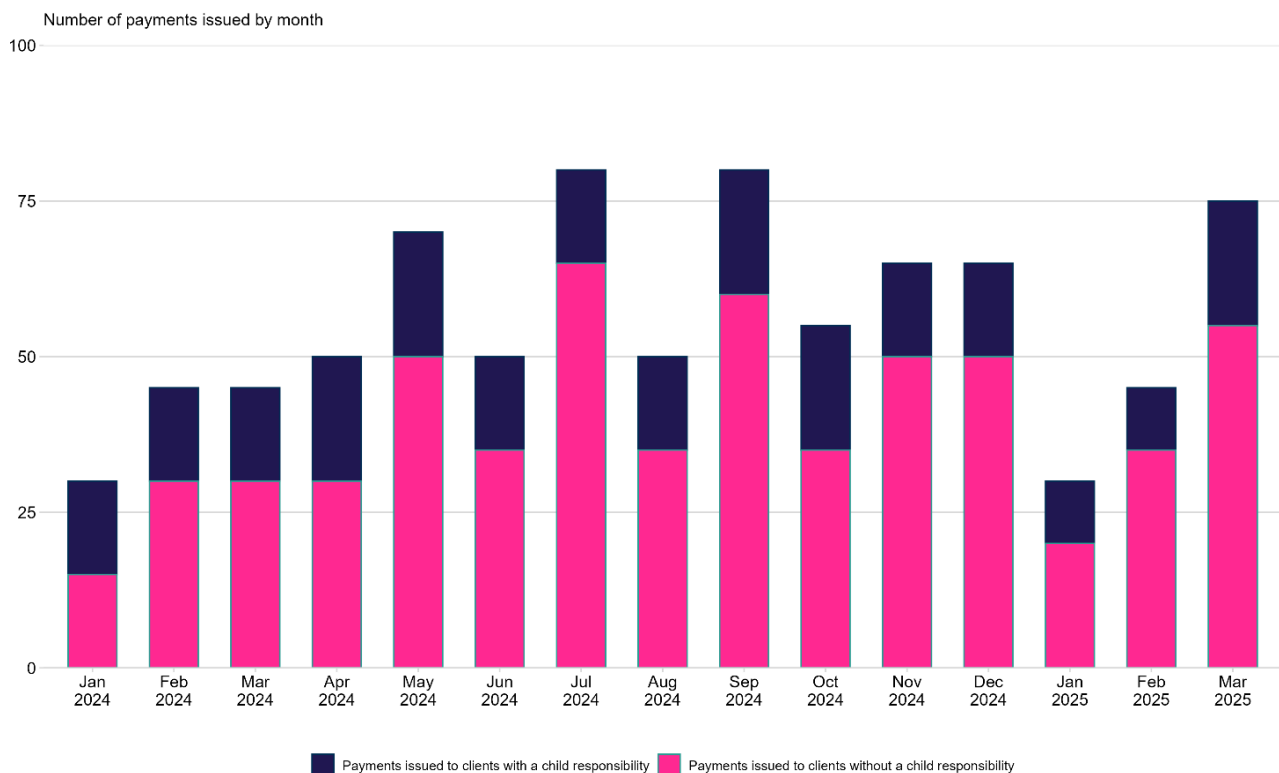
<sup>5</sup> An applicant is considered a care leaver within this publication if they provide evidence of their care leaver status when making an application. An applicant may be a care leaver but choose not to provide evidence of this if they qualify for the benefit under the standard eligibility criteria. See the [About the data](#) section for more information on this.

**The total value of payments issued to 31 March 2025 was £1.9 million.**

£264,450 had been paid out to clients in the 2024/25 financial year. Of the payments issued this financial year, 72% were paid to clients without a child responsibility. The remaining 28% were paid to clients with a child responsibility.

**Figure 3: The number of payments being paid to clients without a child responsibility has been higher every month than those issued to clients with a child responsibility, over the past fifteen months.**

Payments issued to clients with and without a child responsibility, from January 2024 to March 2025.



**In total 6,175 payments were issued by 31 March 2025.**

725 payments were made in the 2024/25 financial year.

**In total, 6,075 individual clients<sup>6</sup> have been paid since the launch of Job Start Payment.**

725 individual clients have been paid in the 2024/25 financial year.

<sup>6</sup> A client refers to a person who has applied for the benefit. A client may be included in multiple financial years if they have successfully applied and received payment for multiple applications.

**Up to 31 March 2025, 375 internal reviews were received.**

In total, 370 of these internal review requests had been completed. Of these, 62% were disallowed, 33% were allowed and 5% were withdrawn.

**The all-time median average response time for internal reviews was 10 working days.**

The median average response time for internal reviews that were completed in the 2024/25 financial year was 15 working days.

# Background notes

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 – the executive agency of the Scottish Government responsible for delivering social security benefits for Scotland – began taking applications for Job Start Payment on Monday 17 August 2020.

Further details about the Job Start Payment can be found on the [mygov.scot](https://mygov.scot) website.

## 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 different amounts for those who do not have responsibility for a child or a higher amount for those who do. The payments at different dates are shown below:

Date application was received	Amount (£) for those who do not have responsibility for a child	Amount (£) for those who do have responsibility for a child
17 August 2020 to 31 March 2022	252.50	404.00
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023	267.65	428.25
1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024	294.70	471.50
1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025	314.45	503.10

## Eligibility

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. The payment does not need to be paid back.

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. This is not the same as scheduled and unscheduled reviews of disability benefits.

# **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 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, a data cut was taken on the first of the month one full month after the final date used in this publication, for example for data up to 11.59 pm 31 March 2025, a data cut on 1 May 2025 was used. 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 2025.

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 as 'non-Scottish postcodes' manually.

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. Therefore a small number of addresses may not reflect the correct local authority at the time of application, decision or payment.

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

## **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.

To ensure that our published statistics continue to meet high standards of trustworthiness and quality for our users, “reviews as a percentage of decisions processed” has been removed from this publication. This will remain the case until further options for reporting can be explored. We cannot currently put a timescale on when an alternative solution may be available.

For more information, please see our [Data and Methodology Changes document](#) which details ongoing data issues and revisions made to the statistics. As with all our statistics, we encourage users to get in touch if they have any feedback regarding these statistics or any ongoing continuous improvement.

## **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**

Future statistics published by Social Security Scotland will be available through the [Social Security Scotland website](#).

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

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

### **Correspondence and enquiries**

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E-mail: [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot)

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

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, Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, e-mail [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot).

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at [ScotStat](#).

Details of forthcoming publications can be found on the [Social Security Scotland website](#) and [Scottish Government website](#).

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