

Social Security Scotland statistics

Pension Age Disability Payment: high level statistics to 30 November 2024

Key Findings

In Scotland, from 21 October to 30 November 2024:

- 605 part 1 applications were registered for Pension Age Disability Payment. During that period, 265 part 2 applications were received.
- 255 applications were processed with a decision. Of these 71% were authorised, 7% were denied and 22% were withdrawn.
- £52,005 was issued to clients in the pilot areas of Argyll & Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney and Shetland.

Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering up to the 31 January 2025, will be released in March 2025. Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics¹ we publish a timetable of statistical releases for the twelve months ahead².

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

² The forthcoming publication timetable is available on the [Social Security Scotland website](#).

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Introduction

Pension Age Disability Payment is a replacement for Attendance Allowance in Scotland, which is currently delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions. Pension Age Disability Payment is administered by Social Security Scotland. It provides money to support older people who have a disability or long-term health condition that means they need assistance with looking after themselves, or supervision to keep them safe.

From 21 October 2024, Pension Age Disability Payment opened for new applications in the pilot areas of Argyll & Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney and Shetland. Pension Age Disability Payment is due to be rolled out to additional areas from March 2025, with the benefit set to be available nationally from April 2025.

People in Scotland currently in receipt of Attendance Allowance will have their benefits transferred to Pension Age Disability Payment from early 2025. The transfer process happens automatically, with no need for clients to do anything. Social Security Scotland will write to clients in advance of their benefits transferring. This transfer process is happening across the country and not just in the initial pilot areas.

The application for Pension Age Disability Payment is in two parts. Once an applicant has filled out part 1 they have eight weeks to complete part 2.

This publication provides information on applications and payments for Pension Age Disability Payment from launch on 21 October 2024 to 30 November 2024. It therefore provides information for just over six weeks of applications and payments.

All tables and charts relating to this publication are available in an Excel workbook on [Social Security Scotland statistics website](#).

The statistics for Pension Age Disability Payment 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.

Main Findings

The first applications for Pension Age Disability Payment have been received and processed

As of 30 November 2024, 605 part 1 applications for Pension Age Disability Payment had been received and 265 part 2 applications have been received. Of these, 255 have been processed.

71% of processed Pension Age Disability Payment applications have been authorised

In total, there were 255 applications processed with a decision made by 30 November 2024. Of these, 71% were authorised, 7% were denied and 22% were withdrawn.

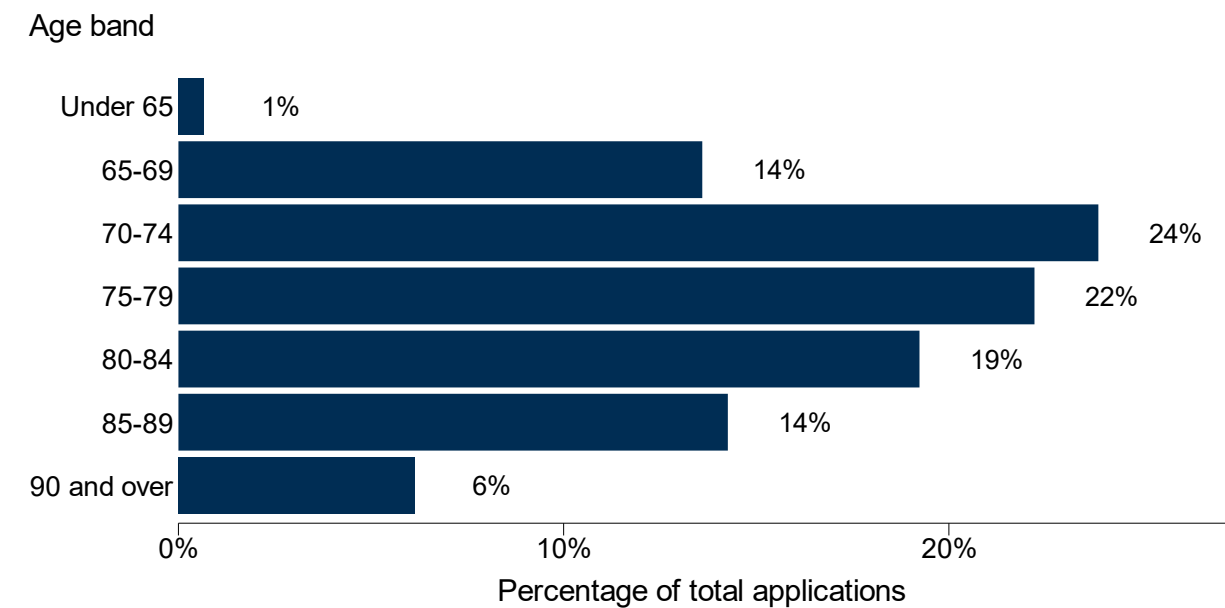
Most clients apply online

As of 30 November 2024, of the 605 part 1 applications received for Pension Age Disability Payment, 49% were received online, 6% were paper applications and 34% were phone applications.

The majority of applications come from clients aged over 75.

The most common age group for applicants was 70-74, representing 24% of applications received. This was followed by 75-79 which represented 22% of applications and 80-84 at 19%. Overall, 61% of part 1 applications were received by applicants aged 75 and over.

Figure 1: Percentage of total part 2 applications received, by age, to 30 November 2024



Description of Figure 1: Bar chart showing percentage of part 2 applications received by age bands. The age band with the largest proportion is 70-74, followed by 75-79.

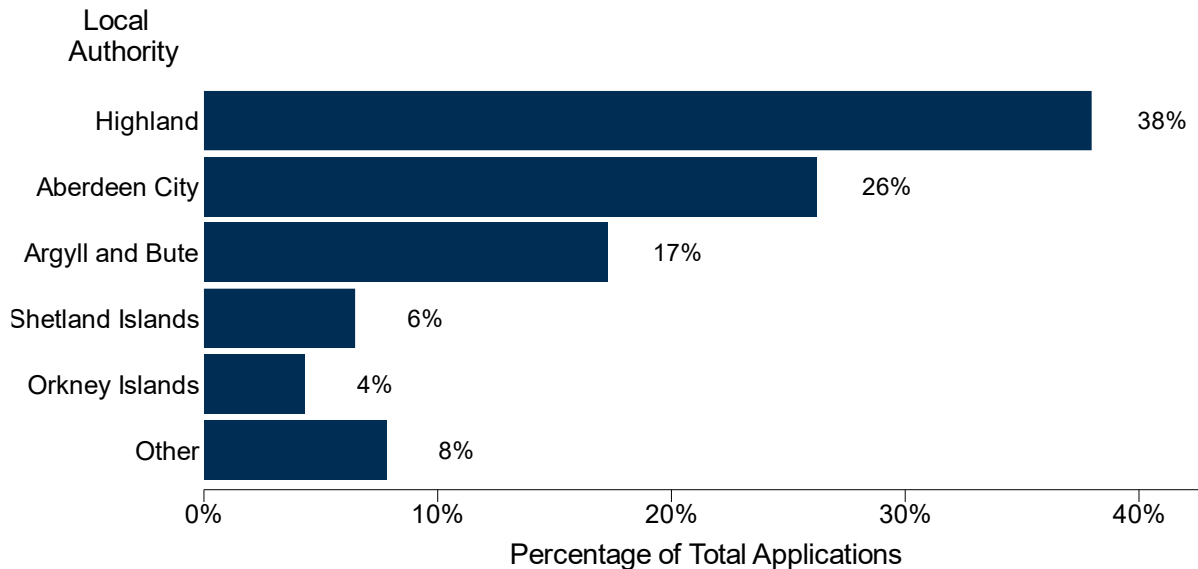
The majority of successful applicants received the higher rate of Pension Age Disability Payment.

83% of authorised applications were awarded the higher level and 17% were awarded the lower level over the period to 30 November 2024.

Most applications to date were from Highland.

Applications were received from all five pilot areas. Of the applications received, the majority came from Highland with 38% of applications. This was followed by 26% of applications coming from Aberdeen City and 17% of applications received from Argyll and Bute. There were also 8% of applications registered from outside of the five pilot areas which were either withdrawn or denied.

Figure 2: Percentage of total applications, by Local Authority, to 30 November 2024.



Description of Figure 2: Bar chart showing percentage of applications coming from the five pilot local authorities. The largest proportion is from Highland, followed by Aberdeen City.

The median average processing time for applications was 4 working days, in November 2024.

This compares to 7 working days for Adult Disability Payment in its equivalent first full month, in April 2022.

Up to 30 November 2024, total payments of £52,005 have been made in respect of Pension Age Disability Payment.

Over the period from 31 October to 30 November 2024, 150 individuals received Pension Age Disability Payment. 265 payments have been made to clients over the period with total value of £52,005.

Background notes

The [Scotland Act 2016](#) gave the Scottish Parliament powers over Attendance Allowance, which is currently administered in Scotland by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Pension Age Disability Payment is a replacement for Attendance Allowance in Scotland. It is administered by Social Security Scotland, which is the executive agency responsible for delivering Scottish Government social security benefits. It is the last of three different types of disability assistance for new applicants to be delivered. These are:

- Child Disability Payment, to replace Disability Living Allowance for children
- Adult Disability Payment, to replace Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance for adults
- Pension Age Disability Payment, to replace Attendance Allowance

Pension Age Disability Payment will support people of State Pension age who have a disability or long-term health condition that means they need assistance with looking after themselves, or supervision to keep them safe.

Pension Age Disability Payment launched in five pilot local authority areas on 21 October 2024:

- Argyll & Bute
- Highland
- Aberdeen City
- Orkney
- Shetland

Pension Age Disability Payment is due to be available in another 13 local authority areas from 24 March 2025, with the benefit set to be launched nationally on 22 April 2025.

Clients in Scotland who already receive Attendance Allowance will have their award automatically transferred to Pension Age Disability Payment. This process will begin early 2025. The process is automatic, with no need for clients to do anything. Social Security Scotland will write to clients in advance of their award transferring.

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

Case Transfers

People currently receiving Attendance Allowance do not need to apply for Pension Age Disability Payment. Their awards will be automatically moved from the DWP to Social Security in phases, with the first expected to transfer in early 2025. We expect to transfer the awards of around 160,000 people to Pension Age Disability Payment. Social Security Scotland aims to have the transfer process completed for everyone in receipt of Attendance Allowance by the end of 2025. Social Security Scotland will only publish detailed information on case transfers that they are fully responsible for and have made their first payment to. The Department for Work and Pensions will publish information on the cases that are still being paid by them.

Eligibility

Pension Age Disability Payment provides financial support to people who:

- are of State Pension age
- need assistance looking after themselves or supervision to keep them safe due to a physical or mental disability
- have had care needs for 6 months or more

Eligibility for Pension Age Disability Payment is linked to the state pension age. State pension age is currently 66. This will rise to 67 between 2026 and 2028. Adult Disability Payment clients will not transfer to Pension Age Disability Payment when they reach state pension age.

Pension Age Disability Payment relates to an individual's care needs only.

Payments

There are two rates to Pension Age Disability Payment. These are:

- lower rate for people with day or night needs
- higher rate for people with day and night needs or who are terminally ill

The amounts payable are summarised below:

Rate	2024/25 Amount
Lower	£72.65
Higher	£108.55

Terminal illness

For the purposes of accessing disability assistance in Scotland, terminal illness is defined as a progressive disease which can reasonably be expected to cause an individual's death³.

The clinical judgement as to whether a person should be considered terminally ill, according to the Scottish definition, is made by a registered medical practitioner (RMP) or registered nurse (RN) on a case by case basis, in accordance with guidance prepared by the [Chief Medical Officer](#). An individual's eligibility for meeting the Scottish terminal illness definition may be based on having a single illness or a combination of diseases with conditions.

If an individual is diagnosed with, or is currently living with, a terminal illness under the Scottish definition, their application for disability assistance can be processed under special rules. These special rules mean that:

- The process of applying for disability assistance is more straightforward with a 'one part' application form.
- Applications from people with a terminal illness are fast-tracked so that they are processed as quickly as possible.
- Individuals who are terminally ill automatically receive the highest rates of assistance they are entitled to and there are no award reviews unless there is a change of circumstances.
- Awards made under the Special Rules for Terminal Illness can be backdated to the date of diagnosis of terminal illness up to a maximum of 26 weeks before the date of application.
- There is no qualifying period. An individual is not required to have the condition for any length of time before they are eligible.

Applications eligible under the special rules will be identified by the submission of a Benefits Assessment for Special Rules in Scotland (BASRiS) form, which provides confirmation that an individual meets the Scottish definition of terminal illness. If a Department for Work and Pensions DS1500 form or SR1 form has been completed instead it will also be accepted. Social Security Scotland aims to make decisions within seven working days of receiving a completed application

³ This differs from the Department for Work and Pensions definition of terminal illness, which is 'a progressive disease where death as a consequence of that disease can reasonably be expected within 12 months'. The Department for Work and Pensions changed this definition from 6 months to 12 months on 3 April 2023

form and BASRiS form (or equivalent) for cases eligible under the Special Rules for Terminal Illness.

Social Security Scotland has a duty to identify potential terminal illness cases at all stages of the application process. In cases where the person may meet the eligibility criteria for the special rules to be applied but no BASRiS form is submitted, a case manager must alert the relevant practitioner to determine whether the special rules apply. A Registered Medical Practitioner (RMP) or Registered Nurse (RN) will need to confirm whether or not the individual is terminally ill. If the client is terminally ill the RMP/RN can either:

- return a BASRiS form (or equivalent) to Social Security Scotland or,
- provide a clinical letter confirming the individual is terminally ill or,
- confirm the individual is terminally ill over the phone with the practitioner and return a BASRiS form (or equivalent) to Social Security Scotland within 28 days.

For an application made under the normal rules it may not be possible to identify that a case is eligible under the Special Rules for Terminal Illness unless Social Security Scotland is advised, or until information about the terminal illness, or a clinical judgement, is received.

Application and decision-making process

The application stage involves a two part application process. The part 1 form gathers key personal details of the client. The impact of the client's disability is detailed in part 2 of the application form. The exception to this is for applicants applying under the special rules for terminal illness, where there is only one part to the application, to make the process simpler and quicker.

Part 1 of the application is generally made online or by phone. Where part 1 of an application is started online, part 2 will usually be completed online. Where part 1 is completed by phone, the client will be sent a paper form to complete part 2 of the application. In some instances a client might request to complete both parts of the form by paper. It is also possible for a valid application for Pension Age Disability Payment to be made with an alternative form. For example, a Scottish client may complete a Attendance Allowance form and send it to the Department for Work and Pensions, who will then re-direct it to Social Security Scotland.

Applicants have 8 weeks to complete part 2 of the form following the submission of part 1.

Social Security Scotland processes each application received and makes a decision whether to approve or deny the application. Applicants can withdraw

their application at any point before a decision is made. This may be after part 1 of the application has been submitted, or after both part 1 and part 2 have been submitted.

Re-determinations and appeals

If an applicant does not agree with the decision about their Pension Age Disability Payment application, they can ask Social Security Scotland to look at it again. This is called asking for a re-determination. A request for a re-determination should be made within 42 calendar days of being notified of the determination. Social Security Scotland then has 56 calendar days to make a re-determination. Pension Age Disability Payment applicants also have the right to appeal to a Tribunal if they do not agree with Social Security Scotland's re-determination, or if Social Security Scotland is not able to make a re-determination within the required timescales.

Short Term Assistance will also be available as part of Pension Age Disability Payment. An individual can apply for Short Term Assistance during a re-determination or appeal of a determination that reduced or ended their longstanding award of Pension Age Disability Payment. The intention is to ensure an individual is not discouraged from challenging a Social Security Scotland decision or from accessing administrative justice, by having to manage for a period with a reduced income. Where a person is eligible for Short Term Assistance, this will be the difference between the level of assistance paid under the person's longstanding award (prior to review or re-determination) and the level paid under the most recent award.

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 received, decisions and payments. Data about the applicant is collected through the online application form or is entered by client advisors during telephone applications or 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 which includes details of all Pension Age Disability Payment applications made since 21 October 2024. A payments extract which contains information on the financial aspects of applications is used for calculations in this publication.

To take into account backdating and delays between applications being authorised and payments being made, a data cut from 4 December 2024 has been used to produce statistics on applications received and decisions and payments made up to 11.59 pm on 30 November 2024. Later data cuts may include retrospective changes to application details, including corrections to details in the case management system, and changes that have resulted from re-determinations and appeals.

Quality Assurance

The data used to produce 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.

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

- Check for duplicate and missing application references.
- Check for duplicate and missing applicant identification numbers.
- Check application dates are within the expected ranges.

- Check that payment date is present where a payment value is present.
- Check postcode lengths are within the expected ranges and check postcodes that do not match to local authorities – see [Geography](#) section.
- Remove 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 final documents are checked by the lead statistician.

Revisions

Each updated publication of Pension Age Disability Payment statistics may include revisions going back to October 2024. 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 October 2024 as described in [How the data is collected](#) section. More recent months 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. The number of payments has been rounded to the nearest five for disclosure control. Data has been suppressed where it would disclose fewer than five applications.

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 classed as 'unknown'.

Application authorisation and payment

In this publication, the date that applications were processed is the date used to produce statistics of processed applications by month. After applications are authorised for payment, and in some cases approved by a manager, then a payment is 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.

Age of applicant

The age that is used for the applicant is taken from the date of birth that is entered during the completion of the application and some small errors may exist. The age that is used in this publication is based on the age of the client at the time of application.

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.

This presentation of the publication shows a breakdown of applications by pilot local authority areas of Argyll & Bute, Highland, Aberdeen City, Orkney and Shetland. Applications from any local authorities out with the pilot local authority areas have been classed as 'Other'.

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 supporting information 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 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.

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.

Related Social Security Scotland Publications

Statistics on Attendance Allowance for Scotland are published by Social Security Scotland at: [Social Security Scotland](#)

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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

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E-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

☐ are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot

☒ 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 for further information.

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

Complaints and suggestions

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

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

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

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