



Social Security Scotland Statistics

Social Security Scotland Client and Applicant Diversity and Equalities Analysis for April 2023 to March 2024

Key Points

- This publication includes equalities information about 140,075 people that applied for Social Security Scotland benefits between April 2023 and March 2024. This represents approximately 70% of people applying during this period.
- Adult Disability Payment accounted for the highest proportion of applicants in this publication at 43%, an increase of 28% from the last publication. This has contributed to changes to overall profiles for gender, health condition or illness, and age compared to the last publication.
- The proportion of approved outcomes decreased from 81% to 67% compared to the last publication. Approval rates were the highest for applicants choosing 'prefer not to say' across all questions in the equalities monitoring form.
- The largest differences in approval rates were observed for religion and gender, while age had the smallest difference in approval rates.

Introduction

This publication provides statistics on the diversity characteristics of people applying to Social Security Scotland between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 for the following benefits:

- Adult Disability Payment
- Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods
- Child Disability Payment
- Funeral Support Payment
- Job Start Payment
- Scottish Child Payment
- Young Carer Grant

Social Security Scotland uses this information to understand who is using their services and how their processes work for different groups of people. Diversity information is collected using an equalities monitoring form which applicants are asked to complete when applying for a benefit. These forms are usually completed by the person claiming the benefit but are sometimes completed by someone acting on their behalf. The information in this publication relates to the person completing the application form, who are referred to as applicants throughout this publication.

This publication presents statistics about applicants and their most recent application outcome. If an applicant submitted multiple applications and received multiple outcomes, the information from the application with the most recent outcome was used. This means that applicants are only counted once in the statistics. In some cases, applicants did not return an equalities monitoring form or it was not possible to link their equalities and application information together. These cases are not included in these statistics.

All tables referred to within this publication are available in an Excel workbook on [Social Security Scotland website](#). Additionally, all charts included in this publication are available in a separate PDF file which includes several supplementary charts. Separate publications on the number of applications, outcomes and payments for each benefit are also available on this website. These publications contain additional statistics on certain diversity characteristics. See the [related publications](#) for more information.

These statistics are 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](#).

In our next publication covering 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, we intend to include statistics about people applying for Carer's Support Payment and Pension Aged Disability Payment. We are aiming to continue improving the quality of these statistics by refining the methodology and by working with the Scottish Government

to improve data quality. Separate to the annual publication, we plan to release updated tables on intersectionality by the end of 2025.

We are 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, please email MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot.

Scottish Government statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

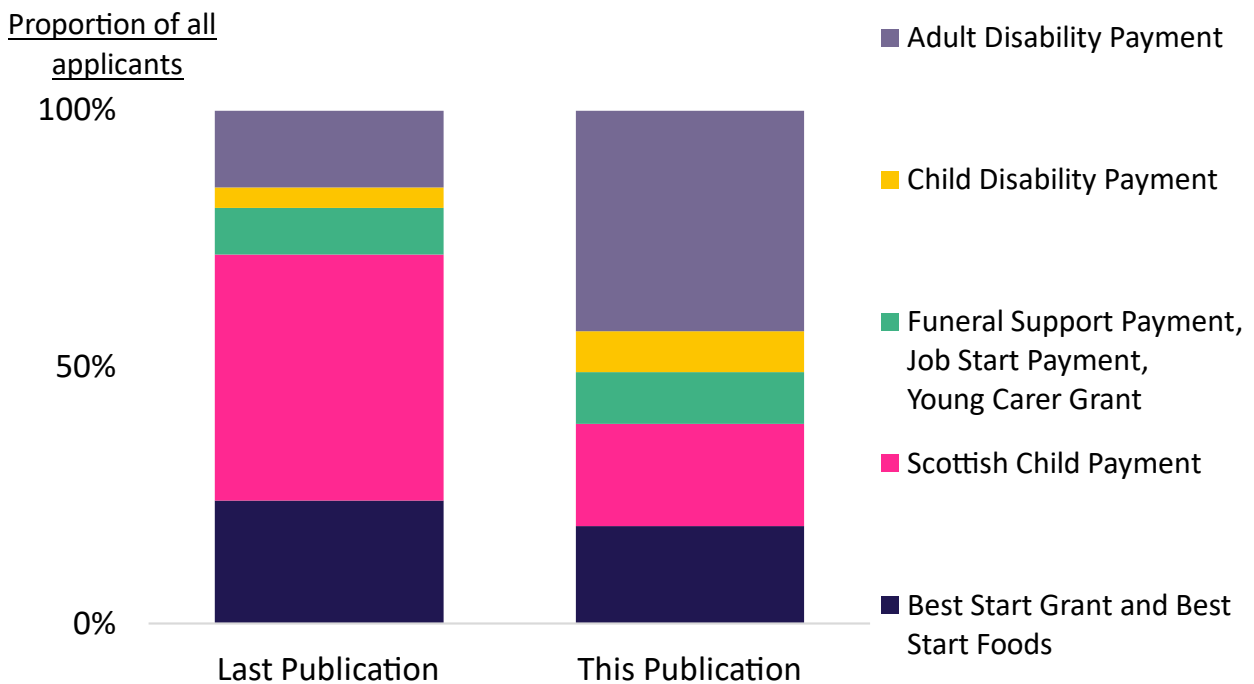
Main Findings

General Findings

- Between April 2023 and March 2024, 201,455 people applied for one of the benefits included in this publication. Of these applicants, equalities information was linked to application information for 140,075 people which was around 70% of applicants. The remaining 30% of applicants were predominately those who had not submitted the second part of their application for Adult Disability Payment or Child Disability Payment or those who did not return a paper equalities monitoring form.

Figure 1: Proportion of Applicants by Benefit, Publication comparison

Source: Table 13, [Social Security Scotland client diversity and equalities to March 2023](#)

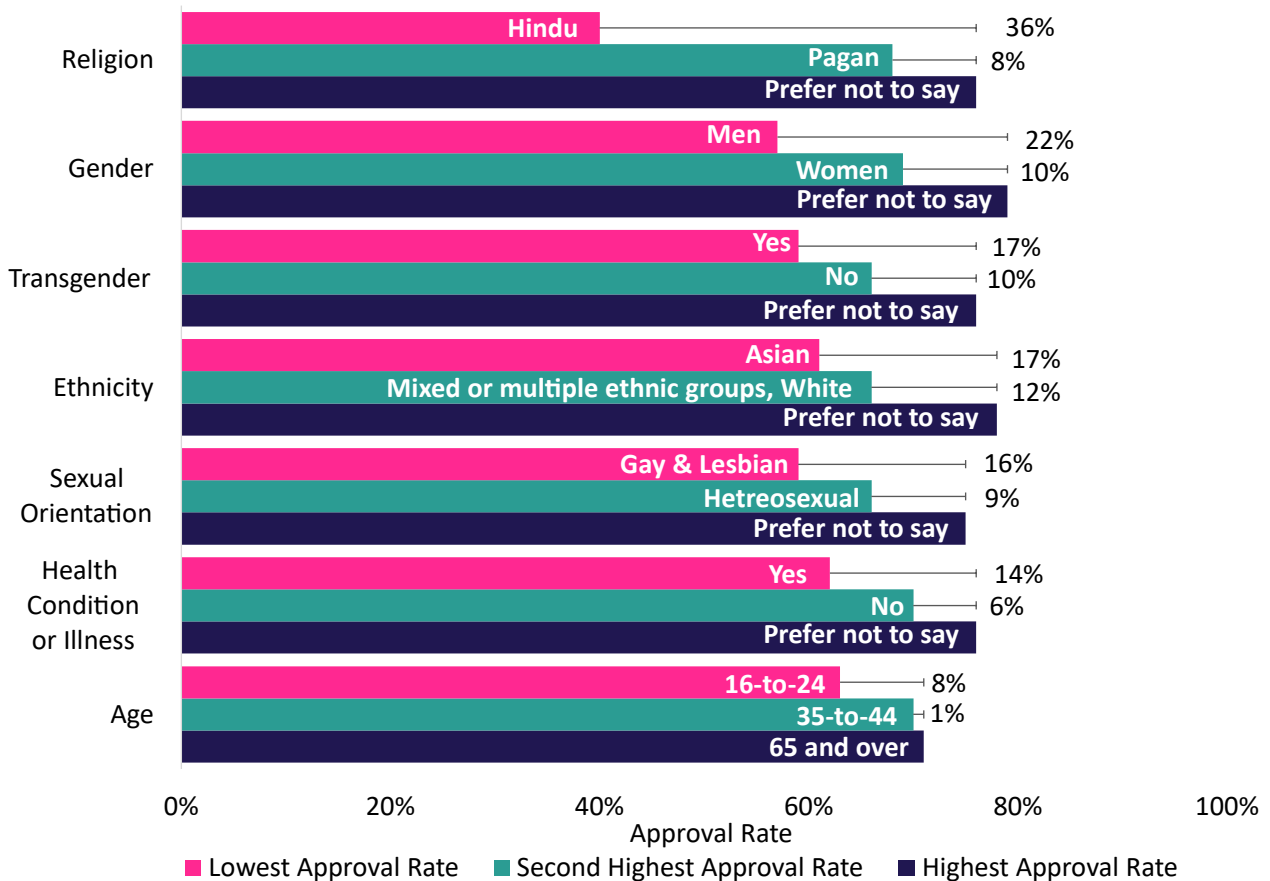


- Figure 1 shows the proportion of applicants included in this publication and the previous publication by benefit. Adult Disability Payment accounted for the highest proportion of applicants in this publication at 43%. This compares to 15% in the last publication. The proportion of Scottish Child Payment applicants decreased from 48% in the last publication to 20% in this publication.
- Compared to the last publication, the distribution of gender, health condition or illness, and age characteristics have changed. The proportion of male applicants has increased from 16% to 25%. The proportion of applicants who reported having a health condition or illness has increased from 32% to 50%. The proportion of applicants aged 16-to-24 and 45 or over has increased while the proportion of applicants aged 25-to-44 has decreased.

- Compared to the last publication, the overall rate approval rate has decreased from 81% to 67%. This change is partially due to lower approval rates for Adult Disability Payment which constituted a larger proportion of all applicants in this publication. Additionally, at a benefit level, approval rates have decreased for all benefits except Funeral Support Payment.
- For each question in the equalities monitoring form, applicants could choose 'prefer not to say'. The proportion of applicants choosing 'prefer not to say' ranged between 6% and 11% across diversity characteristics. Physical or mental health condition or illness, religion, and sexual orientation had the highest proportion of 'prefer not to say' responses. Funeral Support Payment had a much higher proportion of applicants choosing 'prefer not to say' compared to all other benefits, at over 30% across all diversity characteristics.

Figure 2: A comparison of the highest and lowest approval rates

Sources: Tables 1 to 8

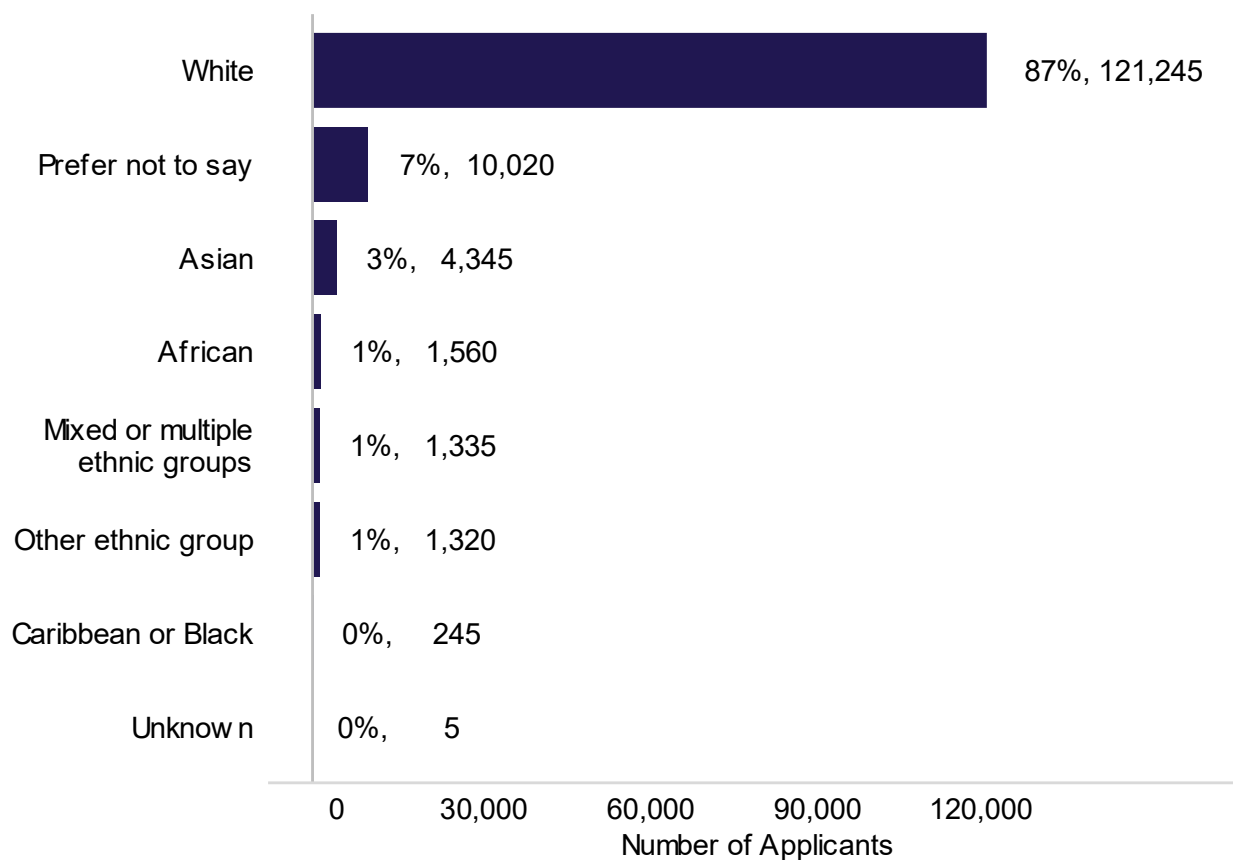


- Figure 2 shows the differences between the highest and lowest approval rates for diversity characteristic which ranged from 8% to 36%. The biggest differences were for religion and gender while age had the smallest difference. Applicants who chose 'prefer not to say' for the questions in the equalities monitoring forms had the highest approval rates across all characteristics.

Ethnicity

Figure 3: Number and proportion of applicants by ethnicity

Source: Table 1

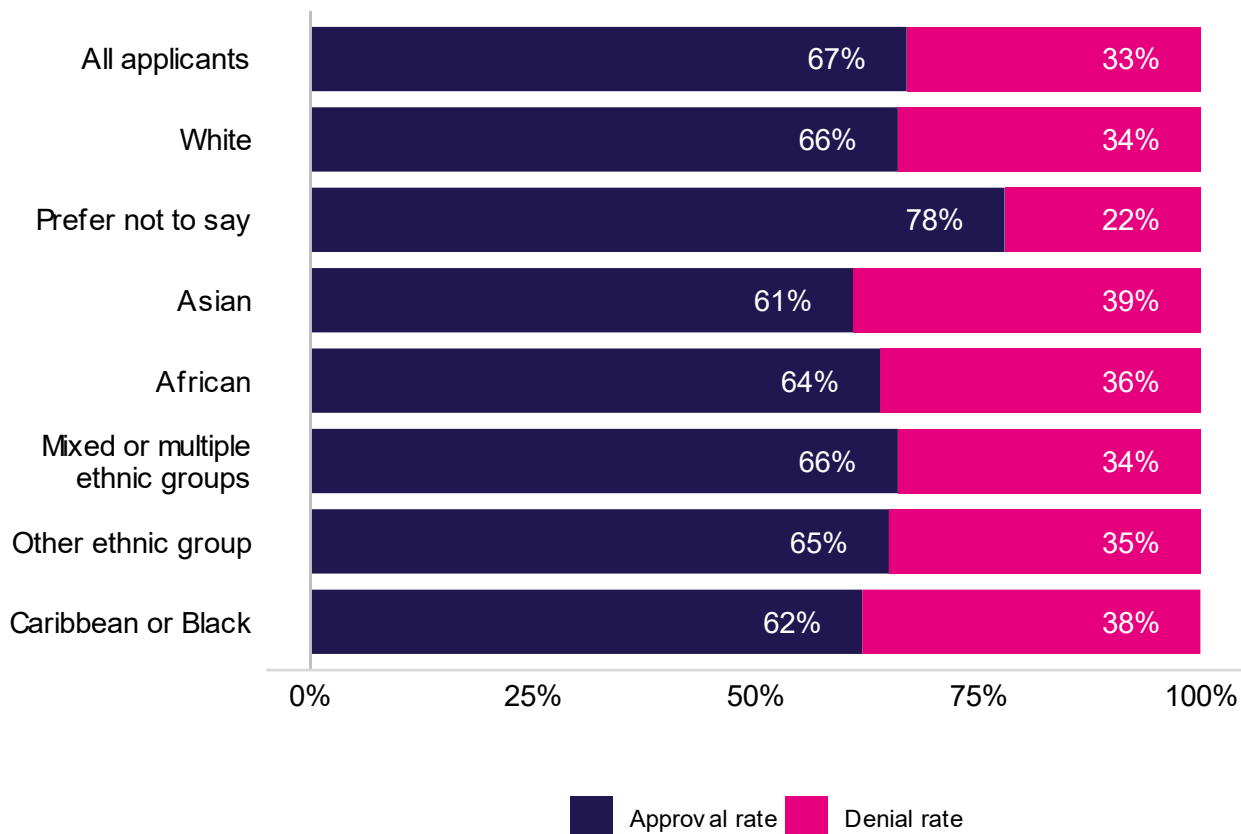


- Figure 3 shows that 87% of applicants were White, which included Scottish, Other British, Irish, Gypsy/Traveller, Polish, and Other white ethnic group identities. 6% of applicants were another ethnicity including Asian, African, Caribbean or Black, Mixed or multiple ethnic groups, and other ethnic group identities. The remaining 7% of applicants chose 'prefer not to say'. These proportions are identical to the previous publication. According to [Scotland's Census 2022](#), 93% of the total population of Scotland were White, with the remaining 7% being from other ethnic groups.
- The second largest ethnicity was Asian which accounted for 3% of applicants. Each of the other ethnicities accounted for 1% of applicants or less.
- Overall, the proportion of applicants selecting 'prefer not to say' remained consistent with the last published statistics at 7%. The proportion of applicants choosing this option has remained comparable to the last publication for all benefits except for Funeral Support Payment for which 'prefer not to say' increased from 23% to 34%.
- Ethnicity proportions differed across benefits. Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment had the largest proportion of White applicants at 93%. Funeral Support Payment had the lowest proportion of White applicants

at 64% followed by Scottish Child Payment at 81%. Scottish Child payment and Best Start Grant and Foods had the highest proportion of Asian applicants at 5% while Funeral Support Payment had the lowest at 1%.

Figure 4: Approval and denial rates by ethnicity

Source: Table 1

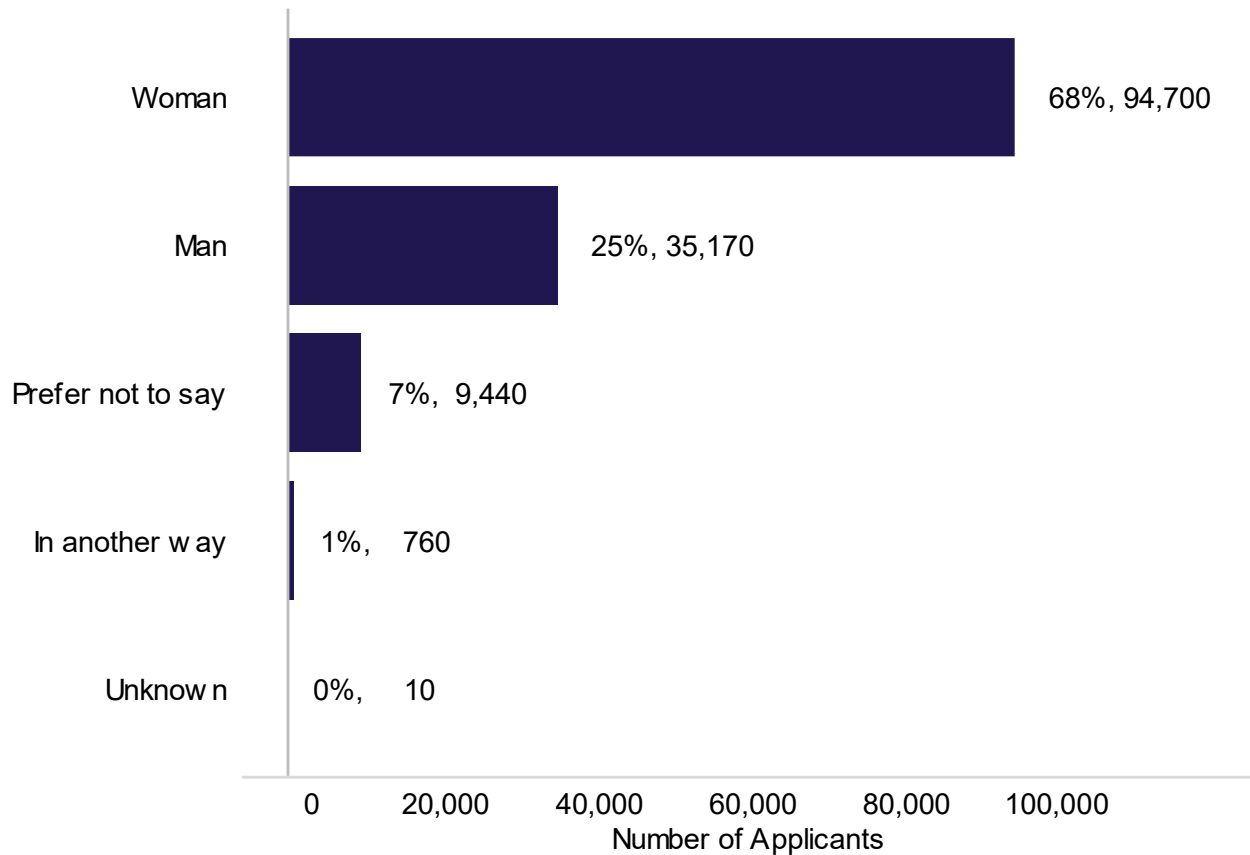


- Figure 4 shows that, applicants who chose ‘prefer not to say’ had the highest overall approval rates at 78% followed by White and Mixed or multiple ethnic group applicants at 66%. Asian applicants had the lowest approval rate at 61%, followed by Caribbean or Black at 62%.
- Overall approval rates have decreased for all ethnicities compared to the last publication by varying amounts. Approval rates for White applicants decreased the most at 15 percentage points while ‘prefer not to say’ decreased the least at 3 percentage points.
- Approval rates varied between benefits. For Best Start Grant and Foods, approval rates were lowest for Asian applicants at 49%, which was 14% lower than the overall approval rate for Best Start Grant and Foods. Similarly large differences were observed for ethnicity groups across some of the other benefits. However, these differences were likely inflated due to small applicant numbers for certain ethnicities.

Gender

Figure 5: Number and proportion of applicants by gender

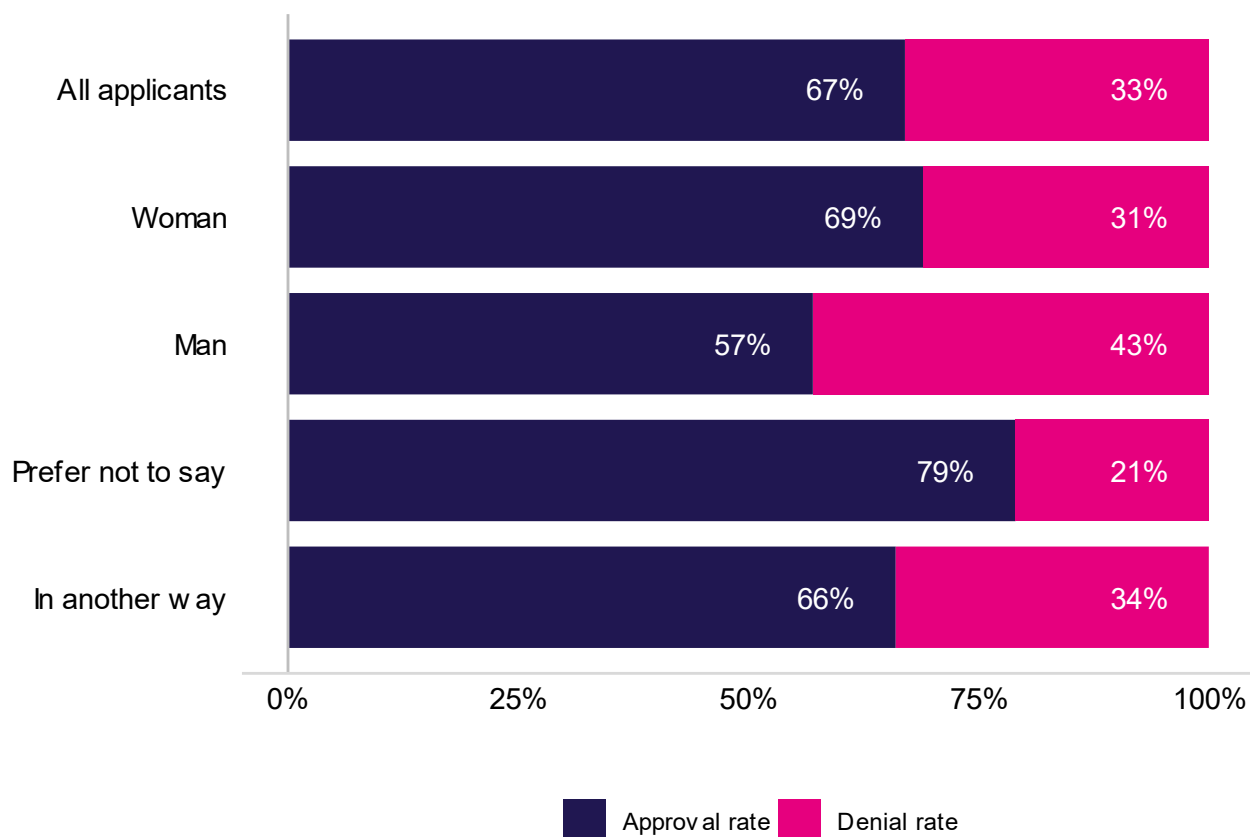
Source: Table 2



- Figure 5 shows that 68% of applicants were women and 25% were men. 1% of applicants chose 'in another way' and the remaining 7% chose 'prefer not to say'. According to [Scotland's census 2022](#) statistics on sex, 52% of the population aged 16 and over were female and 48% were male. Of the total population aged 16 or over, 0.44% of people were trans or had a trans history. The census did not collect data on gender directly.
- Compared to the last publication, the proportion of applicants that were men has increased by 9%. The vast majority of applicants applying for benefits relating to children i.e. Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grant and Foods, and Child Disability Payment, continued to be women. For most other benefits, gender differences were less pronounced with the largest proportion of applicants being women. Job Start Payment was the only benefit where the largest proportion of applicants were men at 51%.

Figure 6: Approval and denial rates by gender

Source: Table 2



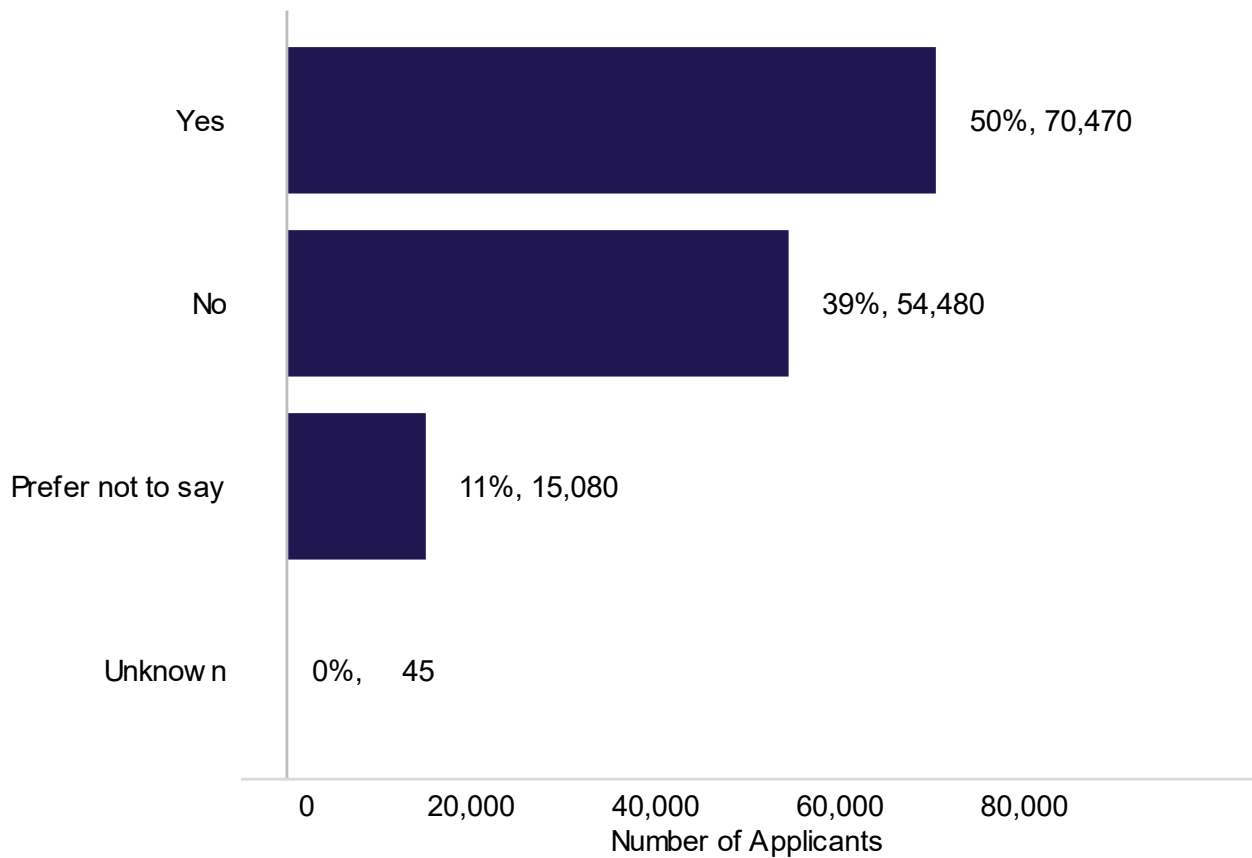
- Figure 6 shows that overall approval rates were highest for applicants choosing 'prefer not to say' at 79%, followed by women at 69%, 'in another way' at 66%, and men at 57%. Compared to the previous publication, approval rates decreased for all gender categories with women and men having the largest decreases at 14 and 12 percentage points respectively, while 'prefer not to say' had the lowest at 3 percentage points.
- At the benefit level, approval rates varied. For most benefits, applicants who chose 'prefer not to say' or 'in another way' had the highest approval rates while men had the lowest. Job Start Payment was the only benefit where approval rates were higher for women than those who chose 'prefer not to say'. Young Carer Grant was the only benefit where approval rates were higher for men at 76% compared to women at 74%.

Physical or mental health condition or illness

- Statistics on condition or illness are based on applicant's responses to equalities monitoring forms and differ from the client's primary disabling condition for Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment. [See the data and methodology section](#) for more information on these differences.

Figure 7a: Number and proportion of applicants by health condition or illness

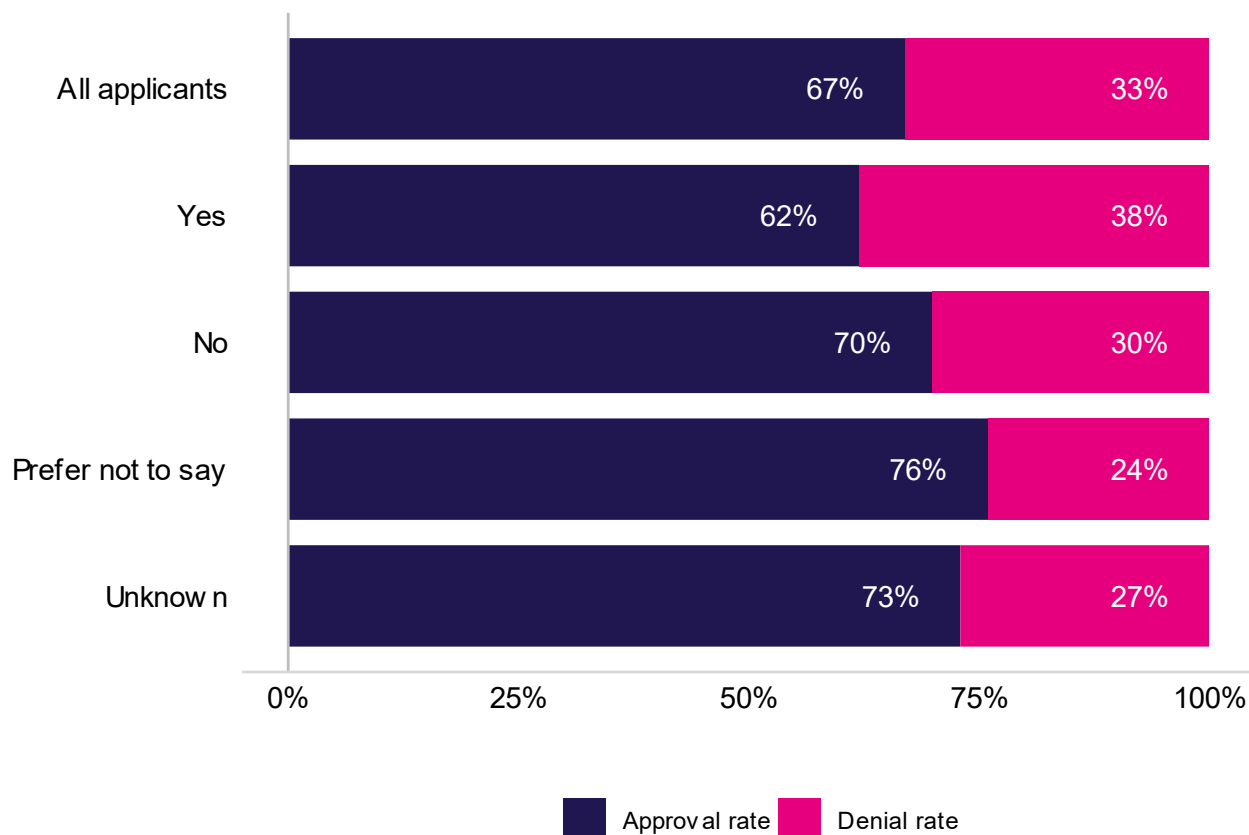
Source: Table 3



- Figure 7 shows that the overall proportion of applicants with a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more was 50%. The proportion of applicants who did not have a condition or illness was 39%. The proportion of applicants with a condition or illness increased by 18 percentage points compared to the last publication which is likely due to a larger proportion of applicants applying for Adult Disability Payment.
- For most benefits, less than a quarter of applicants had a condition or illness. As Adult Disability Payment is designed to help people with extra costs associated with living with a disability or long-term health condition, the proportion was much larger at 89%. Child Disability Payment had a slightly higher proportion of applicants with a condition or illness at 34%.
- 27% of Funeral Support Payment applicants had a condition or illness and 32% did not. The remaining 41% chose 'prefer not to say'. As Funeral Support Payment applicants are more likely to be older, this may explain the higher proportion of applicants with a condition or illness.

Figure 8a: Approval and denial rates by health condition or illness

Source: Table 3



- Figure 8 shows that applicants with a condition or illness had a lower overall approval rate at 62% compared to applicants who did not at 70%. This is a different trend to our last publication, where approval rates were similar and does not reflect the trends at the individual benefit level. This is a result of a higher proportion of Adult Disability Payment applicants in the statistics, which has lower approval rates than most of the other benefits.
- For the majority of benefits, there were higher approval rates for applicants with a condition or illness compared to those that did not have a condition or illness. The exceptions were Young Carer Grant and Child Disability Payments, where approval rates were slightly lower for applicants with a condition or illness.
- The largest difference in approval rates was for Adult Disability Payment, where there was an approval rate of 57% for those with a condition or illness compared to 43% for those who did not report having a condition or illness.
- Of those applicants with a condition or illness, the most common areas affected were: 'Mobility' at 50%, 'Stamina or breathing or fatigue' at 42%, 'Memory' at 36%, and 'Learning or understanding or concentrating' at 36%. Smaller proportions of applicants reported that their condition or illness affected 'Vision', 'Hearing', 'Dexterity' or 'Socially or behaviourally'.
- The types of condition or illness varied between benefits. For example, a higher proportion of Adult Disability Payment applicants with a condition or

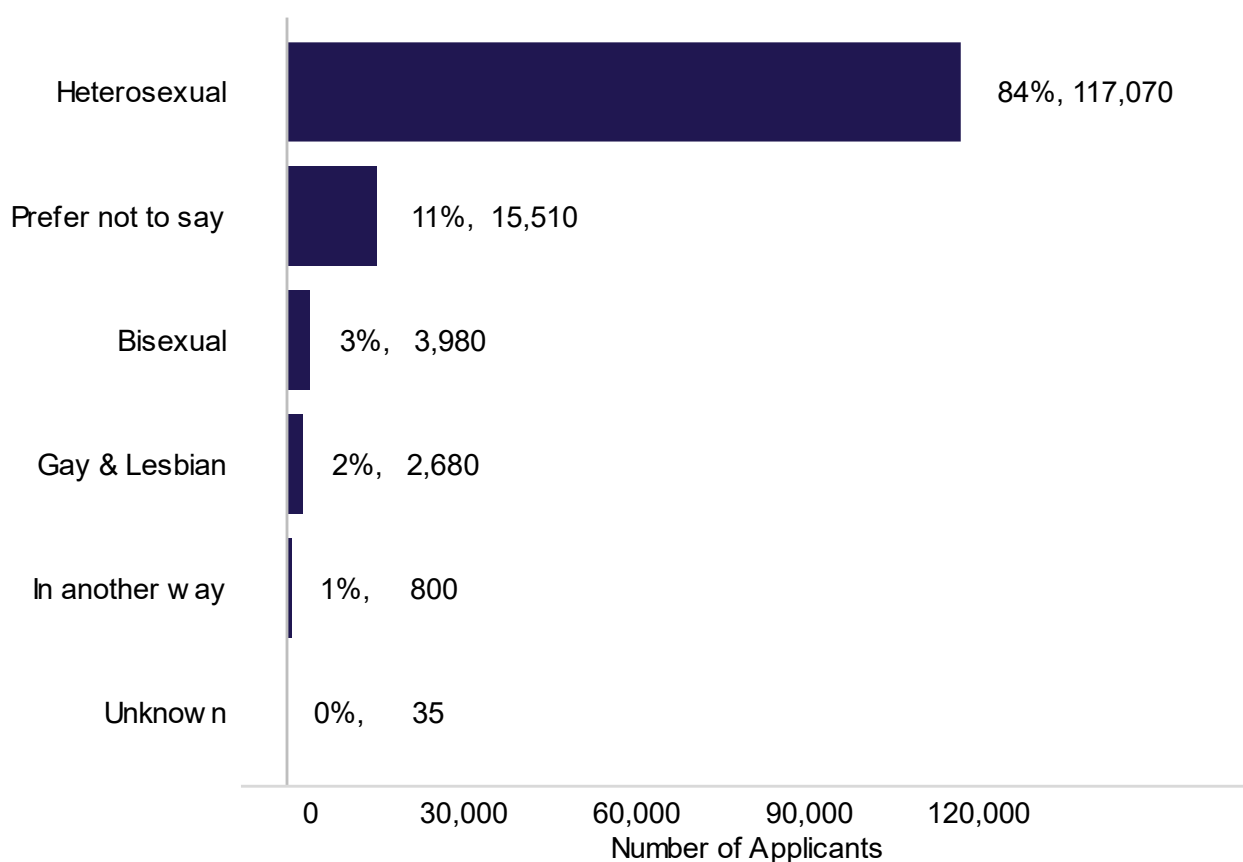
illness specified that this affected 'Mobility' at 55% or 'Stamina or breathing or fatigue' at 49%. The most common area affected for Job Start Grant and Young Carer Grant applicants was 'Socially or behaviourally' at 49% and 34%, respectively.

- Overall approval rates varied across conditions and illnesses from 63% for 'Vision' to 70% for 'Dexterity'. The lowest approval rate was for 'None of the above' at 57%.

Sexual Orientation

Figure 9: Number and proportion of applicants by sexual orientation

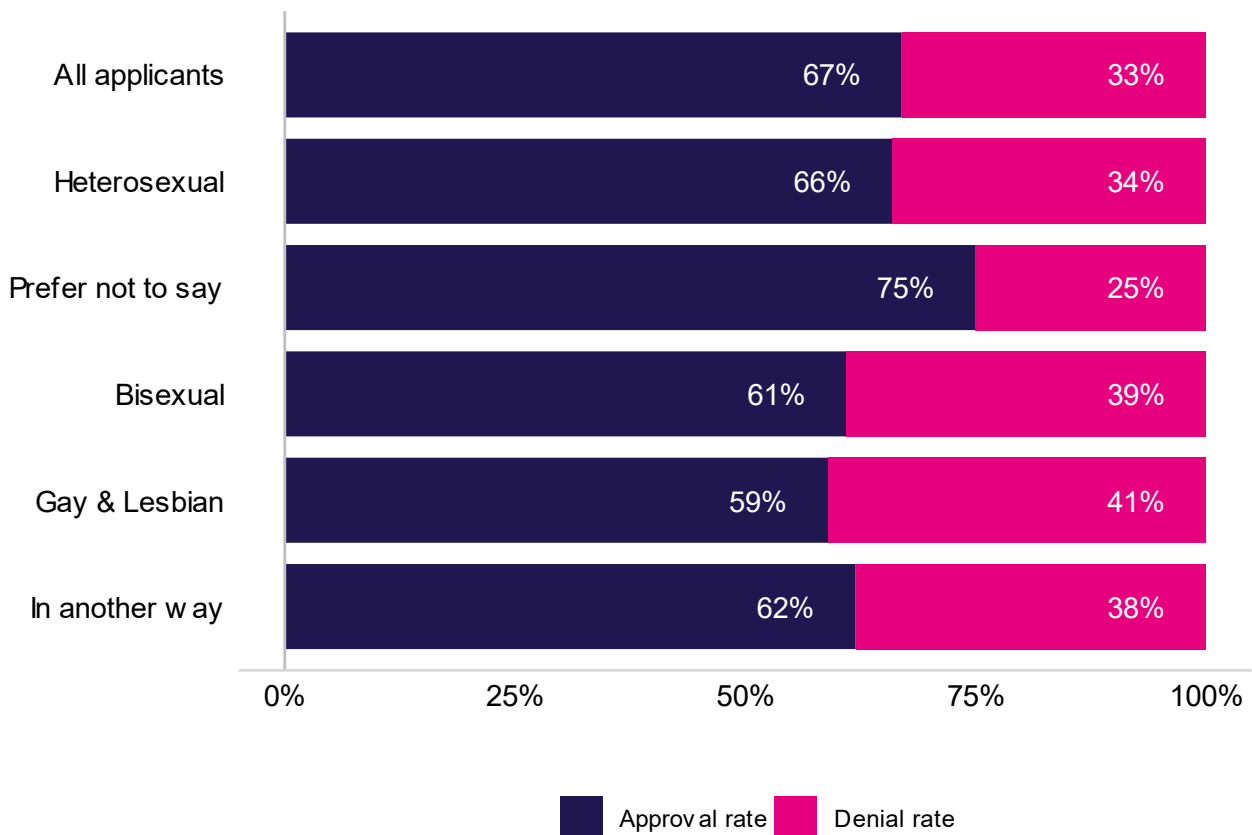
Source: Table 5



- Figure 9 shows that 84% of applicants were Heterosexual, 3% were Bisexual, 2% were Gay and Lesbian and 1% chose 'in another way'. 11% of applicants chose 'prefer not to say'. According to [Scotland's Census 2022](#), 88% of Scottish adults identified as Heterosexual, 2% as Lesbian or Gay, 2% as Bisexual, 0.5% as other and 8% didn't answer.
- At the benefit level, Best Start Grant and Foods, Scottish Child Payment, and Child Disability Payment had the lowest rate of applicants that were Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian, or 'in another way'. Compared to other benefits, Funeral Support Payment had a far higher proportion of applicants choosing 'prefer not to say' at 38%.

Figure 10: Approval and denial rates by sexual orientation

Source: Table 5

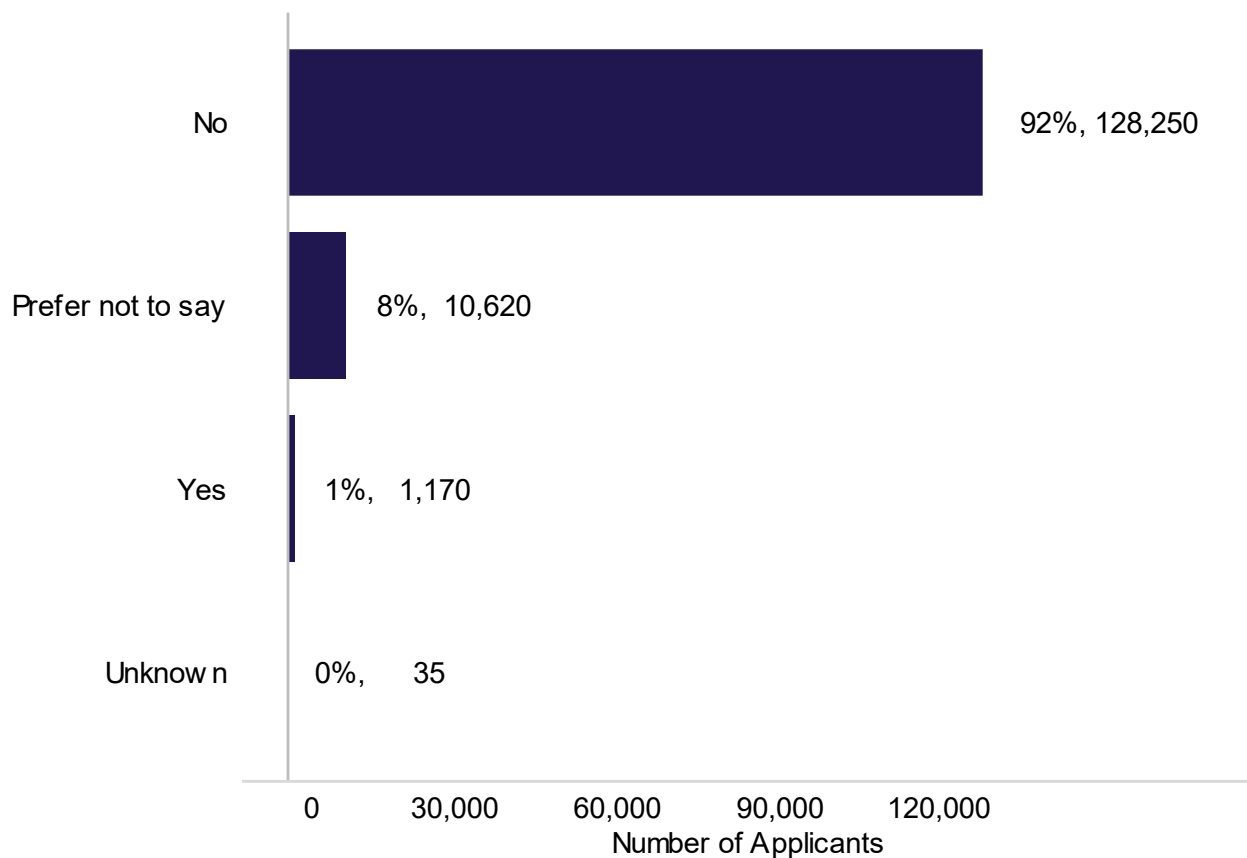


- Figure 10 shows that overall approval rates were highest for applicants choosing ‘prefer not to say’ at 75%, followed by heterosexual at 66%, ‘in another way’ at 62%, bisexual at 61%, and gay and lesbian at 59%. While approval rates had decreased for all sexual orientation groups compared to the last publication, ‘in another way’ had the largest decrease while ‘prefer not to say’ had the smallest decrease.
- Approval rates varied between benefits. Best Start Grant and Foods, Funeral Support Payment, and Young Carer Grant had the largest differences in approval rates between sexual orientations. These differences were likely inflated due to small applicant numbers. Approval rates between sexual orientations were comparable across the other benefits.

Transgender

Figure 11: Number and proportion of applications by transgender identity

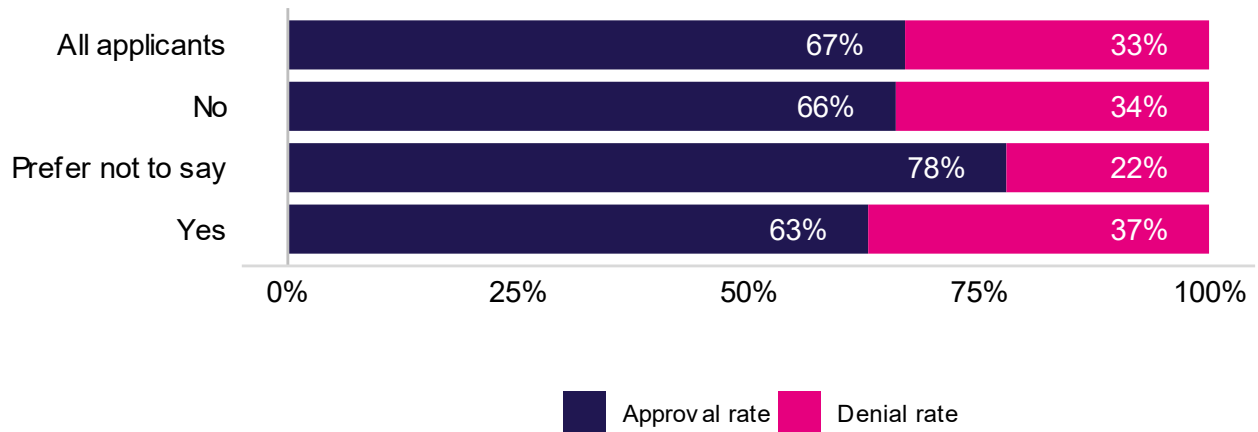
Source: Table 6



- Figure 11 shows that approximately 1% of applicants were transgender and 8% chose 'prefer not to say'. According to [Scotland's census 2022](#), 93.6% of the Scottish population were not transgender, 0.4% were transgender, and 5.9% did not answer.
- The benefits with the highest proportion of transgender applicants were Job Start Payment and Young Carer Grant at 2% and Adult Disability Payment at 1%.

Figure 12: Approval and denial rates by transgender identity

Source: Table 6

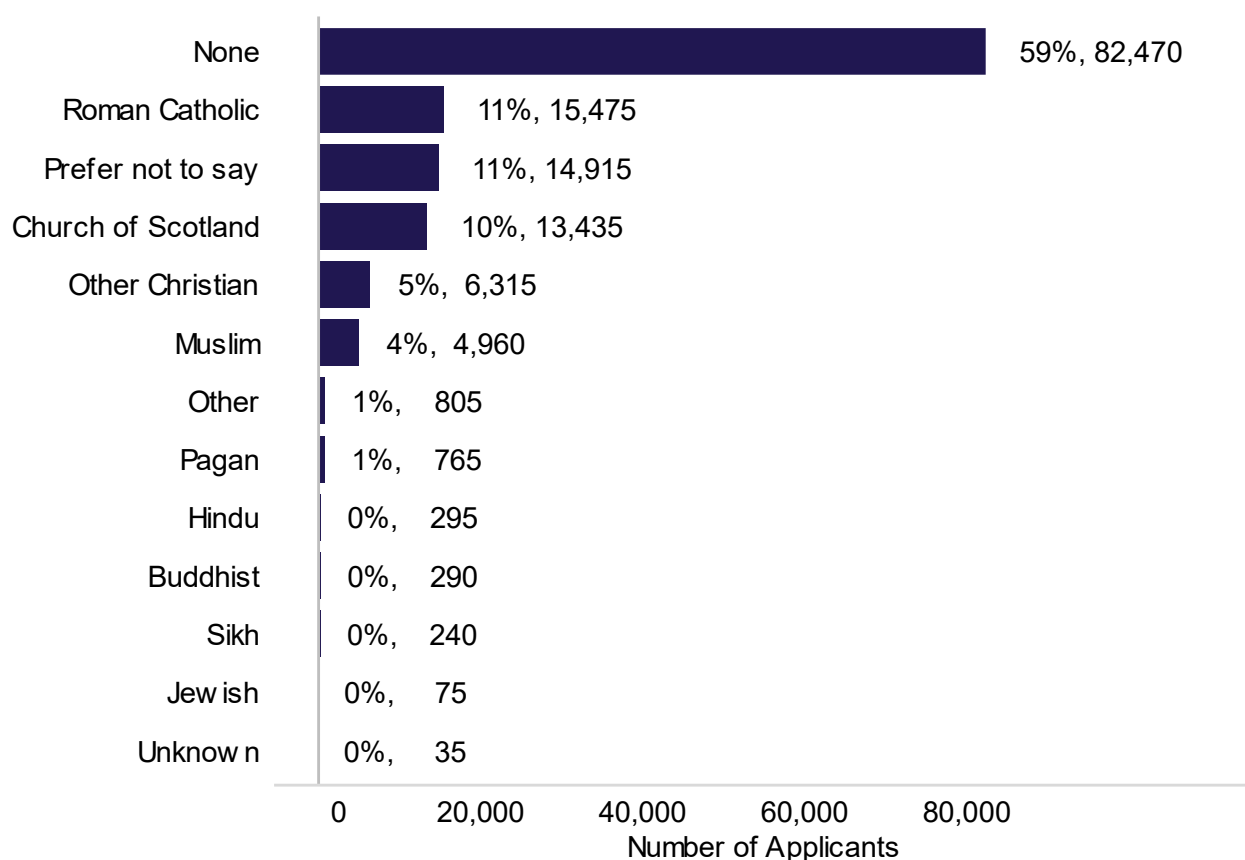


- Figure 12 shows that transgender applicants had an approval rate of 63% compared to applicants who were not transgender who had a rate of 66%. Those who chose 'prefer not to say' had the highest approval rates at 78%.
- For Adult Disability Payment, transgender applicants had a higher approval rate compared to those who were not transgender. For all other benefits, transgender applicants had lower approval rates.

Religion

Figure 13: Number and proportion of applicants by religion

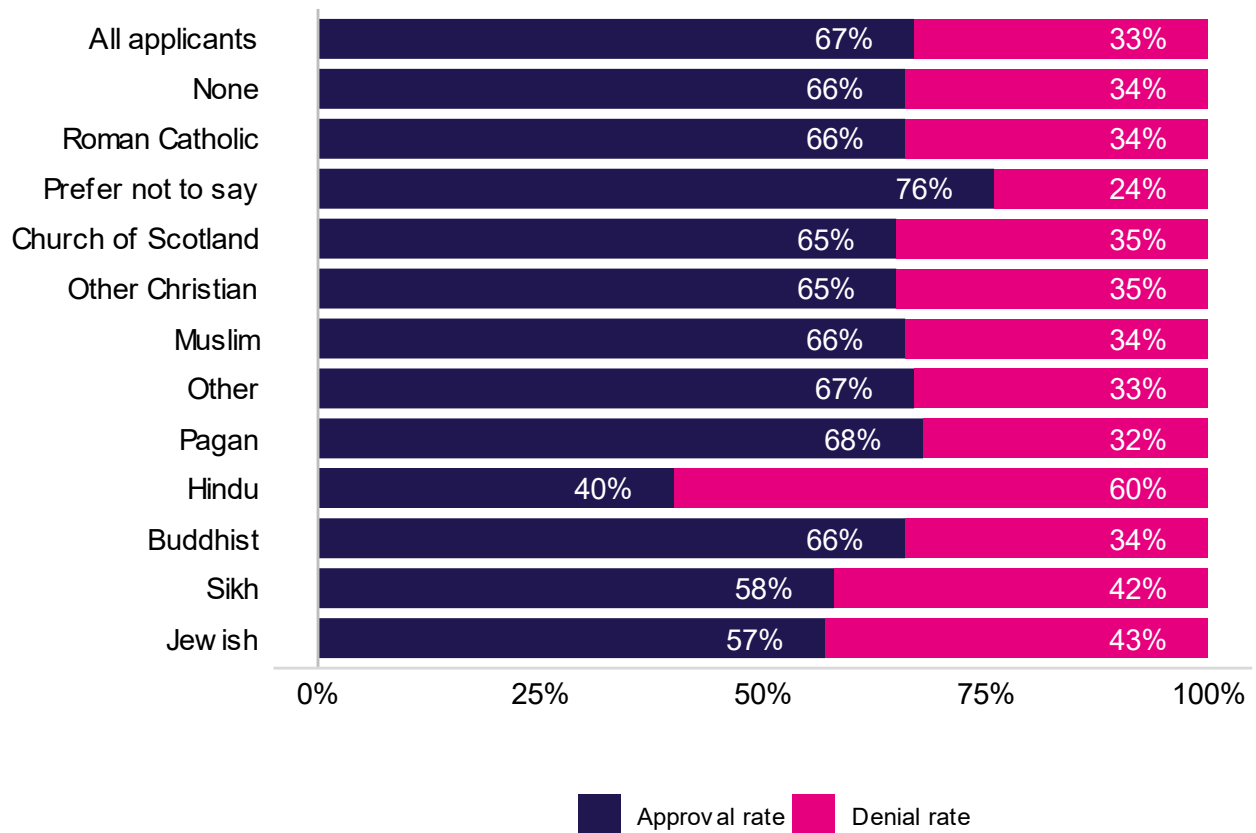
Source: Table 7



- Figure 13 shows that 59% of applicants had no religion, compared to 11% who were Roman Catholic, 10% Church of Scotland, 5% Other Christian and 4% Muslim. 2% were another religion and 11% chose 'prefer not to say'. According to [Scotland's census 2022](#), 49% of Scottish adults reported having no religion, 13% reported their religion as Roman Catholic, 23% Church of Scotland, 5% Other Christian, 2% Muslim and 2% were another religion.
- At an individual benefit level, the proportion of applicants responding with no religion was lowest for Funeral Support Payment at 37% and highest for Job Start Payment at 76%. The difference in no religion between these benefits could be related to the different age profiles of applicants, with a higher proportion of Funeral Support Payment Applicants being from older age groups. According to [Scotland's census 2022](#), people aged 16-to-34 are more likely to have no religion compared to older age groups.
- Best Start Grant and Foods and Scottish Child Payment had the highest proportion of non-Christian religious groups with 6% and 7% respectively. Both had higher proportions of Muslim applicants compared to other benefits. Funeral Support Payment had a much higher proportion of 'prefer not to say' at 37% compared to around 10% for other benefits.

Figure 14: Approval and denial rates by religion

Source: Table 7

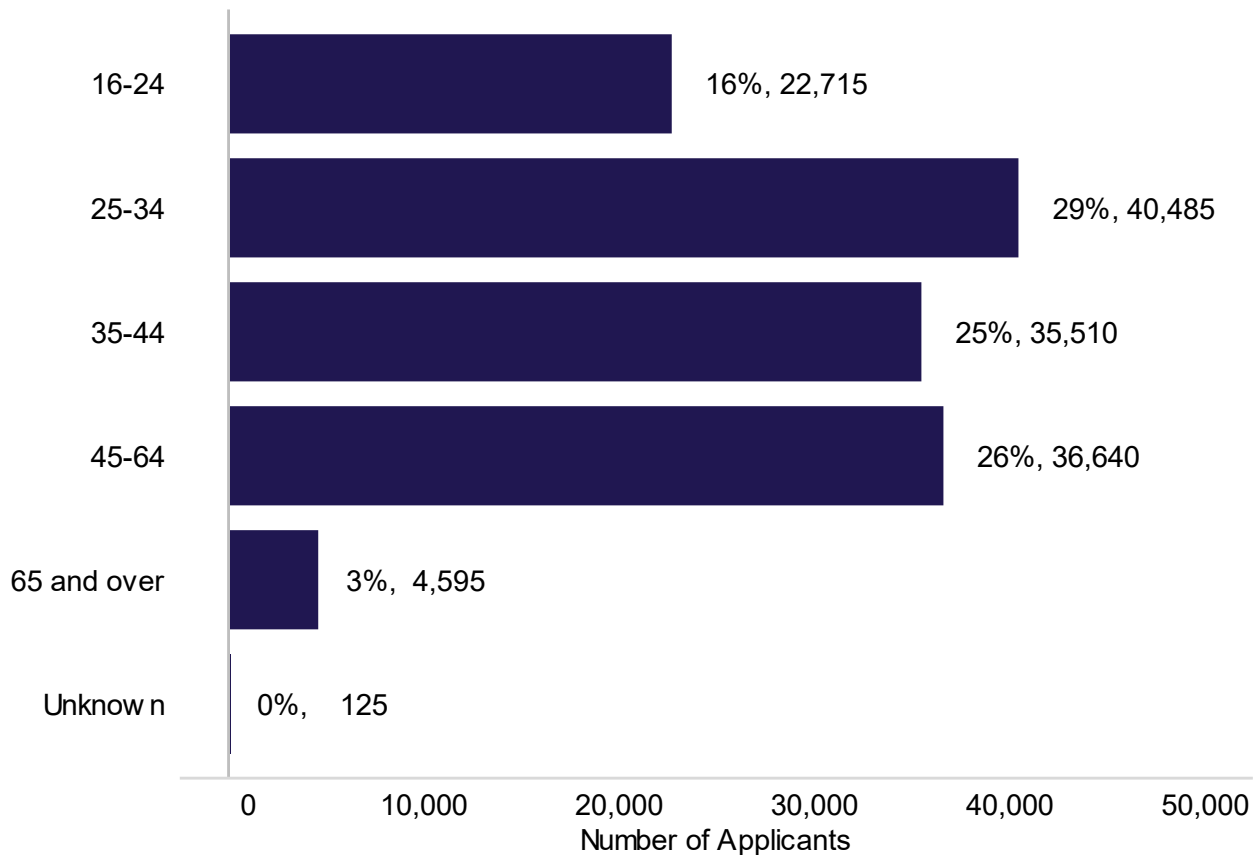


- Figure 14 shows that overall approval rates were very similar for no religion, Christian, and Muslim applicants at 65% or 66%. There was more variability at the individual benefit level. For instance, Best Start Grant and Foods approval rates varied between 54% to 65% for these groups. Approval rates were the most variable for religions with smaller applicant numbers, such as the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Jewish groups.
- Approval rates were the lowest for Hindu clients at 40%, which is 26 percentage points lower than the no religion group at 66%. In comparison, last year the difference was 33 percentage points between the Hindu group at 48% and the no religion group at 81%. This is a reduction of 7 percentage points.
- Approval rates are also relatively low for Jewish and Sikh applicants at 57% and 58% respectively. This is a large decrease for Jewish applicants compared to the last publication, where approval rates were amongst the highest. This variability may be partly due to the smaller numbers of Jewish applicants.

Age

Figure 15: Number and proportion of applicants by age

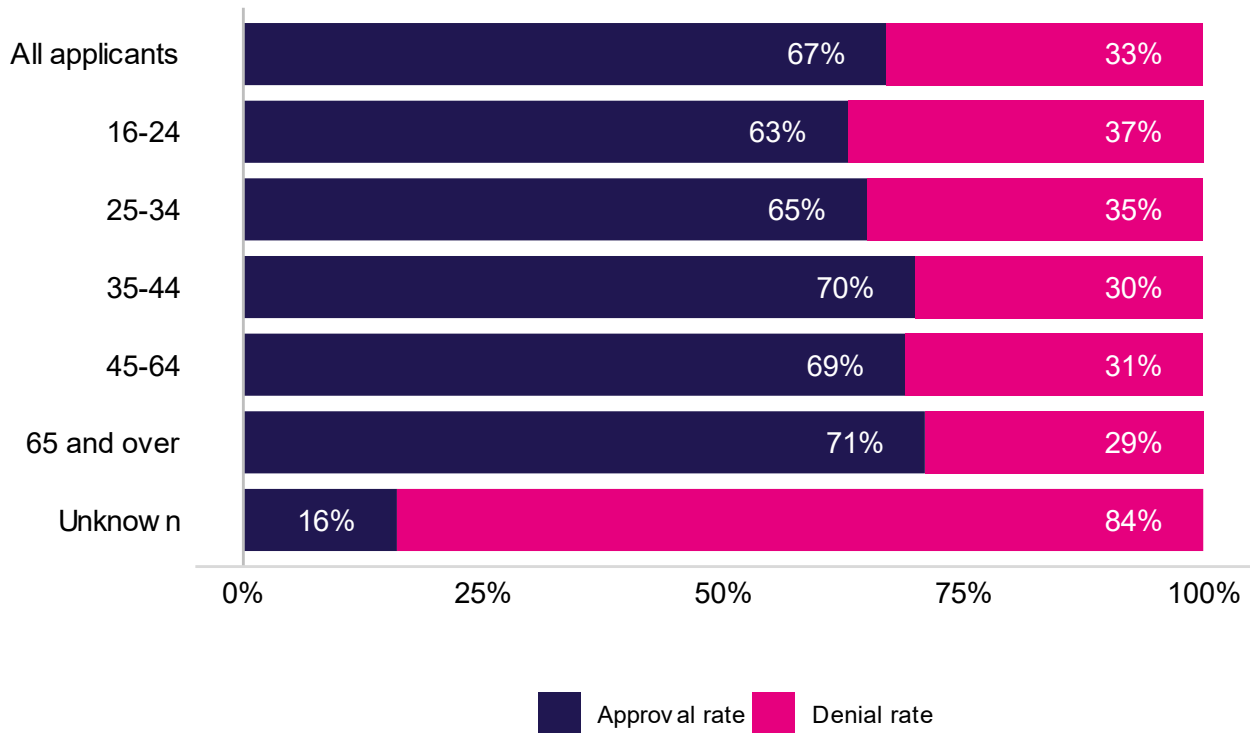
Source: Table 8



- Figure 15 shows that 70% of applicants were between 16 and 45 years of age. The highest proportion of applicants were aged 25-to-34 years at 29%. This was followed by the 45-to-64 year group at 26% and 35-to-45 year group at 25%. 3% of applicants were aged 65 or over and 16% were aged 16-to-24. The age profile for applicants differed from the Scottish Adult Population according to [Scotland's census 2022](#). Specifically, a higher proportion of applicants were aged 16-to-44 and a lower proportion were aged 45 or over compared to the Scottish population. This is due to most of the benefits included in this publication being targeted at families with children, adults with disabilities, and young people.
- Compared to the last publication, the proportion of applicants aged 16-to-24 and 45 or over has increased while the proportion of applicants aged 25-to-44 has decreased. Approval rates have decreased for all age groups, with the 25-to-64 age groups experiencing the greatest decreases. This is likely due to the higher proportion of Adult Disability Payment applicants as explained in the [general findings section](#).

Figure 16: Approval and denial rates by age

Source: Table 8



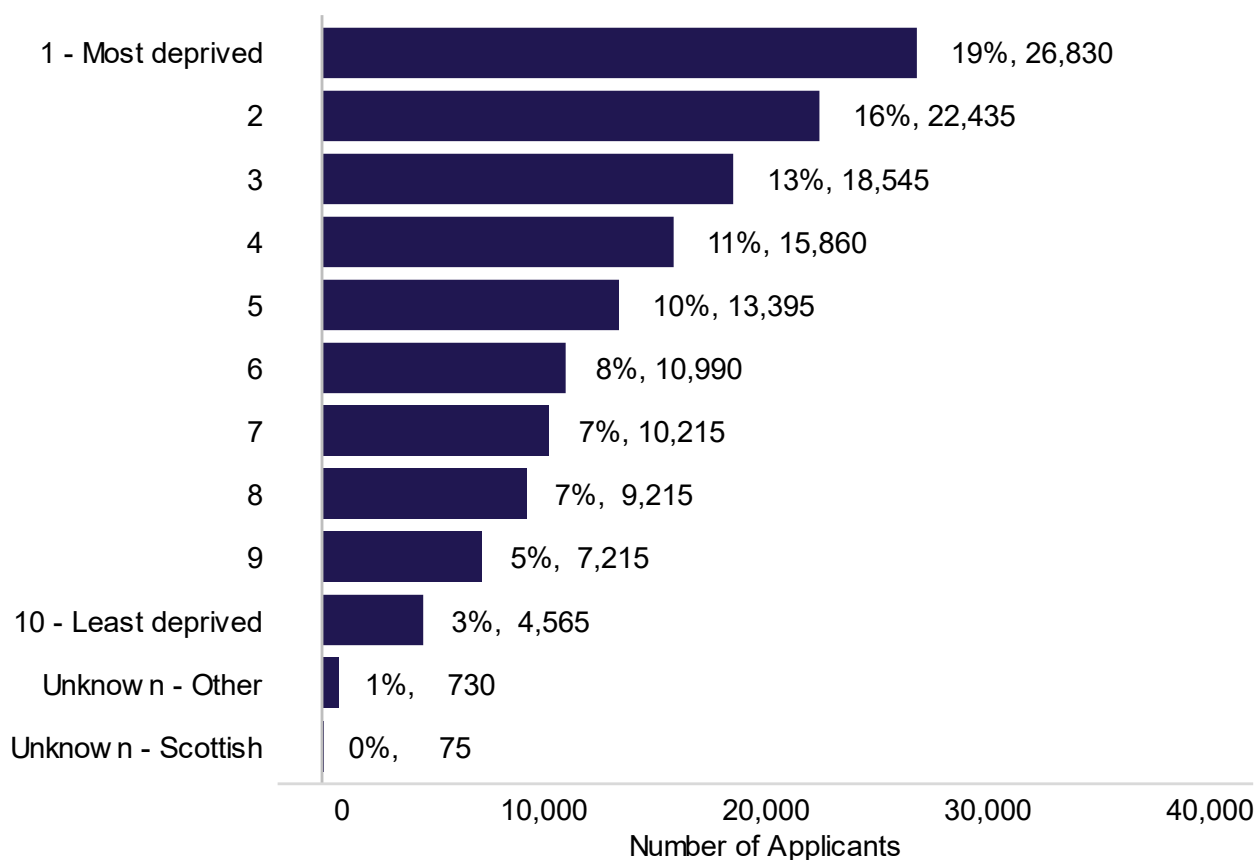
- Figure 16 shows that overall approval rates were highest for the 65 or over age group at 71%, followed by the 35-to-44 age group at 70%. Approval rates were lowest for the 16-to-24 age group at 63% and 25-to-34 at 65%. Approval rates were influenced by age profiles of each benefit. For example, 48% of all clients aged 65 and over applied for Funeral Support Payment which had a higher approval rate of 81% compared to the overall rate of 67%.
- At a benefit level, Best Start Grant had higher approval rates for applicants aged 16-to-34 and lower approval rates for the older age groups. Adult Disability payment showed the opposite pattern, with applicants aged 45 or over having higher approval rates than the younger age groups.
- Some benefits are only available to people of certain ages. For example, Job Start Payment clients must be aged 16-to-24 or 25 if they are care leavers. These criteria impact the age profiles and approval rates for these benefits.

Geography

- The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is used to rank areas from the most deprived areas to the least deprived areas of Scotland. Approximately 10% of the population of Scotland live in each decile.

Figure 17: Number and proportion of applicants by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

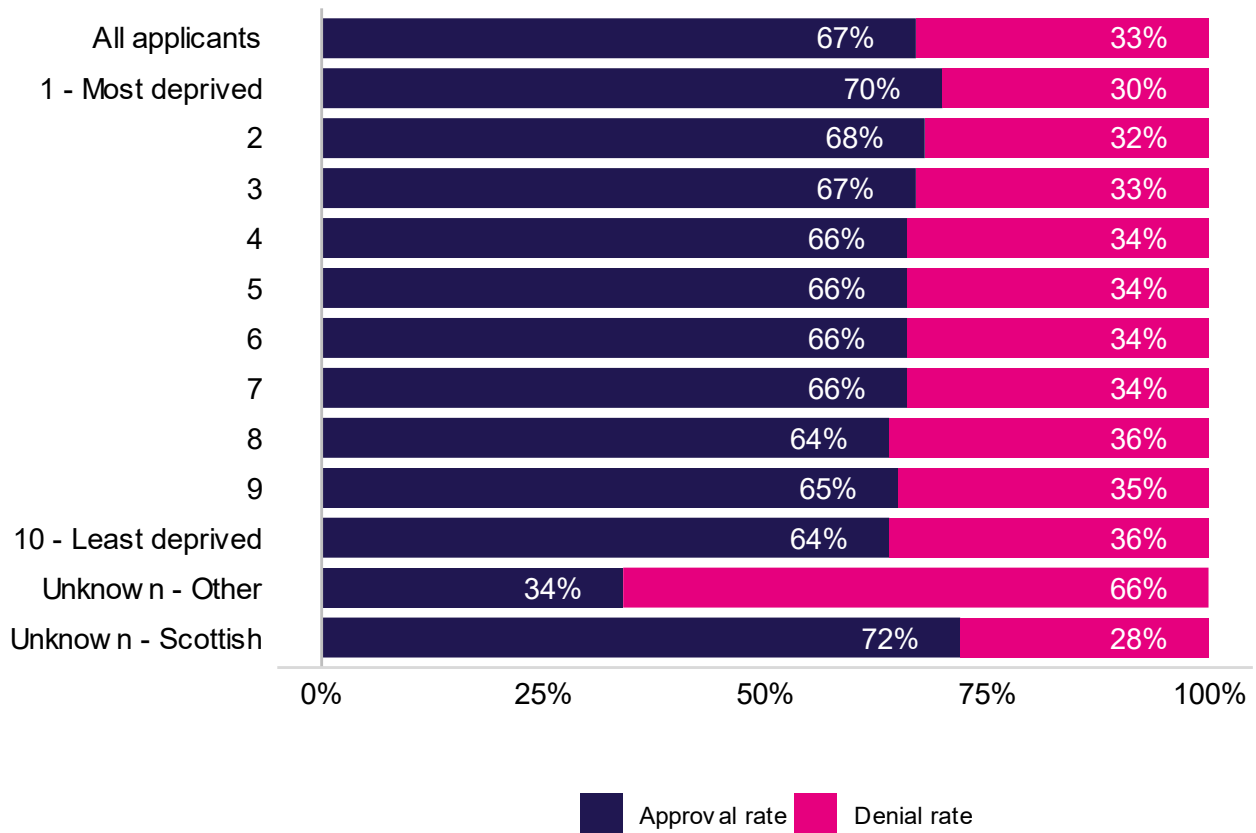
Source: Table 9



- Figure 17 shows that applicants lived across all deciles including the least deprived. However, a higher proportion of applicants lived in the more deprived deciles. 19% of applicants lived in the most deprived decile and 48% lived in the three most deprived deciles. This compares to 9% and 28% of the population aged 16 and over according to [National Records of Scotland 2021 estimates](#).
- A similar trend was observed across each benefit with Young Carer Grant and Job Start Payment having the highest proportion of applicants living in the three most deprived deciles.

Figure 18: Approval and denial rates by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

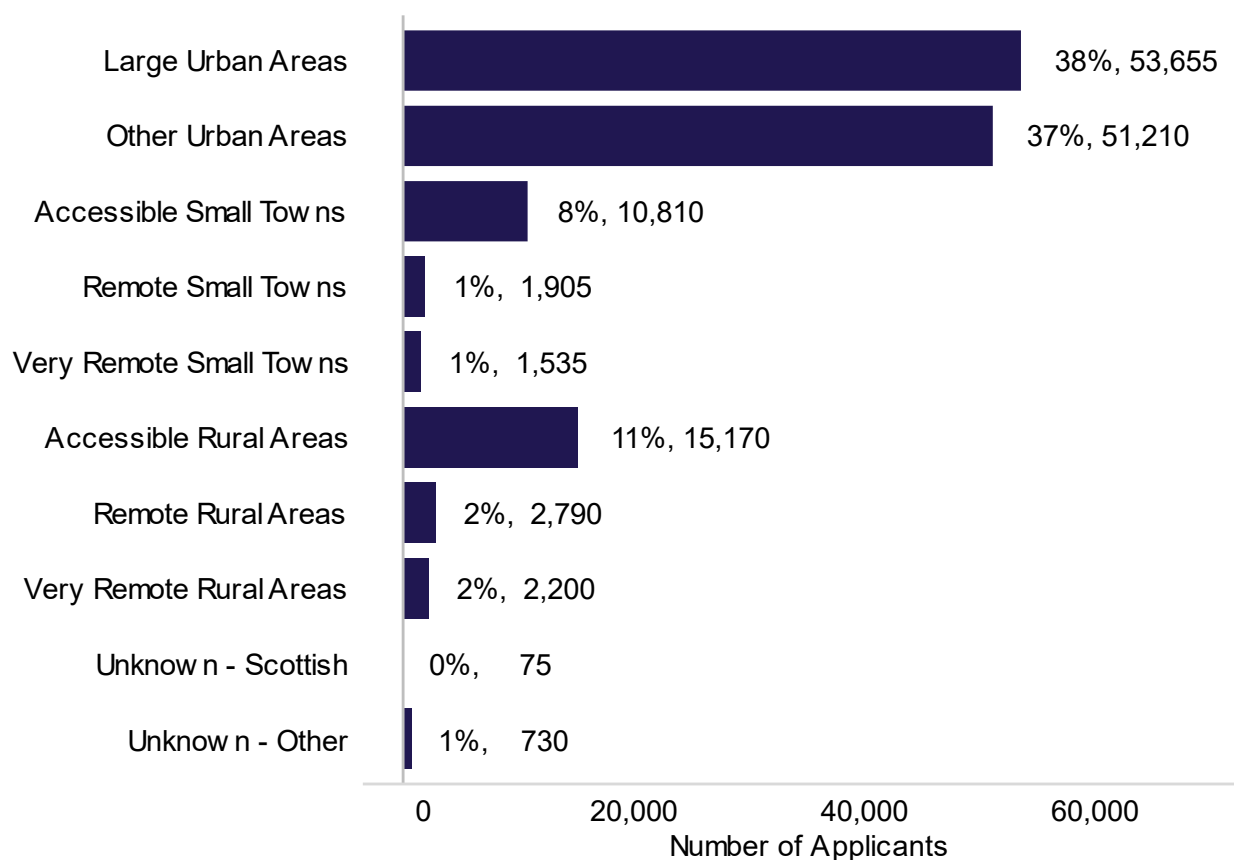
Source: Table 9



- Figure 18 shows that overall approval rates were higher for applicants living in the more deprived deciles, with a 6% difference between the most and least deprived decile. At a benefit level, this trend was observed across Best Start Grant and Foods, Funeral Support Payment, and Scottish Child Payment. Child Disability Payment and Young Carer Grant showed the opposite trend with those in the least deprived areas having the highest approval rates. Approval rates were comparable across all deciles for Adult Disability Payment and varied across deciles for Job Start Payment.

Figure 19: Number and proportion of applicants by geography

Source: Table 10



- Figure 19 shows that 75% of applicants lived in Large Urban or Other Urban areas. This compares to 71% of people aged 16 or over living in Scotland according to [National Records of Scotland 2021 estimates](#). Across benefits, the percentage of applicants living in Large Urban or Other Urban areas varied between 72% and 80%.
- Overall, approval rates were very similar across each urban rural area, ranging from 67% to 68%. Across benefits, approval rates varied but were still comparable for most urban rural areas and benefits. Job Start Payment and Young Carer Grant had the largest range of approval rates between areas which was partly influenced by the small numbers of applicants living in some areas for these benefits.
- Around 1% of applicants lived on Scottish islands and 98% lived on the Scottish mainland. This was similar across all benefits with slight variations in the proportion of applicants living in Scottish mainland and 'other'. In comparison, 2% of the Scottish population lived on islands according to [Scotland's census 2022](#).
- Overall, approval rates were similar but slightly lower for island applicants compared to mainland applicants at 65% and 67% respectively. At an individual benefit level, approval rates were higher for mainland applicants by 8% for Best Start Grant, 6% for Scottish Child Payment, and 3% for Young

Carer Grant. Adult disability payment was the only benefit in which approval rates were higher for island applicants compared to mainland applicants.

Application Channel

- Around 91% of applicants submitted their application online. This compared to 9% by phone and 1% by mail.
- The proportion of applicants applying online was 88% or higher for all benefits except Funeral Support Payment. Funeral Support Payment had a lower proportion of applicants applying online and a higher proportion applying by phone compared to other benefits.
- For most benefits, application channel proportions were similar in this publication compared to the proportions in the [high level statistics publications](#) for each benefit. However, Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment had a higher proportion of online applicants and lower proportion of phone and mail applicants compared to the high level statistics publications. Applicants applying for these benefits by phone or mail are asked to complete and return a paper equalities monitoring form alongside part 2 of their application form. Response rates for paper equalities monitoring forms are lower than forms completed online or via telephone. This may partially explain the lower proportions of applicants using phone or mail channels for Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment in this publication compared to the high level statistics publications. See the [responses rates section](#) for further information.
- Applicants applying via phone had the highest approval rate at 82%, followed by mail at 71% and online at 66%. At a benefit level, Adult Disability Payment and Funeral Support Payment followed this trend. For most other benefits, applicants applying online had a higher approval rate than applicants applying via mail.
- Compared to the previous publication, approval rates decreased for all channels. The online channel had the largest decrease at 14 percentage points while phone had the lowest at 6 percentage points.

Glossary

Appeal – A person can appeal a decision on their application if they do not think the right decision had been made. This will be considered by the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland, which is independent from Social Security Scotland

Applicant – The person who completes an application for a social security benefit. This may be the person benefitting from the payment or someone applying on behalf of another person.

Case Management System – The system used by Social Security Scotland to process benefit applications. Equalities information from telephony applications is stored in this system, separately from application information.

Client – The person who would benefit from a social security payment if an application was successful.

Data warehouse – The platform used to store data extracts for use by Social Security Scotland's analysts. Equalities data from online applications is stored directly within the data warehouse.

De-duplication – The process of removing multiple data records relating to a single person. In this publication, data is de-duplicated so that one record is retained per applicant.

Local Delivery - a service for clients provided by specially trained advisers based in every Local Authority across Scotland. They support new and existing clients to access our benefits in a way that works best for them and importantly, at a time and place that is convenient for them.

Manual database – The database used to store information from paper returns of the equalities monitoring form and from local delivery applications. Data is entered manually into this database by Social Security Scotland staff.

Pseudonymization – The processing of personal data so that it can no longer be attributed to a specific person without the use of additional information.

Re-determination – If a person doesn't agree with a decision about their application, they can ask for someone else to look at their application.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation - The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is used to rank areas from the most deprived areas to the least deprived areas of Scotland. Approximately 10% of the population of Scotland live in each decile. See the [Scottish Government website](#) for more information.

Background

Social Security Scotland is the executive agency of Scottish Government responsible for delivering social security benefits for Scotland. Social Security Scotland collects equalities data in order to fulfil their Public Sector Equality Duty under [the Equality Act 2010](#) and their reporting duties under section 20(1) of the [Social Security Act 2018](#).

In 2020, Social Security Scotland published an [equalities strategy and subsequent Mainstreaming Equalities Report](#). These included specific outcomes and activities which are currently in the process of being refreshed. A new equalities strategy will launch in late 2024 and the next mainstreaming report is due to be published early 2025.

Social Security Scotland collects and publishes information about the following protected characteristics of clients as defined by [the Equality Act 2010](#).

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender (instead of sex)
- Transgender status (instead of gender reassignment)
- Physical or mental health condition or illness (instead of disability)
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

Social Security Scotland does not collect client information about marriage and civil partnership or pregnancy and maternity. Social Security Scotland does not collect information on wider diversity characteristics including care experience, criminal justice, socio-economic status or veteran and armed forces experience.

The analysis in this publication helps Social Security Scotland to understand who is using their services and how their processes work for different groups of people. For example, Social Security Scotland can identify if certain groups are more likely to have their applications denied than others. This information can help to inform improvements to Social Security Scotland's processes. This includes improving how information about benefit eligibility is communicated to different groups.

Detailed background information on each benefit included in this publication can be found in the high level statistics publications on the [Social Security Scotland website](#).

Data and Methodology

How is Equalities information collected?

When someone applies to Social Security Scotland, they are asked to complete an equalities monitoring form alongside their application. People can apply online, by telephone, by mail or with support from a local delivery advisor. Most benefits have a single application form except for Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment which have two parts. For these benefits, the equalities monitoring form is included with part 2 of the application. This means that equalities information is only available for people who have submitted part 2 of the application. After filling out part 1 of the application, Child Disability Payment applicants have six weeks to complete part 2 and Adult Disability Payment applicants have eight weeks.

For Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment, some clients have been transferred from equivalent benefits administered by the Department for Work and Pensions. These benefits are Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment. Department for Work and Pensions do not collect or publish comparable equalities data as part of their application process. Social Security Scotland are working with the Department for Work and Pensions to understand what equalities data they hold and if these data can be transferred as part of the case transfer process. This publication does not include equalities information for clients that have been transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Who is Included in the Analysis?

This publication includes people who made an application between April 2023 to March 2024 for one or more of the following benefits:

- Adult Disability Payment
- Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods
- Child Disability Payment
- Funeral Support Payment
- Job Start Payment
- Scottish Child Payment
- Young Carer Grant

For Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment, the date that part 1 of the application form was received has been used to decide who is included in the analysis. If someone applied more than once during the publication period, they are only counted once within this publication.

Most applications are made by the person who would benefit from the payment if the application was successful. However, some applications are made by another person on behalf of the person who would benefit. The information in this publication relates to the person making the application which may be different from

the person benefitting from the payment. For Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability payment, equalities information is collected for both the applicant and the person benefitting if these are different people. In these cases, only the information about the person applying is included in this publication.

Funeral Support Payment, Young Carer Grant, Job Start Payment, Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment applications have a single application outcome associated with each application. Applications for Best Start Foods are automatically assessed for Best Start Grant payments and vice versa. To handle this, an application was given an approved outcome if it was approved for any Best Start payment. An application was given a denied outcome if it was denied for all Best Start payments.

Scottish Child Payment can be applied for on its own or jointly with Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods. Joint applications for Scottish Child Payment and Best Start Grant were split into two parts and treated as two separate applications in this analysis.

Who is not Included in the Analysis?

Social Security Scotland deliver Carer's Allowance Supplement, Child Winter Heating Payment, and Winter Heating Payment. These benefits are paid automatically for most clients and equalities information is not captured in this process. Thus, these benefits are not included in this publication.

The pilot for Carer Support Payment was launched on 20 November 2023, with 685 applications received during the 2023-2024 financial year, according to the [most recent statistics](#). Due to technical issues, we are unable to report on diversity characteristics for applicants that applied during that time. We intend to include diversity characteristics of people applying for Carers Support Payment in our next annual publication.

How is the Equalities information stored?

When applying online, applicants are asked to complete an equalities monitoring form at the end of the application process. When an online application is submitted, the equalities information is stored in a data warehouse for analysis while the application data is stored separately in Social Security Scotland's case management system.

When applying by telephone, applicants are asked to answer the equalities monitoring form questions by a client advisor. This information is entered into in the case management system by the client advisor and stored separately from the application information.

When applying by mail, applicants are asked to complete a paper version of the equalities monitoring form. Once this form is received, the information is entered into a manual database which is separate from the case management system. This database is also used to store equalities information for local delivery applications.

For Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment, equalities monitoring forms are given to applicants alongside part 2 of the application form. If applicants apply by telephone or mail, they will usually be sent a paper copy of the equalities monitoring form to complete and return by mail. These responses are stored securely and are manually entered into the same manual database used for other mail returns.

Can individuals be identified from the data?

Equalities responses are pseudonymised so that analysts cannot identify individuals. Information that could be used to identify individuals i.e. name and address are kept in the case management system and are used by client advisors when dealing with individual applications. Analysts do not have access to the case management system and the datasets they use do not include personal identifiers. Instead they include unique identifiers, which can be used to link datasets together. Equalities data that is received online or by telephone are linked to application data using a unique identifier. Equalities data received by mail or local delivery do not have a unique identifier and are linked using the client's postcode and date of birth.

Once the figures are summarised, they are rounded to the nearest five to prevent the disclosure of sensitive personal information relating to applicants. Additionally, figures have been suppressed where information would be disclosed about a small number of applicants. These values are indicated with a [c] in the publication tables.

Suppression has not been applied to statistics that do not contain sensitive information. This includes statistics relating to unknown characteristics, application channel, benefits type or Scotland wide geographical areas. Where these statistics would be rounded to zero, they have a value of [low] in the publication tables to differentiate them from true zeros.

What is the Response rate?

For most online and telephone applications, applicants will complete an equalities monitoring form as part of the application process. However, in some rare circumstances, it is possible for an applicant to submit an online or telephone application without completing a form. For mail and local delivery applications, response rates are lower as applicants are less likely to return completed paper copies of the equalities monitoring form. This also applies to applications which were started via telephone for Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment as these applicants are usually sent a paper copy of the equalities monitoring form to complete. Because of this Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment had lower overall linkage rates as discussed in the [linking data](#) section. The online channel was the most common application channel for all benefits, as shown in Table 12.

The form includes a 'prefer not to say' option for all equalities monitoring questions. This option is for applicants who do not want to disclose information. The number of applicants choosing 'prefer not to say' varied by question and by benefit (see [General Findings](#) for more detail).

How is the data prepared and processed?

1) Data cut

To account for backdating, data cuts from 27 May 2024 have been used for all equalities and application data in this publication. This will have accounted for delays between paper forms being received and inputted into the manual database for some cases. However, for the disability benefits, some part 2 applications and paper forms may not have been received and inputted in time for this publication. These returns could not be included in this publication and will not feature in future publications due to application date cut offs. Later data cuts may include retrospective changes to application data. This includes corrections made in the case management system and changes in outcomes due to re-determinations and appeals.

2) Data Cleaning

Some equalities monitoring forms received via mail or local delivery contained typographical errors. Where postcode or date of birth data were entered into incorrect columns, this was corrected manually. Around 5% of mail responses and 4% of local delivery responses were missing postcode or date of birth information. These were excluded from the analysis as they could not be linked to application data.

There was a small number of equality records received by mail or local delivery which had the same postcode and date of birth. If these cases had identical responses for certain equalities questions, they were assumed to be duplicates and one record was retained. If the answers to these questions were not the same, all records were removed from the analysis as it was not possible to tell whether these were duplicates from the same person. The duplicate records that were removed this way accounted for 2% of mail responses and less than 1% of local delivery responses that had postcode and date of birth information.

All equalities responses which were received online or by phone and entered directly into the case management system or data warehouse had a unique application reference. Thus, none of these cases were excluded at this stage.

3) Linking data

The equalities data received online or by telephone were linked to application data using a unique application identifier. Equalities data received by mail did not have a unique application identifier and were linked using client postcode and date of birth.

Firstly, equalities data received online or by phone was linked with application data that had a unique identifier. 88% of applications were matched with equalities at this stage. Linkage was close to 100% for each benefit except Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment, which had a linking rate of 72% and 74% respectively.

The remaining application data from the previous step was then linked with the equalities data received via mail or local delivery after removing cases that did not have postcode and data of birth. At this stage, 6% of the remaining applications were linked with mail equalities and 1% with local delivery equalities. The majority of the applications linked at this stage were for Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment.

4) Deduplicating multiple applications

Applicants can make multiple applications to Social Security Scotland. For example, they can:

- apply for the same benefit more than once.
- apply for more than one benefit.
- make a joint application for Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment

After the data was linked, multiple applications were identified and deduplicated. Where an applicant made more than one application and submitted equalities information through the same channel, the application with the most recent outcome was kept. If an applicant had multiple applications with the same outcome date, one record was randomly selected to keep. If an applicant made multiple applications and none of these had an outcome, one record was randomly selected to keep.

Of the application data linked to online or telephone equalities data, 28% were removed via de-duplication. 2% of application data linked to mail equalities data were removed via de-duplication. 4% of application data linked to local delivery equalities data were removed via de-duplication.

If equalities information is received for the same applicant via different equalities sources, there is a chance they may be counted twice within these statistics. For example, if an applicant applied online for one benefit and applied via mail for another. This issue was estimated to effect less than 1% of the total applicants in this publication.

This method of deduplicating of applications has been used so that these statistics represent Social Security Scotland's applicants instead of the number of applications and their outcomes. However, this method does have some limitations. Firstly, it may influence outcome breakdowns. For example, applicants with multiple applications may have later applications denied because they are already receiving a benefit. Alternatively, applicants who make multiple applications may have a better understanding of the application process and thus have a better chance of having later applications approved. This method may also influence benefit breakdowns as an applicant can apply for multiple benefits but would only be counted for one of them in these statistics.

5) Quality Assurance

The application data used to produce official statistics is 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. For example, checking applications, decisions and payments figures increase as expected over time and they are in proportion to each other. Data is also compared to other sources of information.

The equalities data undergoes [cleaning](#) before being linked to the application data. Each stage of the linking and deduplication process is tracked in detail and compared to the previous publication. Trends in the data are compared to the benefit-specific publications, for example, changes in volumes of applications.

Once the statistics are aggregated, these then undergo primary and secondary suppression as detailed in the section: [Can individuals be identified from the data?](#) The statistics are also checked for consistency with the previous equalities publication. The final figures are quality assured by a different member of the statistics team and finally by the lead statistician.

What issues do I need to consider when interpreting these statistics?

1) Comparing approval rates for groups of different sizes

Groups of smaller sizes tend to have more variable approval and denial rates than groups with larger numbers. For example, there were over 10,000 people in the no religion, Roman Catholic and Church of Scotland religious groups and less than 500 in the Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish and Hindu groups. When making comparisons between these groups, it is expected that approval rates for the smaller groups will be more variable within and between publications compared to the larger groups.

2) Lower response rates for some benefits

Response rates were lower for Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment due to a larger proportion of equalities monitoring forms being sent out by paper compared to other benefits. Lower response rates may mean that the equalities data is less representative of applicants applying for these benefits.

3) Data quality issues

As part of the quality assurance process, it was discovered that a higher amount of equalities data was missing for Child Disability Payment applications from February and March 2024. This issue has been resolved but this happened too late for these applicants to be included in this publication. This may have a minor impact on trends for the Child Disability Payment statistics.

4) Weighting of equalities data towards the largest benefits

After the data were cleaned and de-duplicated, a larger number of equalities responses were related to applications for Adult Disability Payment, Scottish Child, Payment and Best Start Grant and Foods (Table 13). Thus, the equalities

characteristics of these applicants had a greater influence on the overall figures in this publication compared to applicants applying for other benefits.

5) Geography

Applications are assigned to a local authority by matching the applicant's postcode to a Scottish Government lookup file. For some applications, the postcode will not match to the lookup file. This can happen if the postcode was not in a Scottish local authority. It can also happen if the postcode has been introduced too recently to appear in the lookup file, for example a property is within a new development area.

Postcodes are linked to client's profiles and data extracts are automatically updated if an individual changes address. As a result, postcodes reflect the latest address of clients and may not be the same as the address they lived in at the time of application. Therefore, a small number of addresses may not reflect the correct geographical locations at the time of application. This issue may also impact the linking of equalities information from the manual database to application data, as postcode is not automatically updated in the manual database.

How are Approval and Denial Rates calculated?

Approval rate figures are calculated as the proportion of applications approved from the total applications approved or denied. Denial rate figures are calculated as the proportion of applications denied from the total applications approved or denied.

What does the Unknown category mean?

When completing an equalities monitoring form, a small number of applicants did not answer certain equalities questions. These applicants were categorised as 'unknown' within the publication tables.

Applicants were categorised as 'unknown' in the age tables if information about their date of birth was missing, contained errors or if they were under 16 years old.

In the geography tables, applicants were categorised as 'unknown' if their postcode was missing or contained errors. Applicants were also categorised as 'unknown' if their postcode had recently been introduced and was not available in the lookup database used to match postcodes to higher geographies.

Why are Applications Denied?

Applications can be denied for multiple reasons. This includes the client not being a Scottish resident, not being in receipt of a qualifying benefit, or the application being made outwith an application window. It is not currently possible to analyse the data based on denial reasons. Social Security Scotland are working with the Scottish Government to improve the data.

How does this publication differ from other Social Security Scotland Statistics Publications?

Approval and denial rate figures are calculated differently in this publication compared to Social Security Scotland's benefit specific publications. Within this publication, approval and denial rate figures exclude withdrawn applications while the other publications include these applications. This is a particular issue for Funeral Support Payment, where around 14% of applications with an outcome between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 were withdrawn.

This publication includes one application per applicant while the benefit specific publications include all applications. This publication only includes applications which can be linked to equalities data while the other publications include all applications. Finally, in benefit specific publications approval rate is calculated from decisions taken within a time period, whereas here they are calculated for applications received within the same time period.

This publication reports on applicants physical or mental health condition or illness. This information is self-reported through the equalities monitoring forms. The Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment publications report on clients' primary disabling condition. This information is recorded by the Case Manager during the processing of an application. It is based on the supporting information that is provided in the application. This means that the person that is being reported on may differ between these publications. The publications also differ on how disability is determined. For example, for Child Disability Payment:

- this publication reports on the self-declared conditions or illnesses of the adult who made the application.
- the high-level benefit-specific publication reports on the primary disabling condition of the child as determined by the evidence provided.

Due to these differences, information on disability is not comparable between these publications.

Related publications

Detailed background information and application level statistics for each benefit can be found in the high-level statistics publications [on the Social Security Scotland website](#). These benefit-specific publications include additional diversity information including:

- Client age breakdowns for all benefits.
- Client gender for Carer's Allowance Supplement, based on the title of the applicant.
- Disabling condition for Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment
- Cared for status for Young Carer Grant
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation breakdowns for Child Winter Heating Assistance, Winter Heating Payment and Scottish Child Payment
- Child age for Child Winter Heating Assistance, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment.
- Sex of child for Child Disability Payment applications until 30 October 2022, which was published as a [one-off table \(see Table 16\)](#).

Social Security Scotland also publishes statistics on the diversity characteristics of its workforce. [The most recent publication covers to the end of March 2024](#). The publication includes information on:

- age
- disability
- ethnicity
- marital or civil partnership status
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

In addition to the diversity and equalities information included in this publication, the equalities monitoring forms also ask applicants for feedback on their application experience. Analysis of this information is published separately as part of Social Security Scotland's Client Survey annual publication series. The next publication is due to be released in late 2024. Previous years analyses were included as part of Social Security Scotland's Insights Research Findings. These publications can be found on the [Social Security Scotland Social Research publications page](#).

We previously published [supplementary intersectional tables covering the period June to November 2020](#). Due to the resource required to produce these tables, they are updated less frequently than this publication. Social Security Scotland aims to release updated tables on intersectionality by the end of 2025.

The [Equality Evidence Finder](#) brings together the latest statistics and research on equalities characteristics across Scottish Government and its agencies. This includes Social Security Scotland's equalities and diversity statistics.

Estimates of take-up for different benefits are produced by Scottish Government. The Scottish Government's latest estimates of take-up of devolved benefits in the [Take-up rates for Scottish Benefits](#), which was published in November 2023.

An [evidence review](#) was carried out setting out the current seldom-heard groups across the Scottish social security system and to explore the barriers they may face when accessing their entitlements. Seldom heard groups include people from established ethnic minority communities and people with long-term disabilities and conditions.

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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

Correspondence and enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

Pippa Stone

Social Security Statistics

e-mail: MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician, Telephone: 0131 244 0442, e-mail:

statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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: <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications/statistics>
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact 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, 3WR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at www.gov.scot/scotstat

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

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