



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Business Plan

2021 - 2022



Dignity, fairness, respect.

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Case transfer – to move a case from one organisation to another, for example, from the Department for Work and Pensions to Social Security Scotland.

Client – a person using the services of Social Security Scotland.

Department for Work and Pensions – the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK’s biggest public service department, it manages the State Pension and a range of working-age, disability and ill-health benefits for around 20 million claimants and customers.

Devolved benefits – the Scotland Act (2016) transferred new social security powers to the Scottish Parliament, allowing the Scottish Ministers to develop new policies on benefits that will help tackle inequality and poverty in Scotland.

Inclusive communication – an approach to all communication that means the largest number of people can take part, and people receive information and can express themselves in ways that they find easiest.

Local authorities – local authorities are responsible for providing a wide range of public services. They also promote the interests of the local community, including the social, economic, environmental, recreational, cultural, community or general development of an area.

Scottish Government – the devolved government of Scotland. The government is led by the First Minister, who selects the cabinet secretaries, who attend cabinet, and the Ministers with the approval of Parliament. Government Ministers all sit in Parliament and are accountable to it.

Scottish Government’s Social Security Directorate – work with the DWP to make sure social security powers from the UK Government are safely and securely transferred, under the Scotland Act 2016. They are responsible for developing the necessary policies and legislation and establishing a social security agency to deliver the devolved benefits. They also work with the DWP on the benefits that the UK Government keep responsibility for.

Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 – allows the Scottish Government to establish a new social security system better targeted at Scotland and which has dignity, fairness and respect at the heart of everything we do.

Stakeholder - a person with an interest or concern in something, especially a business.



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Chief Executive's foreword



David Wallace, Chief Executive

This Business Plan sets out our main activities for the year ahead – a year of significant growth for our organisation.

No-one could have predicted the unprecedented challenges society has faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last 12 months, we have been able to adapt our services to make sure our benefits were paid and that we were supporting efforts to suppress the virus and, importantly, keeping our people safe. We are learning from the changes we put in place due to the pandemic, and thinking about what we need to do to meet changing expectations and needs and future challenges.

So although we recently continued our proud association with Dundee and its people by naming our headquarters 'Agnes Husband House' after a local social reformer, it will be some time before we return to any of our buildings. Like most organisations, due to the pandemic we are reviewing our ways of working to develop a people and accommodation strategy that we can adapt for our people and our buildings, to make sure we can work safely while meeting the needs of our clients.

We will need to be both flexible and resilient in 2021-2022 because we have another huge year of change ahead. We will welcome many more new colleagues and add new skills to our workforce, so that we are ready to deliver more complex benefits and transfer clients from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Building for the future gives us opportunities to run large-scale, inclusive and accessible recruitment campaigns to break down barriers to rewarding, long-term careers for a diverse workforce.

I am determined that we make every effort to be an organisation that reflects the communities we are here to serve.

At the same time, we will still be protecting the wellbeing of the people who currently work for us while maintaining our high standards of service to our clients. I was pleased to see that one of the main findings of our recent all-client survey was that 90% of those who responded said their overall experience with us was either very good or good.

This feedback was particularly pleasing as it was given while staff and clients were still coping with the disruption from COVID-19. We have worked hard with our partners in the Scottish Government and elsewhere to make sure that we are ready to manage more benefits. As always, at the heart of what we do is our commitment to make sure people have a positive experience when using our service, whether it is their first time or they are a regular client.



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We will need the support of our stakeholders more than ever this year. Their input will be vital as we will be physically present in all 32 of Scotland's local authority areas to help clients access the benefits they are entitled to.

So, our Business Plan tells the story of what is set to be another challenging and hugely exciting year for Social Security Scotland. I am extremely proud of the significant progress we have made so far in delivering a social security system for Scotland. But I am not complacent about how far we have still got to go before we are fully up and running. This year is an important one for us, where we put more vital foundations in place. I look forward to further growth and transformation for our organisation over the next 12 months.



David Wallace
Chief Executive
Social Security Scotland



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Introduction

Social Security Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government and is one of the responsibilities led by the Director General for Communities. We are here to manage the Scottish social security system in line with the principles laid down in the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 and reflected in Our Charter. We do not make the rules about who can be paid benefits or how much money they should get. Those are decisions for Scottish Ministers and are set out in law.

We have a major role in creating the new social security system for Scotland, working hand in hand with our colleagues in the Scottish Government's Social Security Directorate Programme who will continue to design the policies, processes and systems that support the services we deliver.

We also benefit from being part of a wider family of Scottish Government directorates led by our Director General for Communities. This joint approach helps us to make sure that when a benefit is being transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions it is done so safely and securely.

Our main priority this year will be to continue to deliver our benefits, in the right amounts at the right time, and to continue to work with our colleagues to make sure that future benefits are delivered safely and securely.

You can find out more about our governance structure - the system of rules, practices and processes that govern us - in our Corporate Plan for 2020 - 2023.



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Headline budget information for 2021-22

Budget	Resource	Capital	Depreciation	Total
	£million	£million	£million	£million
Social Security Scotland administration	248.0	22.0	1.4	271.4
Benefit Expenditure ¹	3,453.9			3,453.9
Total Social Security Scotland	3,701.9	22.0	1.4	3,725.3

¹ The budget has been set based on the latest Scottish Fiscal Commission forecasts: Scotland's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts – January 2021 (fiscalcommission.scot).

This does not include Young Carer Grant as this is below the commission's threshold of materiality and Job Start Payment is not part of their legislative scope.

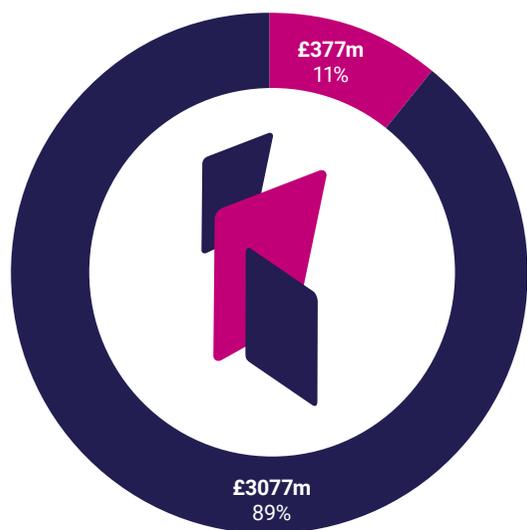
£22 million for capital budget is to fund the fit out of our buildings along with investment in our Information Technology infrastructure.

£1.4 million is to cover the **depreciation** charges for our assets but is subject to change if more assets transfer to us. This can be amended easily during the year.

Plain English Campaign's Crystal Mark does not apply to the table and text above.

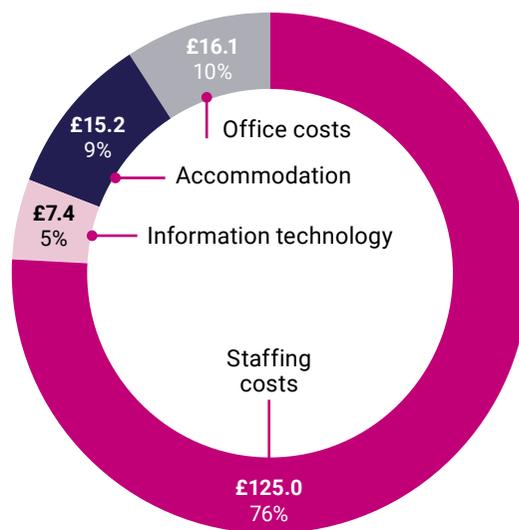
Headline budget information for 2021-22

Benefit spending



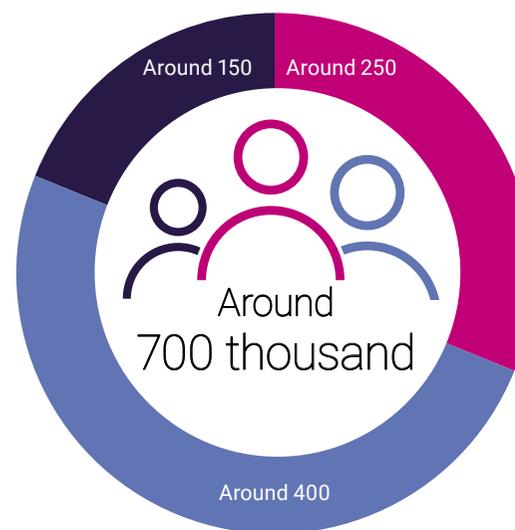
- Delivered by Social Security Scotland
- Delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions

Allocation of operational costs (not including agency agreements)



Who this will support

People supported, by group (thousands) 2021–2022



- Children
- Working age
- State Pension age

Figures have been rounded

Our priorities for 2021-2022

In our Corporate Plan for 2020-2023, we set out our objectives under the following themes.

- Helping to deliver a social security system with dignity, fairness and respect.
- Supporting people in Scotland to access devolved benefits that they are entitled to.
- Running our service in a responsible way.

To show how this year's priorities will help us to achieve these objectives, we have listed them below under the relevant themes.

Helping to deliver a social security system with dignity, fairness and respect

- Adapt, progress and learn from the effect COVID-19 has had on our organisation, while still delivering our full range of live services. This includes providing a range of ways to apply for our current benefits and handling applications as we recover from the pandemic.
- Build our diverse workforce while continuing to establish Dundee as our Headquarters.
- Continue to ask for feedback, through our internal quality assurance process and from stakeholders and clients, on how we deliver our services, then report on that feedback to make sure that we continue to provide our service in line with the commitments in Our Charter.

- Support our people and their wellbeing through the uncertainty of recovering from the pandemic and the growth of our organisation.
- Develop our plan for the future, setting out how we will grow as an organisation to meet all of our responsibilities.
- Develop a health and social care Division that will contribute expert advice to make sure decisions about disability benefits are consistent.
- Work with our colleagues in the Scottish Government's Social Security Directorate Programme to deliver Child Disability and Adult Disability Payments and prepare for the introduction of future benefits.



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Supporting people in Scotland to access devolved benefits that they are entitled to

- Make sure that colleagues in the Social Security Directorate Programme benefit from clients' feedback and insights as they design and develop the systems and processes we need to deliver complex benefits, including our telephone and web chat service contact centre and electronic methods.
- Roll out a local face-to-face service, in accessible buildings, that meets clients' current and future needs as we recover from the pandemic.
- Build on our work to lead and encourage our approach to inclusive communications across our organisation to make it as easy as possible for clients to access what they are entitled to.

- Maintain and develop relationships with a wide range of national and local stakeholders, including local authorities and health and social care partnerships, so we can help more people access our service, learn from best practice and prepare for the launch of other new benefits.
- Continue to raise the profile of our organisation, building positive working relationships with organisations through using new technology, to help us deliver the best service possible for our clients.

Running our service in a responsible way

- Further develop strong internal financial controls, rules, procedures and methods, to support continued growth in the number of clients, including the number of clients transferring from the DWP and the value of payments.
- Publish key strategies, including our Digital Strategy, our People Strategy, our Place Strategy and financial reports that show that we have the right controls in place to spend public funds responsibly.

- Provide accessible buildings that can be used flexibly to support the various needs of our staff to work in, and clients to visit, supporting our ambition to recruit and support a diverse workforce.
- Improve our digital systems, introduce a new and improved intranet for our people and further develop our website and social-media presence.
- Help prepare to improve our service in terms of the increase in payments and regular benefits by introducing new digital methods to improve how we detect and prevent fraud and errors.
- Prepare for the handover of full responsibility for benefit processes and systems from the Social Security Directorate Programme. Benefits will transfer in stages, when it is safe to do so, and we have the required processes and resource in place and when the work of the Programme is complete. This will take a number of years.



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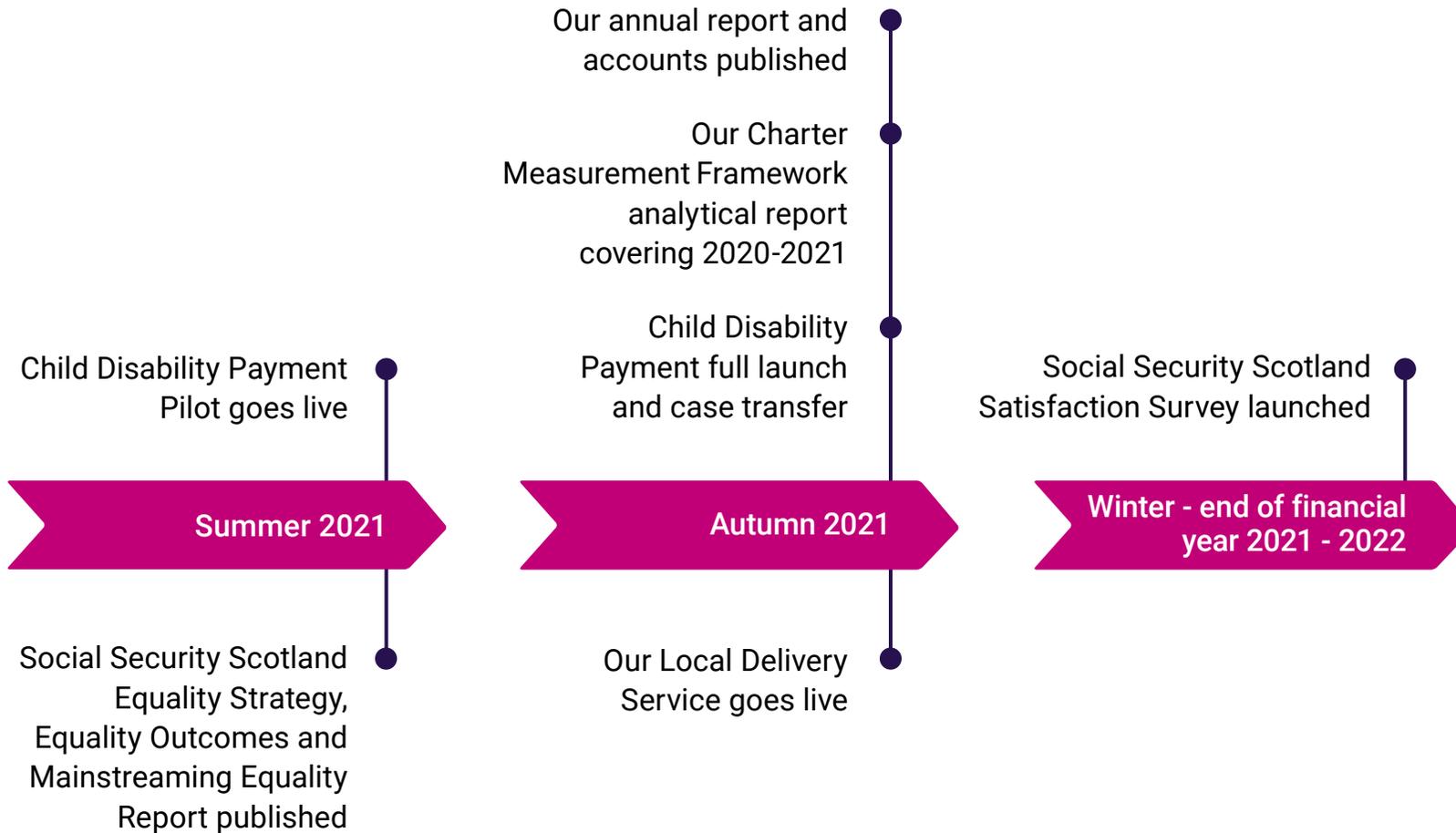
Measuring ourselves against each priority

We will report on how we measure each priority in our Charter Measurement Framework report 2021-2022.

Here are some of the ways in which we will gather the evidence.



Key milestones



Documents we refer to in this plan and where you can find information we publish

We have to carry out a range of duties, some of which we must do by law. We also have to report on our performance, including on how we meet the expectations in Our Charter.

You can find a copy of Our Charter on our website at socialsecurity.gov.scot, along with the first report on our performance in our Charter Measurement Framework 2019-2020.

We already publish some information on the Scottish Government website at gov.scot and will continue to do so throughout the coming year.

We will also be adding more information to our website at socialsecurity.gov.scot to make it easy for people to find what they need to know.



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