



Social Security Scotland  
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba



# Social Security Client Panels Research: Members' feedback survey

Summary report

Dignity,  
fairness,  
respect.



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## Background

This summary presents results from a survey with Client Panel members. Established in 2020, the Client Panels are made up of Social Security Scotland clients from across Scotland. Researchers speak to panel members to find out what people's experience of Social Security Scotland has been like. The research informs decisions about Social Security Scotland's systems, processes and policies.

The Client Panels are managed by a team of researchers based in Social Security Scotland. The aim of this research was to gather feedback from members about their experience of being part of the panel. The survey took place in May 2022. The survey included questions about Client Panels communications, publications, and taking part in research activities. All panel members were invited to participate in the survey and 364 members chose to take part (a response rate of 12%).

Like the make-up of the Client Panels overall, most respondents were women, and less than half had a disability or long-term health condition. Again, like the panel overall, a minority of respondents lived in a rural area or were from an ethnic minority background. Respondents had experience of all current Social Security Scotland benefits apart from Job Start Payment.

## Overall attitudes

Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the Client Panels.

- Around nine in ten strongly agreed or agreed that Social Security Scotland values feedback (88%) and being a member of the Client Panels helps them improve (87%).
- Nine out of ten (90%) said they were glad to be a member of the Client Panels and that they could take part in a way that suited them.
- The majority (85%) said taking part in the Client Panels was worthwhile.
- Almost all (95%) who had taken part in a research activity said they were very likely or likely to take part again in the future.

Respondents were pleased to have the chance to share their views and contribute towards making improvements.

“I feel Social Security Scotland is taking lots of time to try to get as many views as possible and engage people to work together. It feels very good to be invited to contribute and feel listened [to].”

**Client Panel member**

“[The Client Panels] are a great way to help and get things right for future clients who will need the services provided by Social Security Scotland and I get to talk with very nice people.”

**Client Panel member**

“I enjoy taking part in the Panel and feel like my contributions are taken seriously.”

**Client Panel member**

Respondents were asked a series of questions about Client Panels communications and publications.

## Communications

### Welcome message

All new members are sent a welcome message with information about the Client Panels. Just over half of respondents (55%) said they had read a welcome message.

Almost all strongly agreed or agreed the welcome message was easy to understand (94%) and the information was useful and clear (90%).

### Invites to research

Client Panel members receive invitations to take part in research activities such as surveys or interviews. Three quarters (75%) said they had read an invitation to take part in a research activity.

Most said the invite was easy to understand (94%) and made it clear how to take part (94%).

Around the same number (88%) said the closing date on the invitation gave them enough time to take part.

## Publications

### Reports

Around one in ten (11%) respondents said they had read a Client Panels report.

- Almost all said they were easy to understand (94%) and were detailed enough (91%).
- Almost all (94%) found the report(s) they read interesting.

### Summaries

One in ten (10%) respondents said they had read a summary.

- Most said it was easy to understand (93%) and was detailed enough (91%).
- A similar number (93%) found the summary or summaries they read interesting.

### Newsletters

Around a quarter (24%) of respondents said they had read a newsletter. Almost all said the newsletter was easy to understand (95%) and that they found it interesting (91%).

## Taking part in research activities

### Surveys

Respondents who had taken part in a survey rated their experience.

- Almost all said the questions were easy to understand (91%) and the survey was easy to complete (93%).
- Most (86%) said the length of the survey was about right.
- Almost all (90%) said they had enough time to take part before the survey closed.

### Interviews

Respondents who had taken part in an interview rated their experience.

- All or almost all said taking part was straightforward, the questions were easy to understand, and they could take part in a convenient way.
- All strongly agreed or agreed that the interviewer had made them feel at ease and that they were treated with dignity, fairness and respect throughout the interview process.

### In the future

To date, research activities have been carried out online or over the phone. Research with members in person may become possible in the future.

- Around a quarter said they were interested in taking part in a focus group in person (29%) or online via video call (23%).
- Around a third said they were interested in an in-person interview at a local location (35%). Slightly fewer said they would be interested in an interview in their home (28%).

“[The survey had] easy to understand questions and didn’t take too long to complete.”

**Client Panel member**

“The [interviewer] was very polite and well spoken, offered me time out when I got breathless. Was interested in what I was explaining and asked relevant questions.”

**Client Panel member**

“The fact that [during the interview] I was always reminded I never needed to answer if I didn’t want to and never felt judged on the answer I gave.”

**Client Panel member**

## Next Steps

Social Security Scotland will continue to work with the Client Panels to make sure the social security system works for the people of Scotland.

The Client Panels team will use the feedback to consider:

- how best to let members know how Social Security Scotland uses research findings to make improvements
- how and when to send reminders to members
- how to improve the subject line of email invitations, and
- increasing the time given to members to take part in research activities where appropriate.

To make sure as many members as possible are able to take part in research activities, support such as translation or an interpreter and flexible timing for interviews is now in place for all Client Panels research.

In the future, if research is carried out in-person, members will be reimbursed for expenses such as travel costs. Venues will be chosen which are as accessible as possible.



The Client Panels team have reviewed the findings from the research. The team were pleased to hear that many members have had a positive experience so far.



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### Contact us

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