



Social Security Scotland Client Survey: 2018-2020 – Visual Summary

Background



Social Security Scotland was set up in 2018. Its job is to deliver benefits in Scotland. Some of them are benefits that are being moved to Scotland from the UK Government's Department of Work and Pensions.



In 2019-2020, researchers designed the Social Security Scotland Client Survey. They wanted to learn about the experiences and needs of Social Security Scotland's clients. The survey was designed with input from people with lived experience of social security.

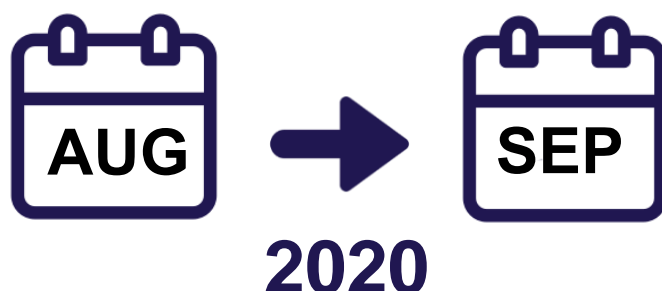


The survey results are being used to measure how Social Security Scotland is performing and where it can improve. In particular, the survey provides data for the [Charter Measurement Framework](#).

This report gives the findings from the Social Security Scotland Client Survey carried out in 2020. The survey was postponed from April 2020 to August 2020 due to the Covid-19 outbreak. The views in this report are from Client Survey respondents. The views may not be shared by Social Security Scotland, the Scottish Government or Scottish Ministers.

About the research

The survey asked respondents about their experience with Social Security Scotland. The survey took place in:



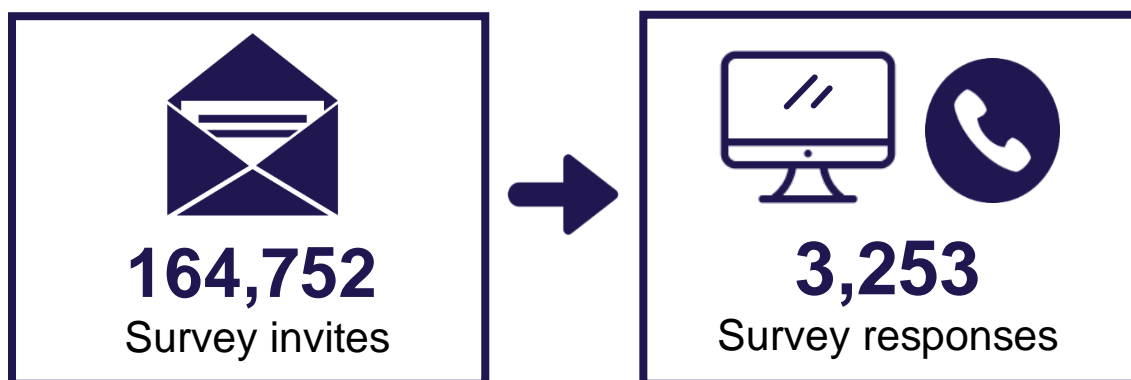
The survey was open to everyone who had received a successful decision on a benefit application. It covered from the start of Social Security Scotland in September 2018 to July 2020.



This included people who had applied for at least one of: [Best Start Grant](#), [Best Start Foods](#), [Funeral Support Payment](#) or [Young Carer Grant](#).



The survey was also open to anyone who had received [Carer's Allowance Supplement](#) (which does not need an application) during this time.



Of the people who responded to the survey:



Three quarters (76 per cent) had received or were due to receive Carer's Allowance Supplement.



One in five (21 per cent) had applied for Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods.



One in twenty-five (4 per cent) had applied for Funeral Support Payment.



One in fifty (2 per cent) had applied for Young Carer Grant.

Overall Experience

Respondents were asked how they felt about their overall experience with Social Security Scotland.

Nine in ten (90 per cent) respondents said their overall experience was 'good' or 'very good'.



Most (86 to 87 per cent) felt Social Security Scotland had treated them with dignity, fairness and respect.



RESPECT

Six in ten (66 per cent) said Social Security Scotland is an **open** organisation.

Seven in ten (77 per cent) said Social Security Scotland is an **honest** organisation.



Four in five (81 per cent) said they understand what Social Security Scotland does.



Most (86 per cent) felt Social Security Scotland had not wasted their time.



Comments about overall experience were mostly positive.



Some respondents felt they had a better experience with Social Security Scotland than with the Department for Work and Pensions.

"No need for improvement as Social Security Scotland are doing a first class service."

"My overall experience, I would say, was compassionate."

"Stress free experience unlike dealing with the Department of Work and Pensions. Please can Social Security Scotland deal with all benefits."



"MUCH easier to deal with Social Security Scotland than the Department of Work and Pensions."



When asked what could be improved, some respondents wanted better publicity of Social Security Scotland and its benefits.

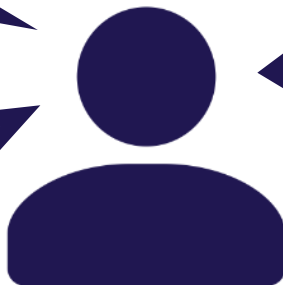


Others asked for more updates and information during the application process.

“More awareness of the organisation as people are missing out due to lack of knowledge”

“More updates when a delay is long like in my case. Maybe at least one per month so I could be sure you still have my application.”

“Make Social Security Scotland more visible online.”

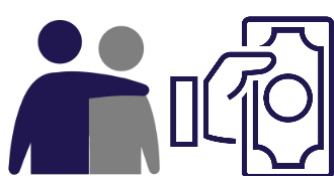


“You need to engage with people, respond to queries and try to not delay provision of services.”

Finding out about Social Security Scotland and getting information and advice

Respondents were asked how they first found out about Social Security Scotland.

Two in five (41 per cent) said being contacted by Social Security Scotland.



Around half (47 per cent) of respondents with experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement said they had found out about Social Security Scotland this way.



However, this was only the case for **one in five** (19 per cent) who had applied for a Social Security Scotland benefit.

Respondents were also asked if they had looked up or contacted Social Security Scotland to find out about benefits or services.

Two in five (43 per cent) said they had.





Six in ten (64 per cent) who had applied for a benefit said they had looked up or contacted Social Security Scotland.



This was the case for **four in ten** (38 per cent) with experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement.

Respondents' experience of getting information and advice from Social Security Scotland was generally positive.

Over four in five (84 to 86 per cent):



Had enough choices of communication to (86%) and from (84%) Social Security Scotland.



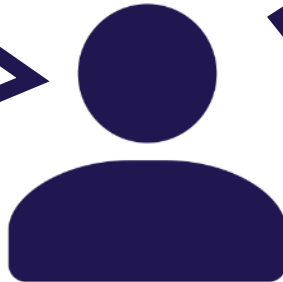
Got the support they needed (86%) and got it in the way they wanted (84%).



Most (84 per cent) found it 'easy' or 'very easy' to look up or communicate with Social Security Scotland to get the information they were looking for.

“As always polite, friendly, professional, very helpful and approachable. Thank you :-)”

“When I phoned for help and advice I got it no problem at all.”



“The information was easy to understand. There was not a lot to it. Pretty straight forward.”



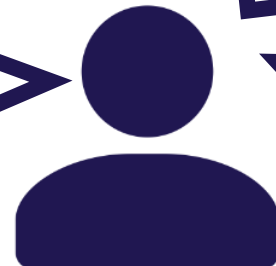
However, some respondents reported difficulty getting through to the phone helpline and being given the wrong information.



Others felt Social Security Scotland had not provided enough readily available information about its services and benefits.

“Not enough information about other possible entitlement when you receive a benefit. You have to find this out yourself.”

“Phone lines are often very busy and it is hard to get through”



“Was given wrong advice on what benefits I was entitled to”

Experiences with staff

Respondents were asked how they felt about their experiences with staff.

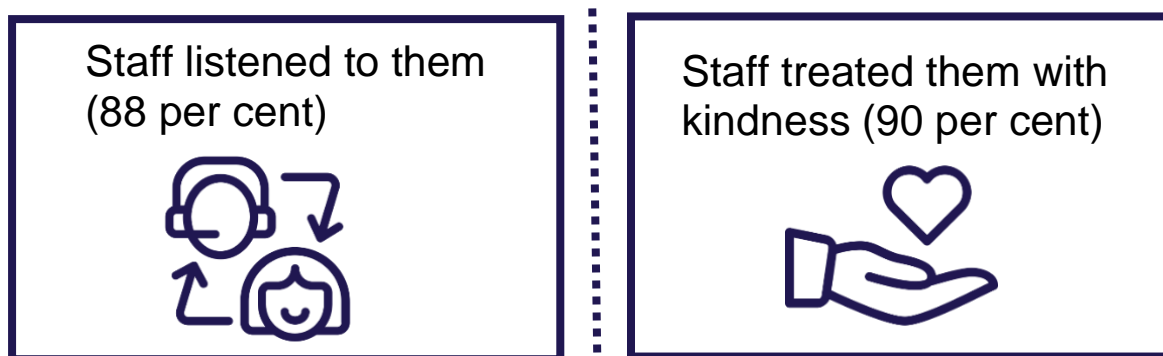


Three in ten (31 per cent) had been in contact with a member of Social Security Scotland staff.

Almost nine in ten (88 per cent) said their experience with staff was 'good' or 'very good'.



Around the same amount (88 to 90 per cent) said:



Over four in five (82 to 86 per cent) said:



They trusted staff (85%)
and felt trusted in return
(82%)



Staff made them feel
comfortable (86%)



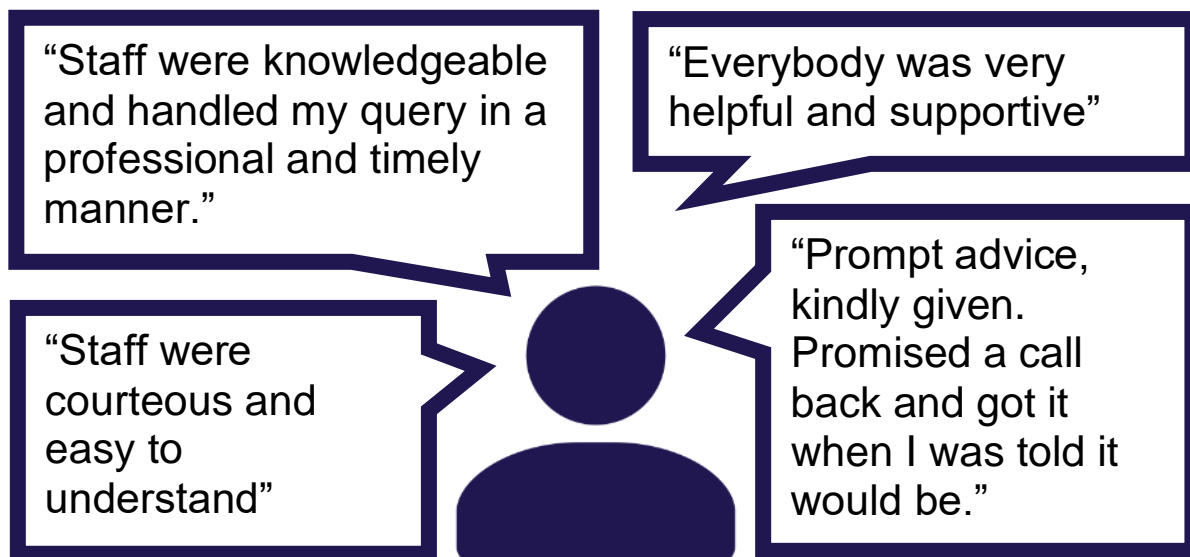
Staff were able to help
them (86%)



Staff were knowledgeable
about benefits (86%)



Most comments about staff were positive and
complimented their manner and helpfulness.



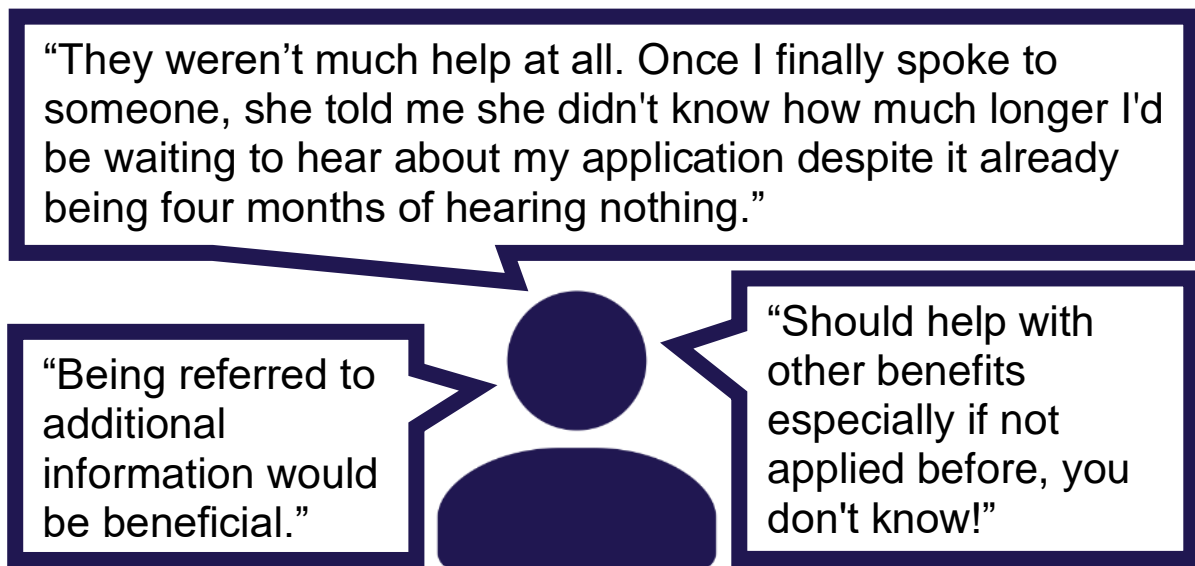
However, **one in three** (31 per cent) said they would have liked to have been told about **other benefits** but were not.



A quarter (26 per cent) would have liked to have been told about other sources of **additional help** but were not.



In some instances, staff were unable to give the help respondents wanted. This included not giving enough information on benefits or updates on applications.

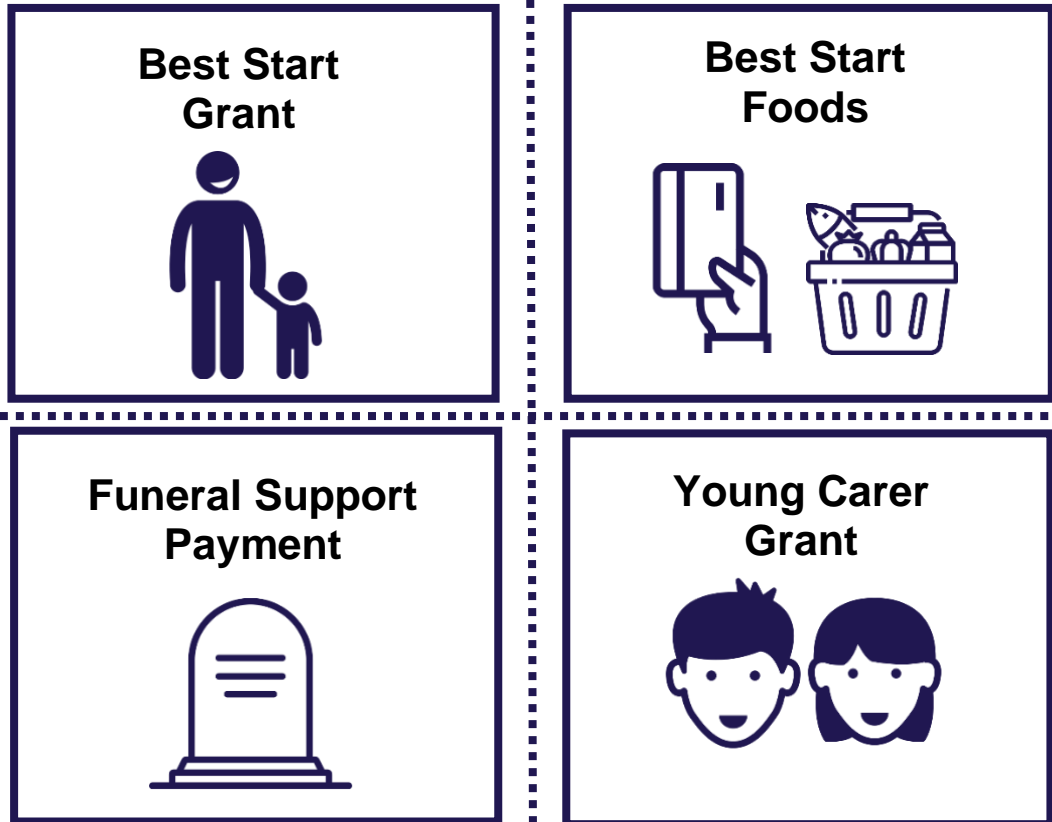


Applying for benefits

Respondents were asked about their experience of applying for a Social Security Scotland benefit.

Just over a quarter (27 per cent) said they had applied for at least one Social Security Scotland benefit.





Most (84%)
applied online



Just under two in ten (16%) applied
by phone



One in ten (10%) applied
by post

Most (87 per cent) said the overall experience of applying for a benefit was 'good' or 'very good'.



Nine in ten (90 per cent) thought the application process was clear.



Most (87 per cent) felt the application only asked relevant questions.



Slightly fewer people were happy about the time it took Social Security Scotland to process their application.

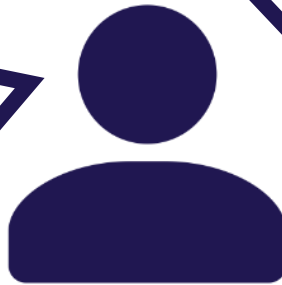
Just under eight in ten (79 per cent) agreed that their application was handled in a reasonable time frame.

One in five (19 per cent) felt they did not get enough updates about the progress of their application.



“While it took longer to process and let me know the outcome of my application due to coronavirus and the lockdown, I did not hear from Social Security Scotland in any way about my application until I contacted them. This was a frustrating and stressful experience.”

“Could have done with more updates or it being a lot quicker.”



“I think you should have a page where you can enter details and access application to see the progress of current application”

Receiving payments from Social Security Scotland



Respondents were asked about their experience of receiving payments from Social Security Scotland.

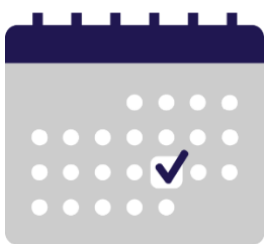
Eight in ten (86 per cent) had received a payment from Social Security Scotland.

Over nine in ten (93 per cent) said their overall experience of receiving payments was ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

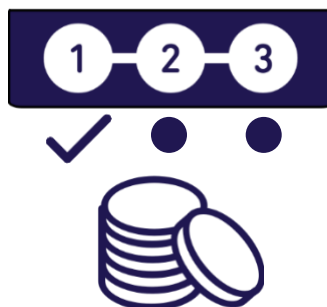


Most (94 to 95 per cent) said:

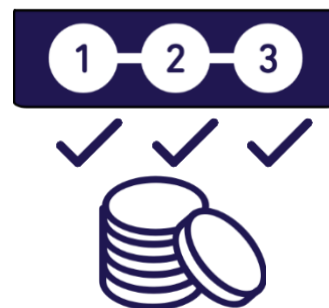
They received their payments when Social Security Scotland said they would (94%).



They received the right amount the **first time** (95%).



They received the right amount **every time** (94%).



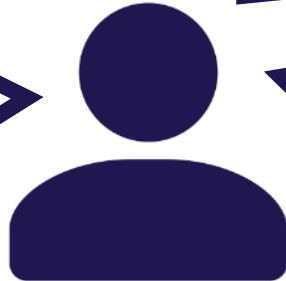
Many respondents who received payments from Social Security Scotland had received Carer's Allowance Supplement.



Several saw Carer's Allowance Supplement as a sign of appreciation for the work of carers.

"Carer's Allowance Supplement has been a welcome bonus in recognition of the many, many hours I spend caring for my mother."

"The extra money made me feel more valued as a carer."



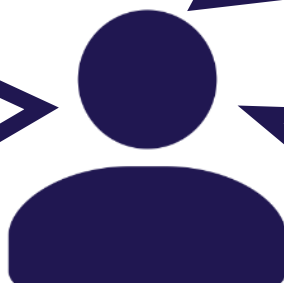
"It was nice to get a lump sum to treat myself with"



However, others felt that the Carer's Allowance Supplement was too low.

"It's nice that carers receive the extra money twice a year. It helps a little for the care we give our love ones. Sadly it's not enough money we receive monthly for the care and work we do. What other job pays that amount per week nobody. It's out of love we do it we deserve to get paid at least the minimum wage per hour not less than £10 per day."

"I'm surprised you think that £230 every 6 months is a life changer"



"Very grateful, but still inadequate."

Your application decision



Respondents who had applied for a Social Security Scotland benefit were asked about their experience of receiving a decision on their application.

Nine in ten (92 per cent) said they agreed with the decision.



Just under nine in ten (87 to 89 per cent) felt:

The decision was explained clearly (87%)



They understood the decision (89%)





A quarter (24 per cent) of those who disagreed with the decision challenged it.



Half (50 per cent) of those who disagreed didn't know how to challenge it.



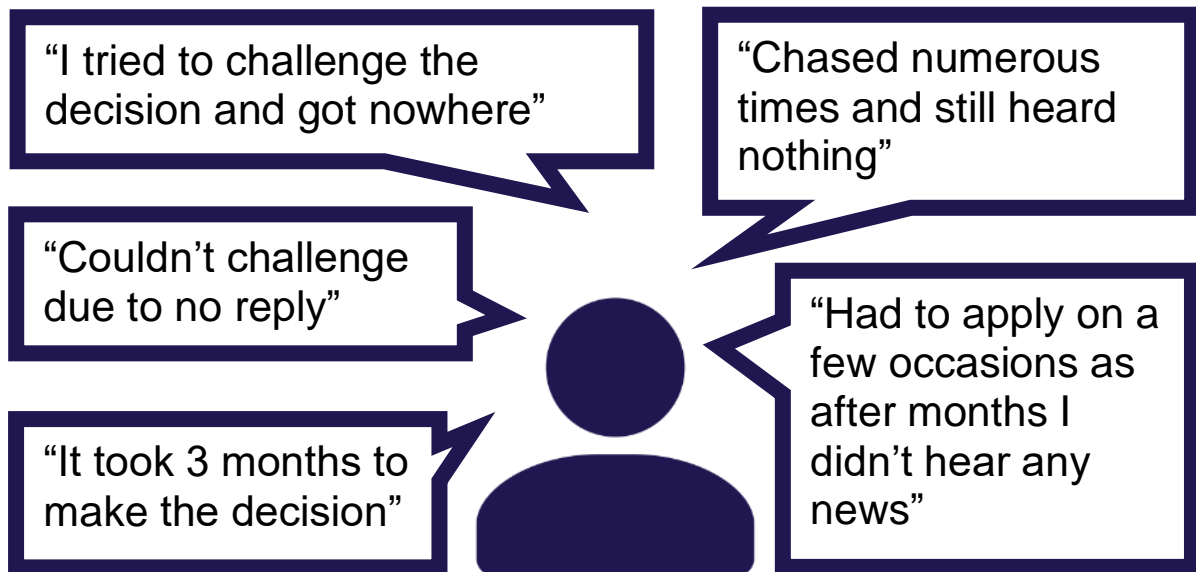
More than half (56 per cent) felt they couldn't challenge it.



Several respondents commented on finding it difficult to challenge decisions.



Others mentioned long waits to hear about a decision and a lack of updates during the process.



Barriers

Respondents were asked whether they had experienced barriers with Social Security Scotland.



7 per cent said they had experienced some sort of barrier in getting help from Social Security Scotland.

Two in five (43 per cent) said they told Social Security Scotland about the barriers they faced.



Only around a quarter (25 to 26 per cent) felt that:



Several respondents reported that they had experienced language and technology barriers.



Others felt helpline waiting times had been a barrier during their experience with Social Security Scotland.



Not knowing about Social Security Scotland and its services was also mentioned as a barrier.



Discrimination

Respondents were asked whether they had experienced any discrimination when dealing with Social Security Scotland.

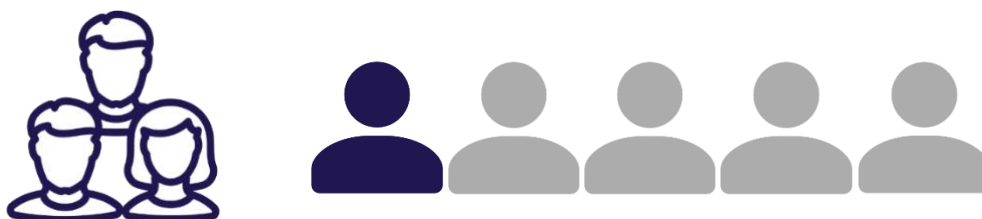


One in fifty (2 per cent) said they had been discriminated against during their experience with Social Security Scotland.

3 per cent preferred not to say.

Of those who experienced discrimination:

One in five (22 per cent) said it related to **staff**.



Two in five (41 to 43 per cent) said it related to **processes or policy**.



Three in five (64 per cent) didn't feel it was clear how to challenge the discrimination or felt they couldn't challenge it.



One in five (21 per cent) said they told Social Security Scotland about the discrimination.





Several respondents felt that the eligibility requirements of Social Security Scotland benefits were unfair.

Some felt mistreated as a benefit claimant.

“My daughter was discriminated against due to her age and situation - there was obviously no process for staff to follow and we were simply ignored.”

“I did feel that it was unfair that I did not qualify for the Best Start School payment since my only income is Carer’s Allowance.”



“Inherent age discrimination in policy regarding Carer’s Allowance Supplement. Carer activity does not cease at State Pension age.”

Next steps



The survey results give an insight into some of the experiences of Social Security Scotland clients.



The findings will be used to see how Social Security Scotland is performing and where it can improve. The results will be in the Charter Measurement Framework which reports on Social Security Scotland's performance.



There are plans to carry out the survey again in future. The plan is to send the survey to everyone who applies for a Social Security Scotland benefit. The survey will also be sent every year to people receiving recurring benefits.