

Executive Advisory Body

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 21 January 2025
Subject	Executive Advisory Body February 2025 minutes
Agenda No.	1
Paper No.	2.1

Attendees

Present

Non-Executive Members

Chris Creegan (CC)	Chair, Non-Executive Member
Deborah Rodger (DR)	Non-Executive Member
Naghat Ahmed (NA)	Non-Executive Member
Barry Matheson (BM)	Non-Executive Member
Laura Brennan-Whitefield (LBW)	Non-Executive Member
Gillian Mudie (GM)	Non-Executive Member

Executive Team Members

David Wallace (DW)	Chief Executive
Miriam Craven (MC)	Chief Operating Officer
Gayle Devlin (GD)	Deputy Director, Disability Operations
Andy McClintock (AMC)	Chief Digital Information Officer
Karyn Dunning (KD)	Deputy Director, Low Income Benefits and Operational Improvement
Stephanie Devenny (SD)	Deputy Director, Finance and Corporate Services
Ally MacPhail (AMP)	Deputy Director, Organisational Strategy and Performance
Paul Knight (PK)	Chief Medical Advisor
Jo Gray (JG)	Deputy Director, Strategy, Learning, Corporate Management & Finance (Social Security Programme)

Presenters

BG	Head of People Change
MG	Learning Delivery and Engagement Lead
Edel Harris (EH)	External – Chair of Interim Adult Disability Payment Review

Secretariat

LS
AMG

Risk and Assurance Team Leader
Corporate Governance Manager

Observers

NR
Heather Carson (HC)

Organisational Design
Scottish Government Deputy Director,
Corporate Hub

Apologies

Leanne Carson (LD)
Russell Frith (RF)

Programme Director, Social Security
Non-Executive Member

1. Welcome and Conflicts of Interest

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance and noted the apologies as listed above.
- 1.2. No potential conflicts of interest were noted.
- 1.3. The Executive Advisory Body endorsed the minutes from the last meeting on 26 November 2024.
- 1.4. Members welcomed Karyn Dunning, newly appointed Deputy Director, Low Income Benefits and Operational Improvement, to her first Executive Advisory Body meeting.

2. Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer's Update

- 2.1. The Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer provided updates on the following:
 - Leadership of the People and Place Division as Deputy Director, Nicola Rudnicki, is on maternity leave.
 - The Scottish Government's recruitment for the replacement of Permanent Secretary JP Marks is progressing following his announcement to move to HMRC.
 - Reflections on Social Security Scotland's evidence session to the Parliament's Social Justice and Social Security Committee. Discussions included the 2023-24 Annual Report and Accounts, preparations for the Social Security Programme Closure and a range of operational issues.
 - The introduction of Gayle Devlin and Karyn Dunning as Deputy Directors in Client Services Delivery along with a breakdown of their responsibilities and areas.

3. Social Security Scotland Performance Update

- 3.1. Members were presented with the latest performance update with the following key points highlighted:
 - Ongoing activity to reduce absence.
 - Child Disability Payment processing times have increased but remain within tolerance. Improvements are expected as new Case Managers complete training.
 - 445,000 Winter Fuel Payments have been processed.
 - Funeral Support Payment demand and resource.

- Data sharing work is ongoing with a front-door process established.

3.2. Members discussed the Social Security Programme closure, which is still on track for 2026.

4. Budget Update

4.1. SD provided members with an update to the Social Security Scotland budget 2025-26 and advised the following:

- Work is underway on the 2025-26 Budget Paper which will outline divisional budget allocations which is due in March 2025.
- An update on the Future Operating Model. There is close collaboration with Social Security Programme to manage the collective budget.
- As agreed with the Scottish Government, the 2025-26 Budget for Benefit Expenditure is in line with the latest Scottish Fiscal Commission estimates which were published in December 2024.

4.2. Members discussed the impact of changes to National Insurance rules for employers and the financial approach to be undertaken by Social Security Scotland.

4.3. Members discussed the main costs associated with recruitment.

5. People Survey and People Plan

5.1. MG presented highlights from the People Survey results and members were advised of the following:

- Scores are broadly in line with other large Civil Service delivery bodies.
- Results have been shared with governance groups, trade unions and colleagues.
- The Executive Team have agreed Divisions will take forward actions and integrate them into business plans.

5.2. BG presented the People Plan and advised members of the following:

- Insights from the 2023 People Survey are being used to develop the People Plan.
- Collaboration with trade unions is ongoing, with plans to roll out results to colleagues through drop in sessions.
- Links between the People Survey and People Plan will be established.

5.3. The Executive Advisory Body discussed themes identified across each Division and the ongoing work required to analyse responses to understand reasons and decisions needed by the Executive Team.

6. Adult Disability Payment

6.1. Edel Harris, the author of the Independent Adult Disability Payment review, was welcomed by members to discuss interim report findings and next steps. The following was highlighted:

- The final report will be presented to Scottish Ministers in July 2025.
- A breakdown of recommendations contained within the report.
- The interim report outlines initial findings, early actions that can be taken, and themes for exploration in the second stage.
- The second stage of the review is underway with stakeholder meetings focusing on eligibility criteria.

6.2. Members were advised of feedback by stakeholders with many expressing feelings of being treated with kindness and are supportive of Scotland's Social Security system.

7. Any Other Business

7.1. Members noted the below the line papers.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 18 March 2025

Date action taken	Detail	Item / Paper	Owner	Due Date	Update if applicable	Status
22 October 2024	Members to be advised of the outcome of the case at the Upper Tier tribunal and the consideration this may be referred to the Court of Session.	Social Security Scotland Performance update	Gayle Devlin	ongoing	These are ongoing cases and the Committee will be updated as appropriate.	Closed
22 October 2024	The Governance will schedule a deep dive in 2025 on Performance	Social Security Scotland Performance update	Nicola Rudnicki / Governance team	2025	2025 Deep Dives to be finalised by end of January.	Closed
22 October 2024	To include within the Business Plan update additional details on initiatives, specifically further details of key issues for any amber or red	Social Security Scotland Performance update	PMO Office / Helen Fogarty	26 November 2024	We are in the process of revamping our reporting for Delivery Mode with the hope that the format of those revisions will help discharge this action and meet the requests of EAB members. A further update will be provided at a later date when more progress has been made.	Ongoing

22 October 2024	Members agreed on having early sight and involvement with next year's Business Plan, a session will be arrange by the secretariat.	N/A	Governance team	26 November 2024	Meeting arranged December 2024	Closed
26 November 2024	Introduction meetings with Non-Executive Members and Karyn Dunning to be scheduled once Karyn is in post.	N/A	Governance team	21 January 2025	Conversations have begun with Business Support and meetings will be arranged	Closed
26 November 2024	Provide an update on the 2025-26 Scottish Budget	Chief Executive & Chief Operating Officer's Update	David Wallace	21 January 2025	David to provide update at January meeting.	Closed
26 November 204	Provide an update on the progress of the Social Security Scotland Digital Maturity Assessment	Social Security Scotland Performance Update	Andy McClintock	21 January 2025	Item scheduled for April 2025	Closed

26 November 2024	Future Governance Model to be provided to members at the next meeting.	Social Security Scotland Performance Update	Ally MacPhail	21 January 2025	Item scheduled for March 2025	Closed
26 November 2024	Further information around the 2024 People Survey to be provided to members	Social Security Scotland Performance Update	Nicola Rudnicki	21 January 2025	To be discussed at the January 2025 meeting	Closed
26 November 2024	Members will be provided with an update on the increase in redetermination numbers with a deep dive to be considered.	Social Security Scotland Performance Update	Ally MacPhail	21 January 2025	Deep dive scheduled	Closed