



Social Security
Scotland

Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba



Client Survey - Five Family Payments

October 2024 - March 2025

Summary report

Dignity,
fairness,
respect.

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Background | 2 |
| About the survey respondents | 3 |
| Executive summary | 4 |
| Communication and finding information | 5 |
| Application | 6 |
| Application – respondent comments | 7 |
| Support to complete application | 8 |
| Eligibility | 9 |
| Decisions | 10 |
| Decisions – respondent comments | 11 |

Background

- This report presents results from the Social Security Scotland Five Family Payments Client Survey.
- Everyone who had applied for any of Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods and received a decision on that application between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025 was invited to take part in the survey.
- This is the second Five Family Payments publication from the Client Satisfaction Survey since recent upgrades were put into effect:
 1. A review of the survey questionnaire to:
 - align it more tightly to the reviewed Charter Measurement Framework
 - reduce the length, and therefore, reduces the time for people to fill it out
 2. The launch of automatic notifications:
 - From July 2024 automatic invitations to the Client Satisfaction Survey have launched for most benefits which require an application. This means that the survey is to be issued on a rolling basis to all applicants following a decision on an application.

About the survey respondents



The report is based
on responses from

1,388

clients.

- Most described their ethnicity as 'white' (63%, compared to 37% minority ethnic)
- Most described their gender identity as 'woman' (82%, compared to 17% 'man')
- Most said their age was either 35-44 (42%) or 25-34 (29%)
- Most lived at a postcode categorised as SIMD quintile 1 (most deprived) (45%) or quintile 2 (23%)
- Most did not have a physical or mental health condition lasting or expected to last 12 months or more (75%), although a quarter did (25%)

Executive summary

- Around two fifths (38%) of respondents made an application for Scottish Child Payment only, while a third made a joint application for Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment (34%). A fifth of respondents made a joint application for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods (28%).
- The majority of respondents rated their overall experience with Social Security Scotland as either 'good' or 'very good' (87%), 5% of respondents rated their experience as 'poor' or 'very poor', while 9% were neutral.
- Nine-in-ten (89%) respondents rated the application process as either 'good' or 'very good'.
- The majority (85%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the eligibility criteria was clear before they applied for a Five Family Payment benefit.



89%

agreed that the application process was clear



90%

agreed that the application asked only relevant questions



89%

agreed that they were treated fairly through the application process



80%

agreed with the decision they received



80%

agreed that their application was handled within a reasonable time frame



84%

agreed that their decision was explained clearly

Communication and finding information

- Most respondents first heard about the benefit(s) they had applied for through word-of-mouth (23%), through a health service (for example, NHS worker, GP, Health Practitioner, Psychologist) (16%) or through Social Security Scotland contacting them directly (11%).
- When respondents used a Social Security Scotland service to find information about benefits, they were most likely to visit our websites (60%) or to contact a member of staff via our helpline (13%).
- The majority (81%) of respondents who contacted Social Security Scotland agreed that they got the support, information or advice they needed.

Adviser on phone was excellent. Very helpful, explained entire process and talked me through each stage.

Phone support was really important and it was greatly appreciated.

However, some respondents expressed that they did not feel properly informed about the Five Family Payment group of benefits:

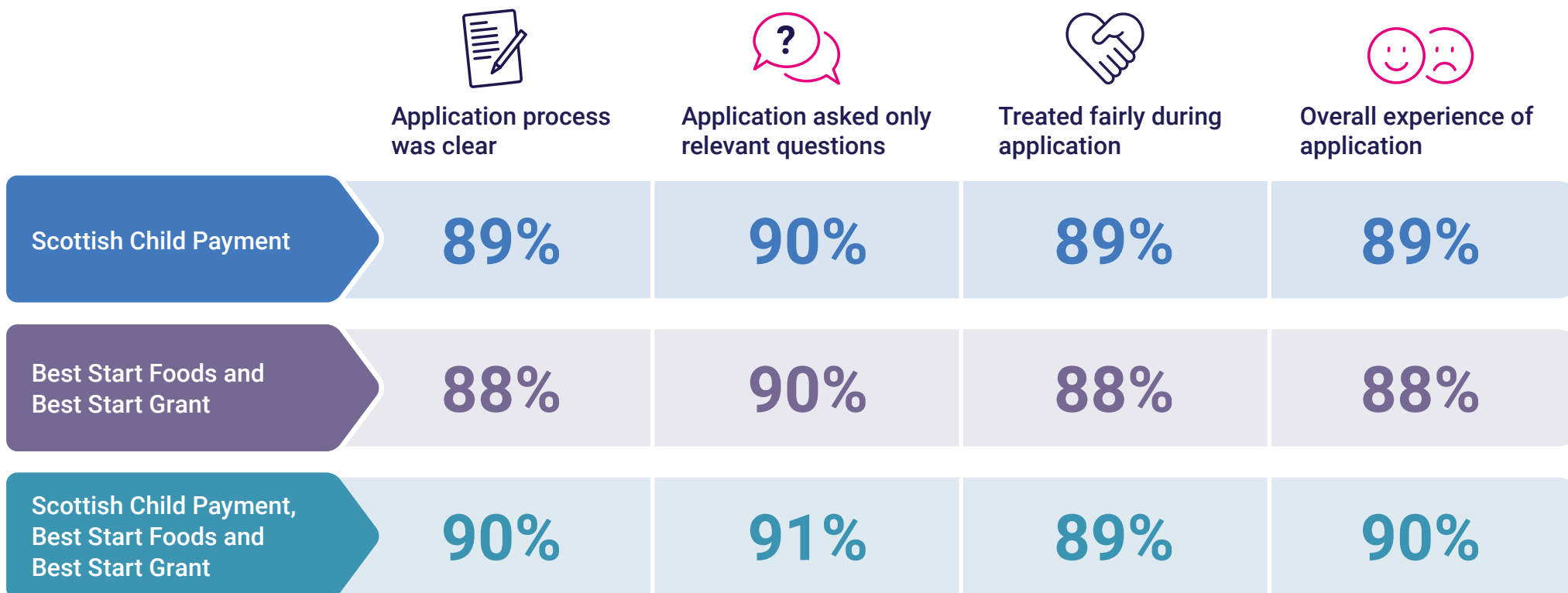
I had no idea my daughter was entitled to Scottish Child Payment. I would've been none the wiser if a friend hadn't informed me.

I applied for Best Starts Foods and was informed that I was not eligible. The condition of eligibility then changed, but I was not informed of this, so I did not realise that I became eligible to reapply which then meant I missed out for a while.

I missed the fact that I needed to be 24 weeks pregnant before applying. Although I don't think the application should have allowed me to go ahead anyway as I had to wait for someone to tell me I had applied too early. Maybe it should ask you if you are at least 24 weeks when filling out the application instead of allowing you to continue to the end.

Application

- The majority of respondents were satisfied with the application process, with nine-in-ten (89%) rating their overall experience of applying for one or more of the Five Family Payment benefits as either 'good' or 'very good'.
- Respondents who had 3 or more children were slightly more likely to rate 'the application process as 'very good' or 'good' (93%) compared to people with one or two children (89%).
- Most respondents agreed that the application process was clear (89%), asked only relevant questions (90%) and that they were treated fairly during the application process (89%).



Application – respondent comments

While the majority of respondents were satisfied with the application process, some expressed mixed opinions on making a joint application for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods.

Very easy to follow steps to complete application. I applied a little early and they phoned me the following day to advise me to reapply after 24 weeks of pregnancy. Very helpful.

Found the form easy to fill in. I had just moved house so finding documents to use was a bit of a nightmare but the ladies on phone were very helpful in telling me what was acceptable to use.

I was kept up to date via text messages that kept reassuring me that you were looking into my application. This made me feel like you cared and that my application was important and that you were getting on with processing it, a 'don't worry' kind of thing.

Application and submission was easy and straightforward. No issues encountered.

Not being able to apply for Best Start Foods separately from Best Start Grants was a bit confusing. My circumstances had changed since not being eligible for Best Start Foods, so was reapplying for that, but had to complete an application for both even though I was not due any Best Start Grants.

Having to apply for the Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods at the same time is strange, especially as you can apply for the Foods part in early pregnancy but not the Grant until after 24 weeks. They need to be made into separate applications to make things easier.



Support to complete application

- Over a quarter (28%) of respondents received help to complete their application.
- There were similar levels of around 3 in ten for help with the application process across benefits (29% of respondents who applied for Scottish Child Payment, 28% of respondents who applied for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods and 26% of respondents who applied for Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment).
- Most respondents who received help from Social Security Scotland agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to get that support (95%).
- Some groups were more likely than others to receive help to complete their application. For example, 38% of men compared with 25% of women, 40% of minority ethnic respondents compared with 20% of white respondents, and almost half (47%) of respondents aged 16-24.

There were several routes by which respondents were most likely to have received help to complete their application.



29%

were helped by a friend or family member



32%

were supported by Social Security Scotland



8%

received help from Citizens Advice Scotland

Eligibility

- 85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the eligibility criteria was clear before they applied.
- 83% of respondents agreed that the information on the Social Security Scotland website made it clear whether they would be eligible.
- While most respondents agreed that eligibility criteria was clear before they applied, some respondents expressed confusion. In particular, around qualifying benefit criteria, reapplication due to fluctuating income and changes to eligibility.

It's quite frustrating, I am new to receiving Universal Credit and a shift worker. Some months I don't receive any and I need to reapply for the Scottish Child Payment again and again as it stops on the months no Universal Credit was paid. I have ADHD and these things are super challenging to remember and keep doing.

It would have been beneficial to know that I should have put my application in when putting my Universal Credit application in, as I waited until that was approved and was then told that Social Security will not backdate, so missed out in the weeks I was waiting for Universal Credit approval.



I previously applied but it was not clear that eligibility for Best Start Foods had changed. I only learned about this at a breastfeeding group I go to and reapplied because of this. As a single mum on benefits with two small children, it'll be a massive help. There might be other people in the same boat, might be worth checking your system if possible? Or running a campaign to say eligibility criteria has changed?

Decisions

- Overall, most respondents reported that they agreed that their application was handled in a reasonable timeframe (80%), that they agreed with and understood the decision(s) (80% and 84%) and that the decision(s) was explained clearly (84%).



Application was
handled in a
reasonable time frame



Decision was
explained clearly



Respondent understood
decision



Respondent agreed
with decision

Scottish Child
Payment only

81%

83%

86%

83%

Joint application for
Best Start Grant and
Best Start Foods

77%

84%

83%

79%

Joint application for
Scottish Child Payment
Best Start Grant and
Best Start Foods

80%

84%

82%

77%

Decisions – respondent comments

I wanted to express my heartfelt thanks for the Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods in Scotland. This initiative is truly one of the best things any government could do for those who are struggling. It provides much-needed support to families, ensuring that children have a strong start in life. Your efforts in making these programs accessible and effective are deeply appreciated. Thank you for making a real difference in the lives of many.

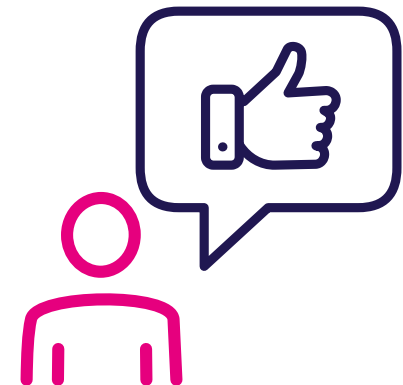
The decision process was timely and well-communicated, providing clarity and confidence in the outcome.

Woman was great she caught up with my claim and I got my payment within a week, very happy and she was very nice told me what else to apply for once baby is here.

I was initially disappointed in being unsuccessful with the Best Start Grant, but was reassured that the reason was because I was just a few months too early in applying and I was still eligible. I got a letter about Scottish Child Payment saying I was successful which I wasn't expecting, given that the first grant was not deemed suitable. It will help so much in getting my children the things they need over the Easter and summer until my wages increase. Thank you for the extra support.

All in all, it was really easy and straight forward. Again, I will have to reapply but it's no issue because it really is straight forward. Thank you.

Decision following application was dealt with and processed quickly.





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Contact us



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ISBN: 978-1-83691-612-3