

# Local Delivery Service Survey 2023

Summary report

Dignity,  
fairness,  
respect.

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## Background

- This report presents results from the Social Security Scotland Local Delivery Survey. Fieldwork ran through all of October 2023
- The survey was sent to all Client Panel members. At the time, this totalled 9017 people

## About the survey respondents

- The report is based on responses from 1069 clients, giving a 12% response rate
  - Most described their ethnicity as 'white' (87%, compared to 10% minority ethnic)
  - Most described their gender identity as 'woman' (75%, compared to 24% 'man')
  - Most said their age was either 35-44 (30%) or 45-54 (28%)
  - Most had a physical or mental health condition lasting or expected to last 12 months or more (59%), compared to those that did not (37%)
  - Most respondents (88%) described their sexuality as heterosexual/straight, 4% said they were gay/lesbian, 2% said they were bisexual and 6% said they would prefer not to say

## Knowledge and experience of the Local Delivery service

- The majority of survey respondents (57%) had not heard of the Local Delivery service
- 16% of respondents had had an appointment with the service
- The data in this report about experiences of the Local Delivery service is only from those who have had an appointment

Of those that had heard of the service, the way they had received information was...



**24%**

a letter from Social Security Scotland



**23%**

information online



**19%**

hearing from an adviser on the phone with Social Security Scotland

## Arranging an appointment

- Most respondents (84%) said their overall experience of booking a Local Delivery appointment was easy or very easy
- Most respondents (between 82% and 90%) agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to book an appointment for a time that suited them, that they had enough choice about where or how the appointment would take place and that the location of the appointment was convenient
- Respondents' suggestions to make booking an appointment easier included reducing the wait times on the helpline and introducing a dedicated route to speak to Social Security Scotland about Local Delivery and to book appointments (such as online)
- Some respondents mentioned that they would have liked more choice around their appointment time and format and that it was difficult to work around other commitments to have an appointment

Having a separate number to call to book an appointment and not having quite lengthy waiting time on hold or appointments done via online system.

It was so hard to arrange time off work and get my daughter out of school.

## Before an appointment

- The majority of respondents (85%) were clear on what their Local Delivery appointment would involve
- The vast majority (87%) of respondents were happy with the length of time between booking and having their Local Delivery appointment
- Most survey respondents (61%) said that the adviser they were going to meet with during their appointment phoned them beforehand. Of those that received the call, 87% agreed that it was helpful to talk to the adviser they were going to meet before their appointment
- Respondents felt extra information that would have been useful ahead of their appointment included more information on the purpose of the appointment, what would be discussed and what the advisors were able to help with
- Others were keen to have additional information on what supporting documents or information needed to be included in their application or gathered before their Local Delivery appointment, especially given that it could take a while to get this information



**84%**

The majority of respondents felt that it would be helpful to receive a notification reminding them about their appointment.

I don't think I had been properly advised of the depth of interview and how much my son would be questioned. More advanced warning of this would have been good.

Assurance that it was to help me complete the form rather than feeling I was going to have to justify my illness.

## Gathering information or evidence

- The majority of clients who responded to the survey (58%) had to gather information or evidence before their appointment
- Most of these respondents (67%) found this easy or very easy
- Those who found the process difficult spoke of barriers to gathering evidence, not being sure what evidence or information was needed, not having enough notice to gather it and the high administrative burden of gathering evidence or information

There is no easy way to access our medical records through the NHS. It's constant phone calls and being transferred, etc. Due to my own disabilities, I find the whole process of form filling and document keeping/tracking, really hard and not something suited to my disabilities.



I didn't get a list of the information they needed before hand they just asked for it when on the phone and I had to look around for it during the appointment.

## During an appointment

### Why and where appointments were held

- The most common reasons respondents had a Local Delivery appointment was to get help to complete an application (37%), to become an appointee (17%) and to get help to complete a review for Adult Disability Payment or Child Disability Payment (14%)
- Adult Disability Payment was by far the most common benefit discussed at appointments (58%), followed by Child Disability Payment (18%) and Scottish Child Payment (11%)
- The most popular type of Local Delivery appointment with survey respondents was a visit from an adviser in their home (41%), with the least popular format of appointment being a meeting with an adviser at a location near where they live (14%)

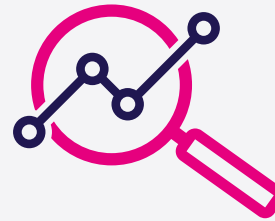
### Local Delivery advisers

- Survey respondents' views of advisers was mainly positive
- Between 89% and 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements: 'the adviser was knowledgeable about Social Security Scotland benefits and processes', 'the adviser put me at ease', 'the adviser listened to me' and 'the adviser treated me with dignity, fairness and respect'
- The survey also explored respondents' experience of staff assisting them with their application. Respondents were very positive again with between 75% and 93% agreeing or strongly agreeing with statements about how advisers helped them with their applications
- Most respondents (85%) were clear what would happen next at the end of their appointment
- Most respondents (93%) also felt at ease while the adviser was in their home

She made us feel very relaxed and listened to as we had a lot of discussions regarding our son's autism and mental health difficulties. She didn't rush us, was extremely empathetic and was amazing while trying to communicate with our son.

## Appointees

- An appointee is someone who has applied for the legal right to manage someone else's Social Security Scotland awards. An adult might need an appointee if they're not able to make or communicate decisions because of a mental or physical health condition
- The survey collected a small amount of data on the experiences of appointees who used the Local Delivery service
- Some respondents felt the appointee process was laid back, straightforward and that the advisers they were supported by were understanding and supportive
- Others felt that the process was confusing and took a long time, found it difficult to gather the required evidence and were frustrated at having to be certified as an appointee twice for two different benefits
- The majority of appointee respondents (73%) said they were comfortable to have the person they support at the appointment. Whereas just over half (55%) said the person they support found this uncomfortable



**93%**

The majority of appointees who responded to the survey were interested in taking part in future research about their experience of the appointee process.

I did not in the end become an appointee. I found the process for becoming a named contact confusing as I thought it had been sorted out at the appointment at home but later discovered that it hadn't.

I found the process very simple, the guy came to the house and talked through it all, I was given opportunities to ask questions. The only issue I found was I received a letter saying I had to apply as she was turning 16 about 4 times.

## Overall experience

- When asked to reflect on their answer, many respondents who answered positively praised the manner of advisers highlighting that they made respondents feel at ease and understood and treated them with kindness
- Some respondents spoke of how using the Local Delivery service meant they were able to access support they needed to complete applications that they would have struggled with otherwise
- Others spoke about how using the service made the process of applying for benefits clearer and simpler
- Respondents also spoke about how they valued being able to meet an adviser in their home and how this helped them better express themselves

Relief at finally being able to show impact of my condition and to share information about it.



**89%**

The majority of respondents rated their experience of having a Local Delivery appointment as good or very good.

I would never have been able to fill out the form myself. I found it very daunting and the wording of the questions were sometimes a bit confusing, the adviser was able to explain exactly what was being asked.

The lady that came out to me was kind and respectful. She did not make me feel foolish. She would explain things in an alternative way if I didn't understand, instead of simply repeating what I hadn't understood. There was no rush. I was amazed.



- Respondents also gave suggestions on what could improve the service
  - Most often, respondents spoke about wanting improved communication, including reduced waiting times on the phone lines, more information on the benefits system, more information prior to the appointment and more clarity over next steps after the appointment
  - Some respondents also spoke about how they would have liked more choice around the location, timing and length of appointments
  - A few respondents commented on how the manner and conduct of the advisers could be improved
  - Respondents spoke specifically about how they would like advisers to have more knowledge and understanding of the conditions they have and how they felt like they were being interrogated

More prior information, sharing of data required and answers. It wasn't explained prior to interview what was expected from my son. It wasn't appropriate questions that he was expected to answer. I was not given any feedback after the appointment.

Someone with knowledge of our conditions and who didn't interrogate us.

Yes if I had been given choice of location for meeting and better time as was at supper time and although told would last 30 mins ended lasting an hour and kids were hungry by time [the adviser] left.

## Next Steps

- The survey sought to explore respondents' preferences for feeding back about the Local Delivery service going forward. Respondents' preferred route for this would be through receiving an email shortly after their appointment with different options for filling out the survey
- It could be valuable to carry out further research to evaluate the experiences of delivery of the Local Delivery service from the perspective of Social Security Scotland staff and other stakeholders
- The research has uncovered support from respondents for new practices that could be introduced, such as the introduction of appointment reminder notifications
- Other areas for improvement include better communication and communication channels. Improvements have recently been made in this area, namely, a specific option on the general phone line to allow clients who have already booked a Local Delivery appointment to select this option and more quickly talk to a member of staff
- A further area of focus could be ensuring that practices around clients choosing the timing, location and length of their appointments are still fit for purpose and effective for clients and the organisation
- The research also showed that there could be a need to ensure advisers are confident in consistently delivering a quality service that helps clients navigate the Social Security Scotland system and the devolved benefits available, with signposting support for other benefits



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