

Social Security Scotland

Our Charter

**What you can expect from the Scottish Government
and Social Security Scotland**

Easy Read version

Introduction



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

The Scottish Government is setting up a new benefits system for Scotland.



Some benefits from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) - mostly disability and carer's benefits – will move to this new system.



The people of Scotland were asked what they thought about social security and benefits. They said that the UK system is stressful, difficult to use and often treats people badly.

The Scottish Government wants to do things differently. It has set-up Social Security Scotland to run benefits in a more positive and supportive way.

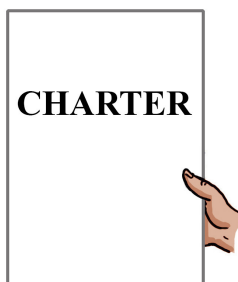


The new system will be run with these ideas in mind:

- Benefits are a human right
- Benefits are a public service
- Treating people with respect should be at the heart of the system
- The system will help to reduce poverty
- The people of Scotland will help to plan the benefits system
- We will look for ways to keep making the system better
- The system will work well and give good value for money



What is Our Charter?



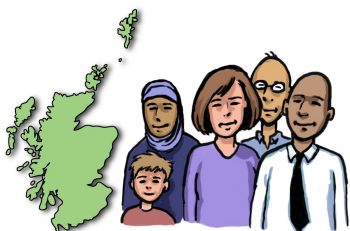
A charter is a document that sets out what the Government is going to do. It is a promise made to the people. Our Charter says what you should expect from the Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland.

Who made Our Charter?



- People with experience of social security.
- Organisations that help or support people to use the new system.
- Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland staff.

Who is Our Charter for?



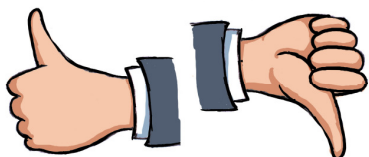
Every person in Scotland. Social security is a human right – a way of helping ourselves and each other. It is a public service that any of us could need at any time. So Our Charter belongs to all of us.

Who makes sure that Our Charter is being followed?



The Scottish Government must tell the Scottish Parliament what it has done to make sure promises are being kept.

The Scottish Commission on Social Security (an independent group of experts) will also tell the Scottish Parliament if Our Charter is being followed.



The Scottish Parliament will use this information to decide if the Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland are doing well or if they should do more.



We all have a personal responsibility to making sure Our Charter is being followed:

- We all need to know our rights and what we are supposed to do.
- We need to speak up if things are not being done properly.

What is the difference between the Scottish Government, Social Security Scotland, the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Commission on Social Security?



The Scottish Parliament is made up of 129 MSPs elected by the people of Scotland. Its job is to pass laws and to make sure the Scottish Government is doing what the people of Scotland want it to do.



The Scottish Government is led by the First Minister. Its job is to come up with new plans and decide what should be done in the areas it is in charge of - health, education and some social security benefits.



Social Security Scotland is an organisation set up by the Scottish Government to run benefits in a way that follows Our Charter.



The Scottish Commission on Social Security is an independent group of experts who check on the new social security system and tell the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament if it thinks things could be better.



All four organisations have an important part to play in Scotland's social security system.

Who can you tell if you do not think Our Charter is being met?



For feedback, suggestions and complaints, please speak to a member of Social Security Scotland staff - visit **mygov.scot/ socialsecurity-feedback** or call freephone **0800 182 2222**.



Staff will try to help you right away. We will listen, learn and make sure we do better next time.



If you are still unhappy please contact independent Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) - visit **spsso.org.uk** or call freephone **0800 377 7330**.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

You can also complain direct to Scottish Ministers about the rules around benefits, like the amount of money that is paid and who is entitled to benefits. Please contact **sgcomplaints@gov.scot**.

A people's service

We are here to help you get everything you're entitled to.

Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Government will:



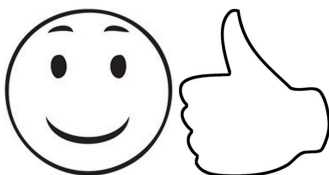
1. be patient, kind and think about how you might feel
2. listen to you, trust you, and treat you like a person
3. treat everyone equally, fairly and without discrimination



4. support you through your application, telling you what is happening and why
5. make sure staff know all about the benefits system and help you get what you are entitled to



6. tell you where to get independent advice and support if you want extra help with your application or appeal. You can also ask for someone you know to support you



7. make the right decisions and get them right first time



8. be honest by giving clear reasons for benefits decisions and tell you what to do if you do not agree with them

9. pay you the right money at the right time



10. tell you about other organisations and services that can help make things better for you



11. hire staff who care about giving a service based on equality, respect and human rights

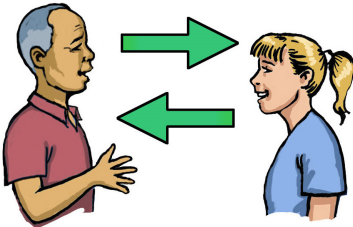


12. get people with diverse experiences to help in training staff

Please help us by:



1. treating staff with fairness and respect
2. telling us if you have any access or cultural needs
- we'll do our best to meet them
3. giving us the information we need to help you and
telling us if something changes
4. telling us if you have any problems with getting
this information that we might be able to help with
5. telling us how you feel about the service. We
always want to get better and your ideas can help
us do that.



Making things work

We will plan services with the people who use them.

Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Government will:



1. make our information and the way we do things as simple and clear as possible

2. know that your time matters and deal with your application and questions as quickly as we can

3. do what we can to meet your needs and wishes

4. support your wellbeing and make sure that your experience with us is as positive and stress-free as possible

5. make sure that people with disabilities who need help making an application can get independent advocacy

6. give face-to-face services in convenient and accessible places. This includes home visits.

7. look at your application again if you disagree with a decision. Someone different will look at it as if it was a completely new application

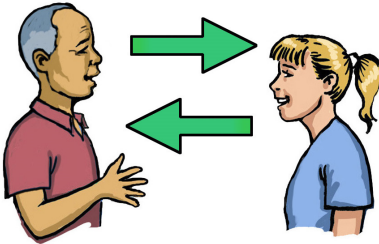
8. tell you how you can appeal if you still do not think the right decision has been made after it has been looked at again

9. keep paying you at the same level if you challenge a decision to lower or stop your benefit

10. only do a face-to-face assessment for disability benefits when we are not able to make a decision with the information we already have

11. make sure that face-to-face assessments are done in a way that puts your wellbeing first

12. make sure that face-to-face assessments are done by qualified staff who understand your disability and how it affects you



A learning system

We will ask for feedback and help people to give the best service they can.

Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Government will:



1. listen, learn and do better next time. We will own up when we make mistakes and listening to feedback, complaints and appeal decisions



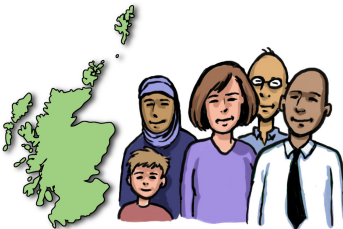
2. help you to give feedback, tell you how to complain and do everything we can to make things right



3. involve people who use the service in checking how well it works

4. make sure staff are well trained, supported and well equipped to do their jobs

5. make sure that staff understand the needs of different people and the barriers they face. No-one will be discriminated against because of who they are



6. help staff to speak up when they think we could give a better service

7. build a workforce that has lots of different people, like the people of Scotland

8. help people to trust us by being open and honest about what we do



9. work with other organisations to make sure that people get the best possible help and support

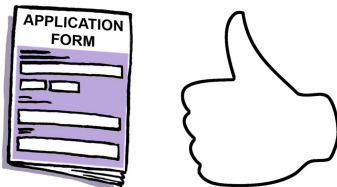
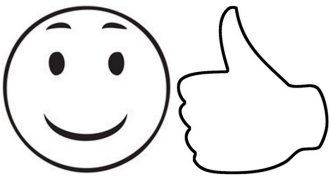
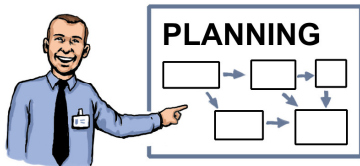
10. try to get other organisations to follow the ideas in Our Charter

11. base services in places that are accessible and welcoming for everyone

A better future

We will invest in the people of Scotland – making a positive difference to all our lives.

The Scottish Government will:



1. make the social security principles and Our Charter part of all our planning
2. involve people with different experiences of social security in planning what we are going to do
3. make new laws that mean more equality, less discrimination and the human right to social security for everyone
4. use our social security system to help people to play a full and active part in society
5. help people to think of social security as a good thing
6. challenge the wrong things some people think about social security to stop people seeing it in a bad way
7. change the way people talk about social security - use more positive words to talk about the service and the people who use it
8. try to make fairer rules about who can claim benefits and think about making new benefits to meet people's changing needs
9. look at the payment levels of Scottish benefits every year
10. raise disability, employment-injury, carers and funeral expense benefits every year
11. make sure that as many people as possible claim the benefits they are entitled to. Work extra hard to reach people who are most likely to be left out
12. use the social security system to fight poverty
13. work with other public services for a fairer, richer Scotland



14. use resources fairly and properly, giving value for money but putting people first
15. come up with ways to tell if we are keeping the promises in Our Charter.

Contact us

0800 182 2222

mygov.scot

@SocSecScot

Social Security Scotland

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