



Social Security Scotland Statistics

Social Security Scotland client and applicant diversity and equalities analysis for April 2024 to March 2025

Key points

- This publication includes equalities information about 148,645 people that applied for Social Security Scotland benefits between April 2024 and March 2025.
- Adult Disability Payment accounted for the highest proportion of applicants in this publication at 42%, similar to the last publication. This year also includes applicants for Carer Support Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment for the first time.
- The proportion of approved outcomes decreased from 67% to 64% compared to the last publication. Approval rates were the highest for applicants choosing 'Prefer not to say' across all questions in the equalities monitoring form.
- The largest differences in approval rates were observed for religion, while age had the smallest differences in approval rates.
- This publication also includes intersectionality analysis which reports on how the number of applicants and their approval rates vary when looking at two characteristics combined e.g. age and gender.

Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering the period between April 2025 and March 2026, will be released in August 2026. As per the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#), we publish a timetable of statistical releases for the twelve months ahead on the [Social Security Scotland website](#).

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Key points | 1 |
| Frequency of publications | 1 |
| Introduction | 3 |
| Main findings..... | 5 |
| General findings..... | 5 |
| Ethnicity | 8 |
| Gender | 11 |
| Physical or mental health condition or illness | 13 |
| Sexual orientation | 18 |
| Transgender | 20 |
| Religion | 22 |
| Age | 25 |
| Geography | 27 |
| Application channel..... | 30 |
| Intersectionality | 31 |
| Glossary | 33 |
| Background..... | 35 |
| About the data..... | 37 |
| Data collection | 37 |
| Data storage | 37 |
| Data processing | 38 |
| Data quality | 43 |
| Data analysis | 45 |
| Related publications | 47 |
| Future developments | 48 |
| An Official Statistics publication for Scotland | 48 |
| Correspondence and enquiries | 48 |
| Complaints and suggestions | 49 |
| Crown Copyright | 49 |

Introduction

This publication provides statistics on the diversity characteristics of people applying to Social Security Scotland between 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 for the following benefits:

- Adult Disability Payment
- Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods
- Carer Support Payment
- Child Disability Payment
- Funeral Support Payment
- Job Start Payment
- Pension Age Disability Payment
- Scottish Child Payment
- Young Carer Grant

The information in this publication relates to the person completing an application form for one of the benefits listed above, who are referred to as ‘applicants’ throughout this publication. Diversity information is collected using an equalities monitoring form which applicants are asked to complete when applying for a benefit. These forms are usually completed by the person claiming the benefit but are sometimes completed by someone acting on their behalf. Social Security Scotland uses this information to understand who is using their services and how their processes work for different groups of people.

This publication presents statistics about applicants and their most recent application outcome. If an applicant submitted multiple applications and received multiple outcomes, the information from the application with the most recent outcome was used. This means that applicants are only counted once in the statistics. In some cases, applicants did not return an equalities monitoring form or it was not possible to link their equalities and application information together. These cases are not included in these statistics.

All tables referred to within this publication are available in an Excel workbook on the [Social Security Scotland website](#). The intersectionality tables are contained within a separate Excel workbook on the same webpage.

Separate publications on the number of applications, outcomes and payments for each benefit are also available on this website. These publications contain additional statistics on certain diversity characteristics. See the [related publications](#) for more information.

These statistics are official statistics in development. Official statistics in development may be new or existing statistics, and will be tested with users, in line with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

We are aiming to continue improving the quality of these statistics by refining the methodology and by working with the Scottish Government to improve data quality.

We are seeking users' views on the content of this publication to ensure it best meets their requirements. If you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to provide, please email MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot.

Scottish Government statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

Main findings

General findings

Between April 2024 and March 2025, Social Security Scotland received 276,610 applications. In this publication, we report on 148,645 applicants, whose applications were linked with their equalities information.

Figure 1: Proportion of applicants by benefit, publication comparison

Sources: [Social Security Scotland - Social Security Scotland Client and Applicant Diversity and Equalities Analysis for April 2023 to March 2024](#) (last publication), Table 13 (this publication)

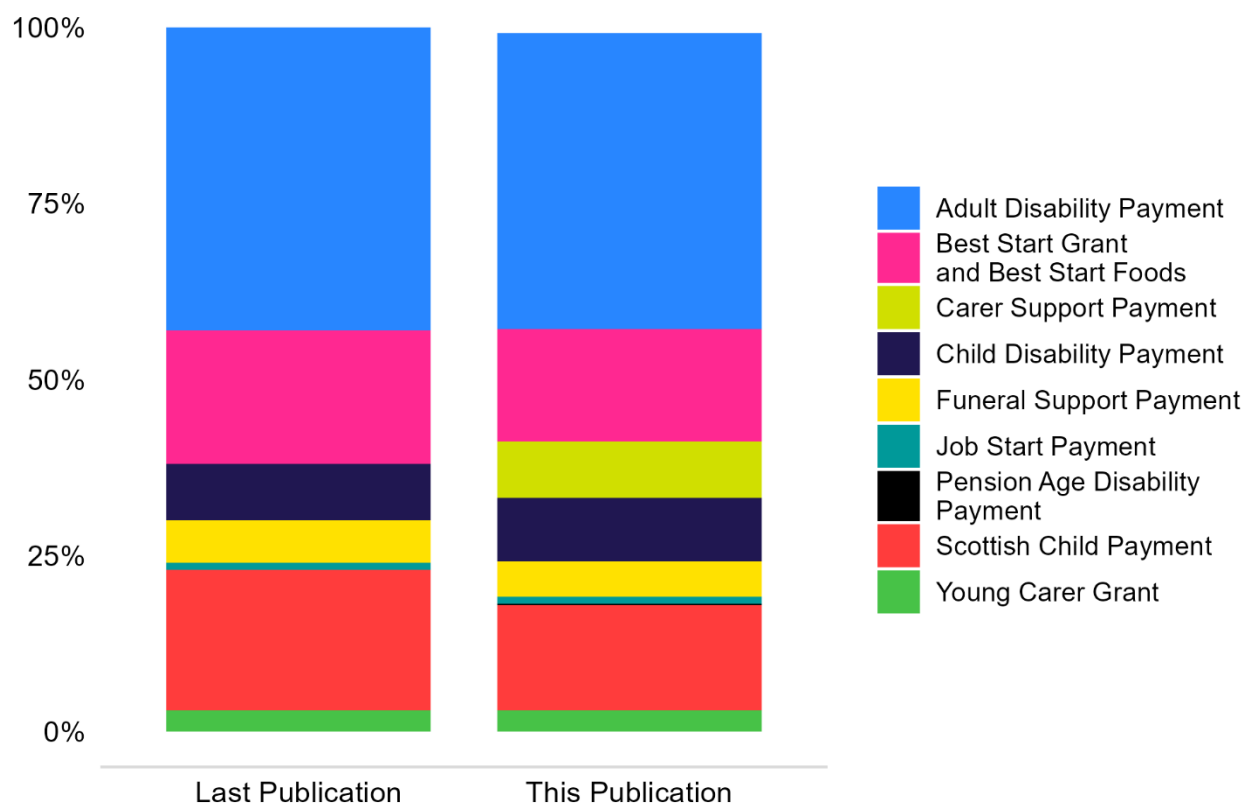


Figure 1 shows the proportion of applicants included in this publication and the previous publication by benefit. Adult Disability Payment accounted for the highest proportion of applicants in this publication at 42%. New to this publication is the inclusion of Carer Support Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment which account for 8% and less than 1% of the applicants in this publication respectively.

Compared to the last publication, the distribution of the characteristics covered in this publication have remained similar. The overall approval rate has decreased slightly from 67% to 64%. This is mainly due to lower approval rates for Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment, down from 56% to 48% and 86% to 82% respectively. However, other benefits have seen small increases in approval rates, and the benefits included for the first time this publication (Carer Support Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment) have the highest approval rates of all benefits, at 84% each.

For each question in the equalities monitoring form, applicants could choose 'Prefer not to say'. The age, geography and application channel variables do not have a 'Prefer not to say' option as they are derived from information provided in the application form i.e. date of birth and postcode. The proportion of applicants choosing 'Prefer not to say' ranged between 6% and 12% across diversity characteristics. Physical or mental health condition or illness, religion, and sexual orientation had the highest proportion of 'Prefer not to say' responses. Funeral Support Payment had a much higher proportion of applicants choosing 'Prefer not to say' compared to all other benefits, at over 30% across all diversity characteristics, except type of health condition or illness at 10%.

Figure 2: A comparison of the highest and lowest approval rates

Sources: Tables 1 to 8

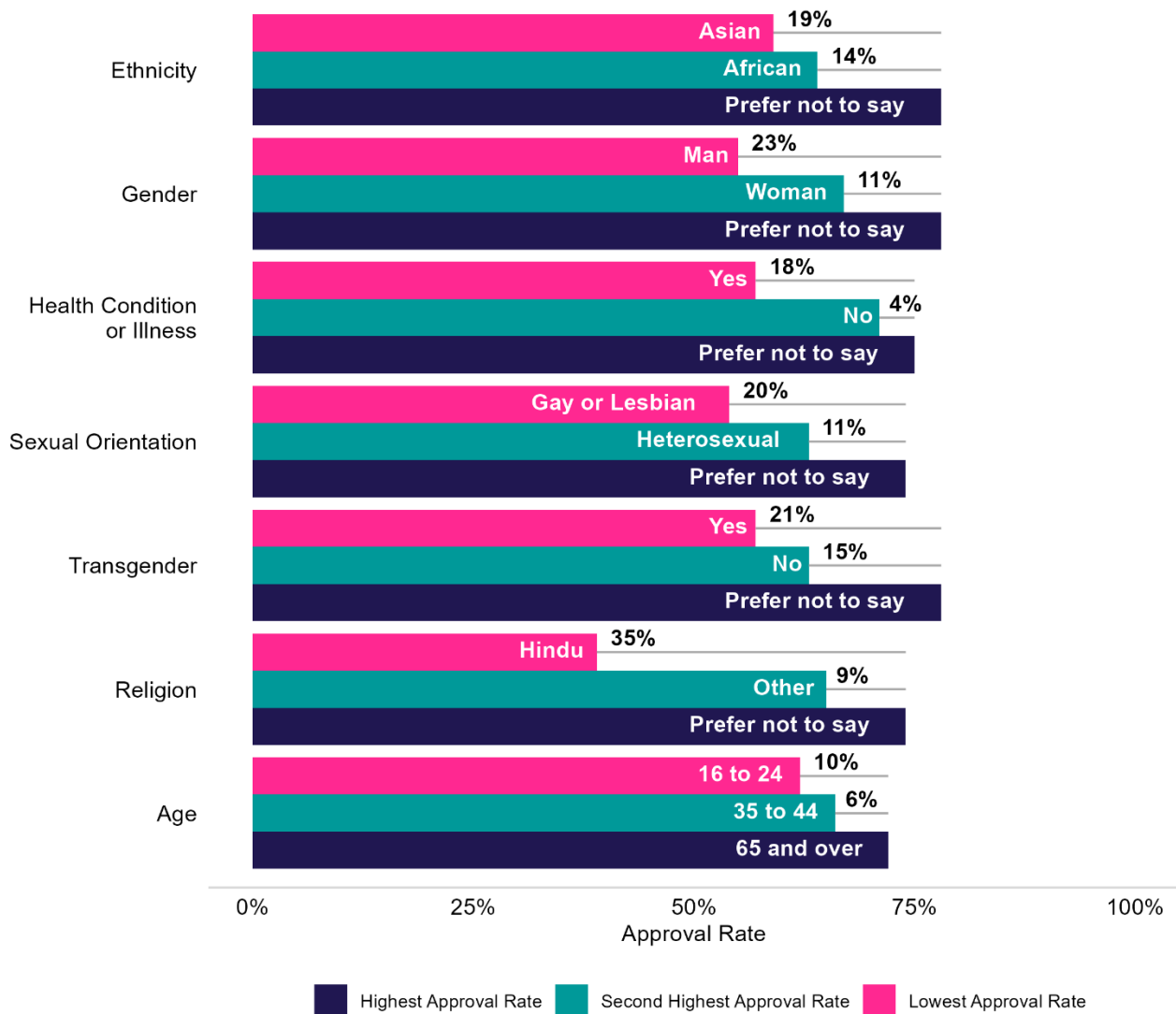


Figure 2 shows the groups with the highest, second highest and lowest approval rates for each diversity characteristic, and the figure on each bar shows the percentage point difference in approval rate between that group and the group with the highest approval rate for each characteristic.

Differences between the highest approval rate and the lowest approval rate ranged from 10% to 35%. The biggest difference in range was for religion where the 'Prefer not to say' group had the highest approval rate of 74% and the Hindu group had the lowest approval rate of 39%, which equated to a 35 percentage point difference. Age had the smallest difference in range with applicants aged 65 and over having

the highest approval rate of 72% and applicants aged 16-24 having the lowest approval rate of 62%, which equated to a 10 percentage point difference. Applicants who chose 'Prefer not to say' for the questions in the equalities monitoring forms had the highest approval rates across all characteristics.

Ethnicity

Figure 3: Number and proportion of applicants by ethnicity

Source: Table 1

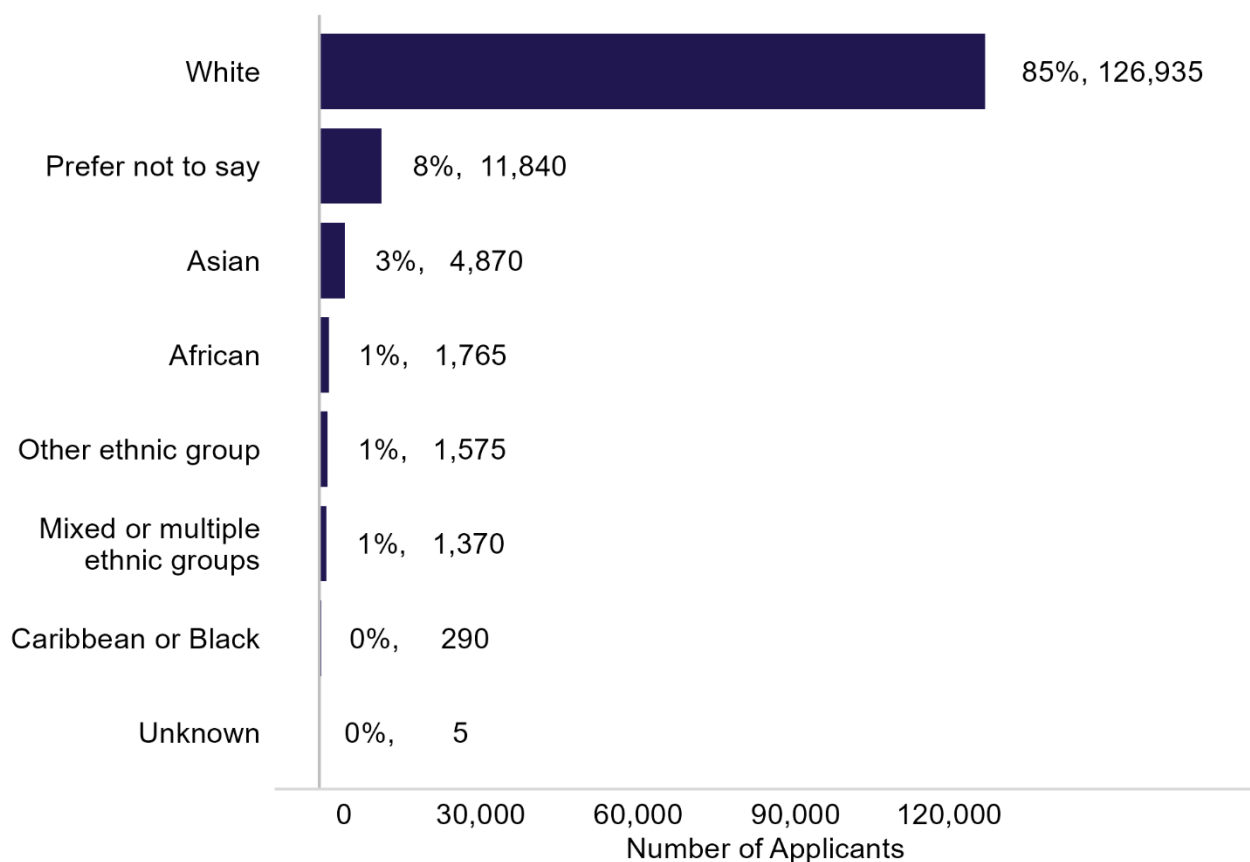


Figure 3 shows that 85% of applicants were White (which included Scottish, 'Other British', Irish, 'Gypsy/Traveller', Polish, and 'Other white ethnic group' identities) and 6% of applicants were another ethnicity (which included Asian, African, 'Caribbean or Black', 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups', and 'Other ethnic group' identities). The remaining 8% of applicants chose 'Prefer not to say'.

According to [Scotland's Census 2022](#), 93% of the total population of Scotland were White, with the remaining 7% being from other ethnic groups.

These proportions are very similar to the previous publication with the White ethnic group proportion decreasing from 87% to 85%, and the 'Prefer not to say' group increasing from 7% to 8%. The rest of the ethnic group proportions remained the same as the previous publication.

Ethnicity proportions differed across benefits. Pension Age Disability Payment had the largest proportion of White applicants at 97%, while Funeral Support Payment had the lowest proportion of White applicants at 67%. Scottish Child Payment had the highest proportion of any non-white ethnic group with Asian applicants accounting for 6%. Funeral Support Payment had the highest proportion of applicants responding 'Prefer not to say' at 31%.

Figure 4: Approval and denial rates by ethnicity

Source: Table 1

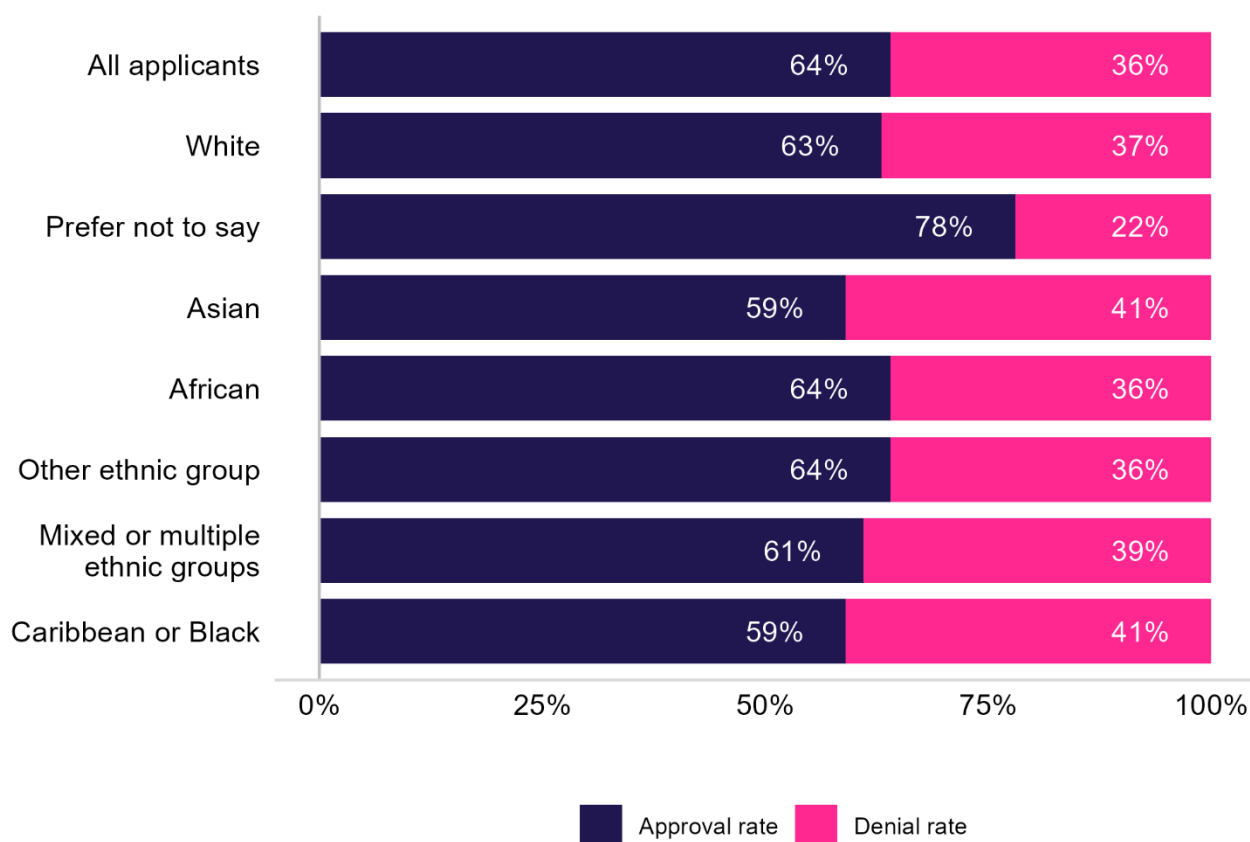


Figure 4 shows that, applicants who chose ‘Prefer not to say’ had the highest overall approval rates at 78%, followed by African and ‘Other ethnic group’ applicants at 64% and White applicants at 63%. Asian applicants and ‘Caribbean or Black’ applicants had the lowest approval rates at 59%.

Overall approval rates have stayed the same or decreased for all ethnicities compared to the last publication. Approval rates for ‘Mixed or multiple ethnic group’ applicants decreased the most, by 5 percentage points. Approval rates for ‘Prefer not to say’ applicants and African applicants stayed the same.

Approval rates for different ethnic groups varied within benefits. However, these differences were often impacted by small applicant numbers for certain ethnic groups. For example, for Young Carer Grant, ‘Caribbean or Black’ applicants had the highest approval rate at 80%, however there were only 15 ‘Caribbean or Black’

applicants. Nearly all other ethnic groups had lower approval rates at 75% or 76%, apart from the 'Prefer not to say' group which had an approval rate of 79%.

Approval rates for ethnic groups varied between benefits too. For example, for White applicants, who overall had the highest approval rate, the highest approval rate was for Pension Age Disability Payment at 84% and the lowest was for Job Start Payment at 41%. Whereas Asian applicants, who overall had the lowest approval rate, had the highest approval rate for Child Disability Payment at 81% and the lowest approval rate for Job Start Payment at 37%.

Gender

Figure 5: Number and proportion of applicants by gender

Source: Table 2

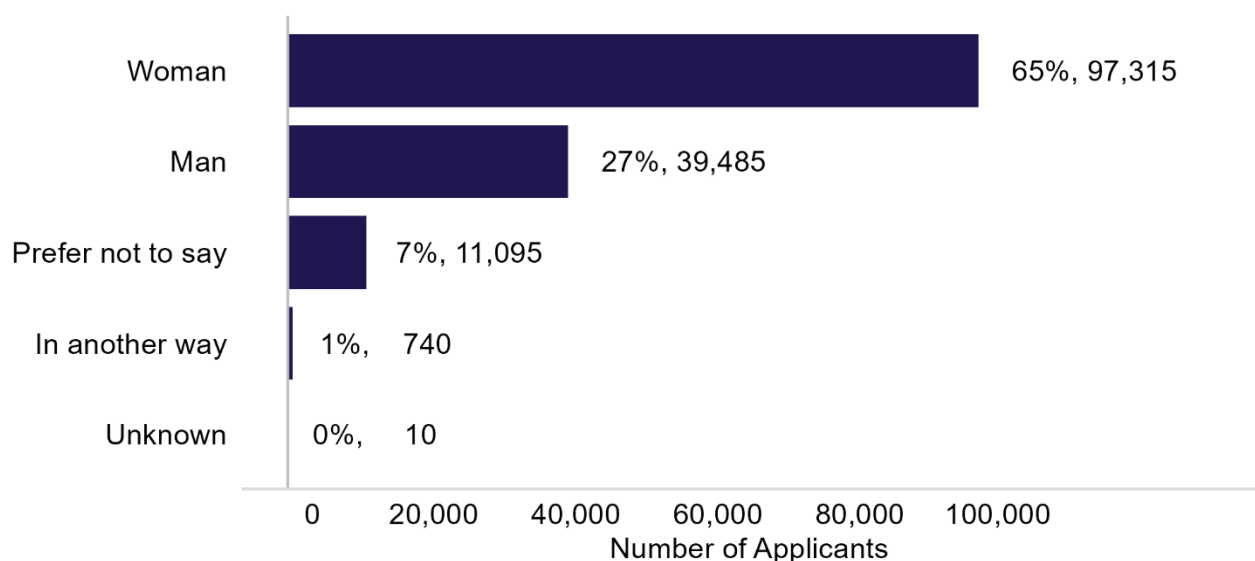


Figure 5 shows that 65% of applicants were women and 27% were men, while 1% of applicants chose to describe their gender 'In another way' and 7% chose 'Prefer not to say'.

According to [Scotland's census 2022](#) statistics on sex, 52% of the population aged 16 and over were female and 48% were male. Of the total population aged 16 or

over, 0.4% of people were trans or had a trans history. The census did not collect data on gender directly.

Compared to the last publication, the proportion of applicants that were men increased by 2 percentage points, while the number of women decreased by 3 percentage points.

The vast majority of applicants applying for benefits relating to children, i.e. Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, Child Disability Payment, and Scottish Child Payment, continued to be women. For most other benefits, gender differences were less pronounced however women were still the largest proportion of applicants. Job Start Payment was the only benefit where the largest proportion of applicants were men at 52%.

Figure 6: Approval and denial rates by gender

Source: Table 2

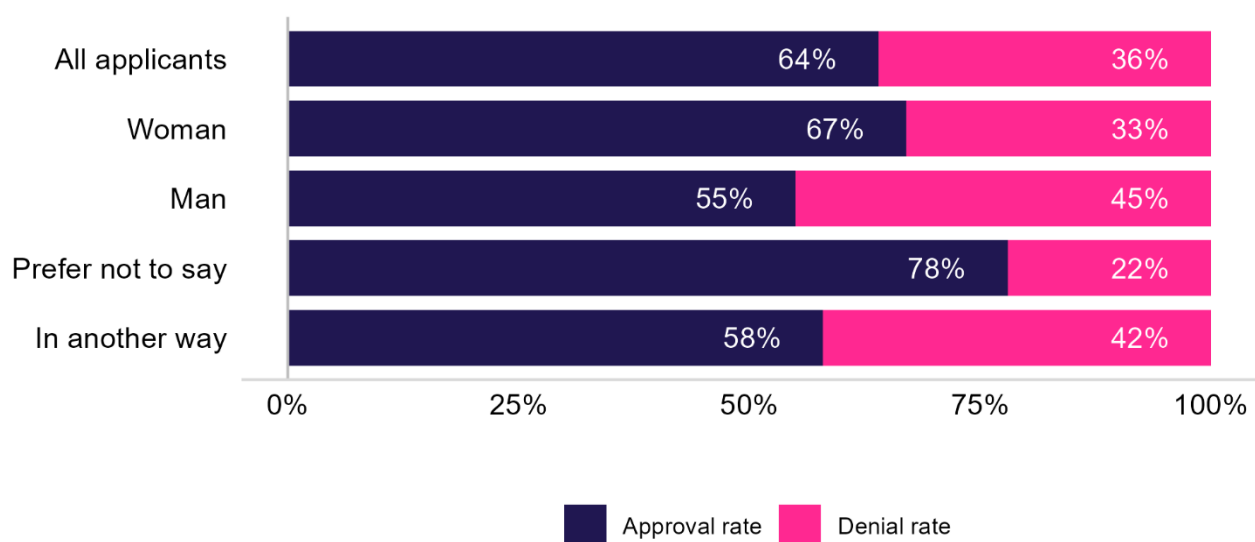


Figure 6 shows that overall approval rates were highest for applicants choosing 'Prefer not to say' at 78%, followed by women at 67%, 'In another way' at 58%, and men at 55%.

Compared to the previous publication, approval rates decreased for all gender categories. 'In another way' had the largest decrease of 8 percentage points, while 'Prefer not to say' had the smallest decrease of 1 percentage point.

At the benefit level, approval rates varied. For most benefits, applicants who chose 'Prefer not to say' had the highest approval rates, while men had the lowest. For Child Disability Payment approval rate was the same at 82% for women, men and applicants who chose 'Prefer not to say'.

Physical or mental health condition or illness

Statistics on health condition or illness are based on applicant's responses to equalities monitoring forms and differ from the client's primary disabling condition for Adult Disability Payment, Child Disability Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment.

Figure 7: Number and proportion of applicants by health condition or illness

Source: Table 3

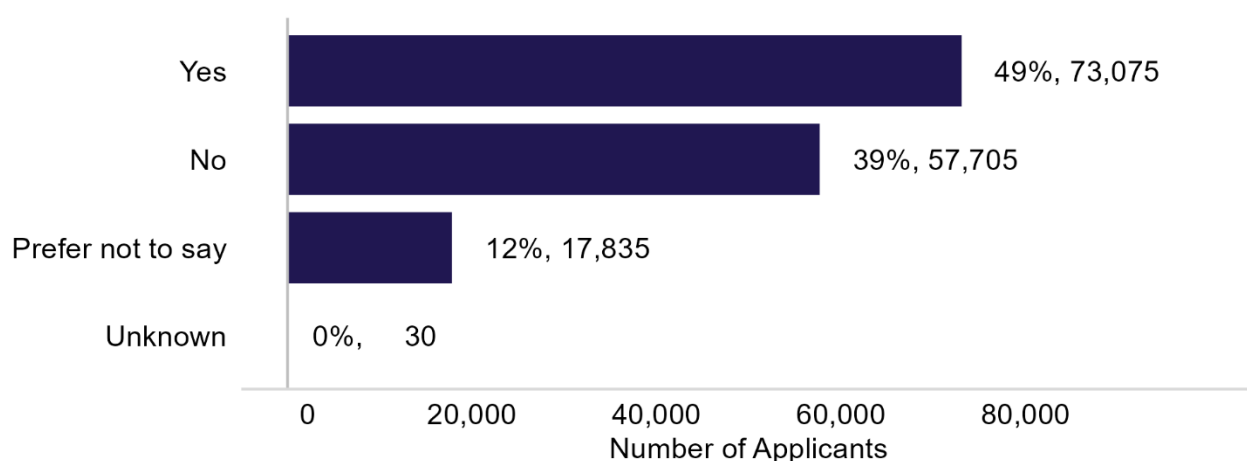


Figure 7 shows that the overall proportion of applicants with a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting, or expected to last, 12 months or more was 49%. The proportion of applicants who did not have a condition or illness was 39%.

The proportion of applicants with a condition or illness was similar to the last publication; the proportion answering 'Yes' decreased by 1 percentage point, while 'Prefer not to say' increased by 1 percentage point.

For benefits not directly related to disability, less than a quarter of applicants had a condition or illness, except for Funeral Support Payment where 28% of applicants had a condition or illness. As Funeral Support Payment applicants are more likely to be older, this may explain the higher proportion of applicants with a condition or illness.

As Adult Disability Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment are designed to help people with extra costs associated with living with a disability or long-term health condition, the proportion of applicants with a condition or illness was much larger at 87% and 80% respectively. Child Disability Payment had 34% of applicants with a condition or illness. We expect this figure to be lower than the figure for Adult Disability Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment because we are reporting on the person applying on behalf of the child in the majority of cases.

Figure 8: Approval and denial rates by health condition or illness

Source: Table 3

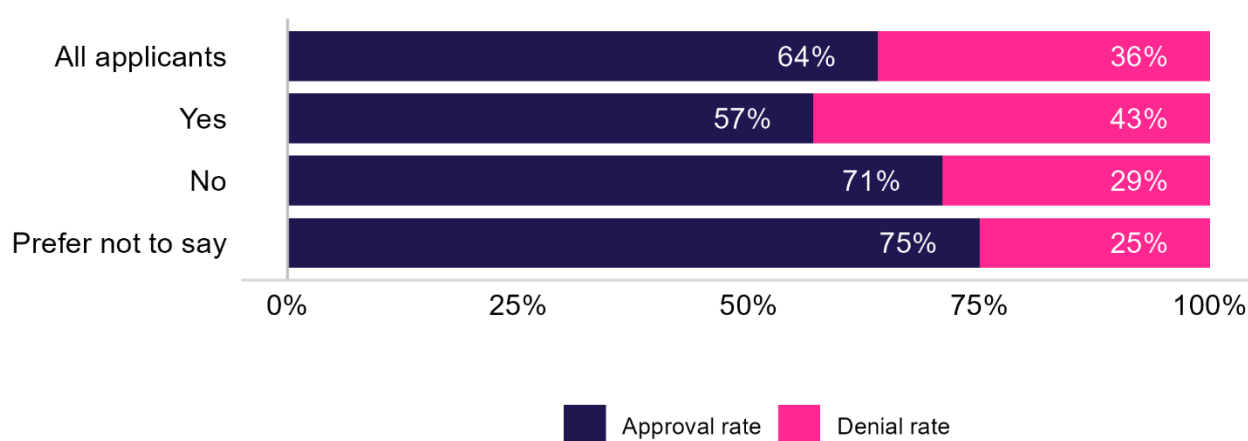


Figure 8 shows that applicants with a health condition or illness had a lower overall approval rate at 57% compared to applicants who did not at 71%. This is due to

there being a higher proportion of Adult Disability Payment applicants in the statistics, which has lower approval rates than most of the other benefits.

For the majority of benefits, there were higher approval rates for applicants with a condition or illness compared to those that did not have a condition or illness. The exceptions were Child Disability Payments and Job Start Payment, where approval rates were slightly lower for applicants with a condition or illness.

The largest difference in approval rates was for Job Start Payment, where there was an approval rate of 39% for applicants with a condition or illness compared to 53% for those who responded 'Prefer not to say'.

Applicants who had a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting, or expected to last, 12 months or more were then asked what type(s) of condition or illness they had. Applicants could select multiple answers.

Figure 9: Number and proportion of applicants by health condition or illness type

Source: Table 4

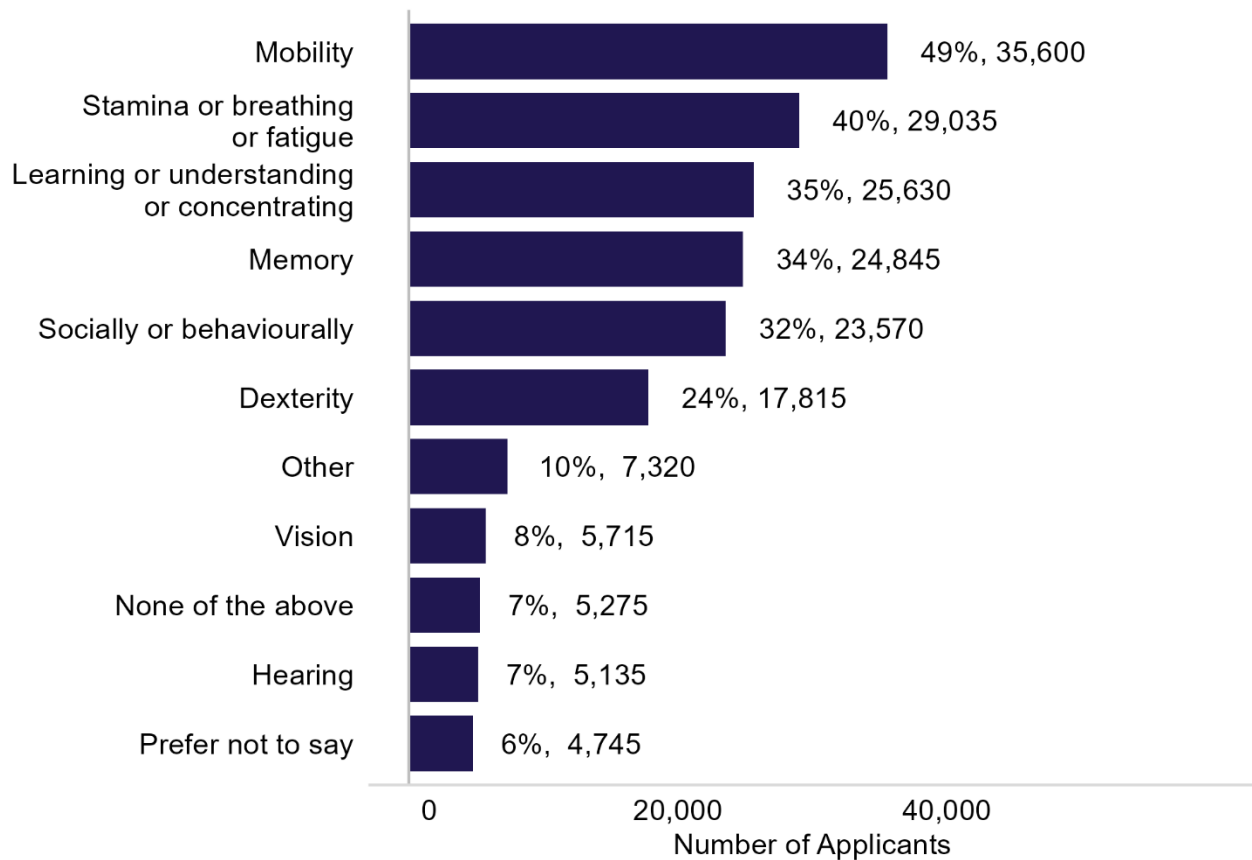


Figure 9 shows the proportion of applicants with each type of condition or illness. Of those applicants with a condition or illness, the most common types were Mobility at 49% and 'Stamina or breathing or fatigue' at 40%.

The types of condition or illness varied between benefits. Mobility was the most common type of condition or illness for the majority of benefits, with Pension Age Disability Payment having the highest proportion of applicants affected at 83%.

Figure 10: Approval and denial rates by health condition or illness type

Source: Table 4

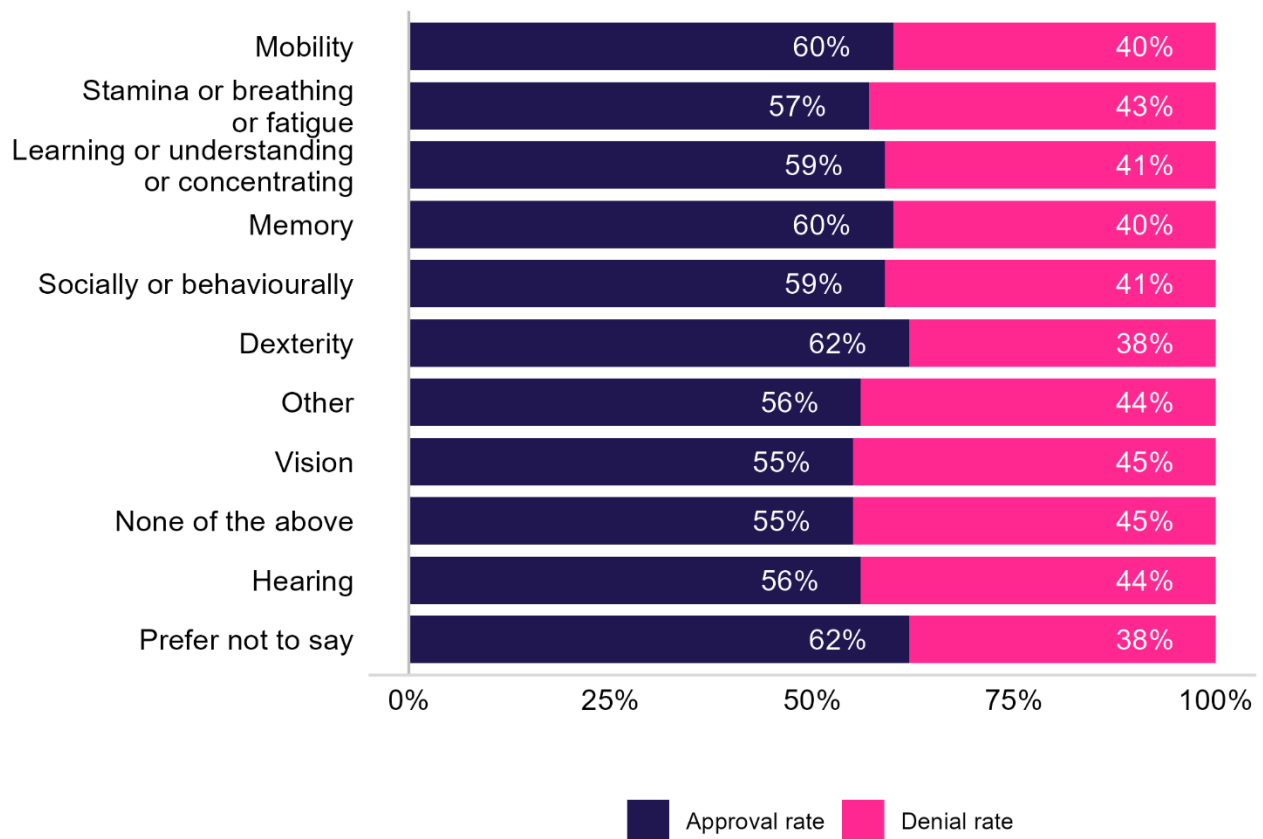


Figure 10 shows how approval rates varied across the types of health conditions and illnesses. The highest approval rate was for Dexterity and 'Prefer not to say' at 62%. The lowest approval rate was for Vision and 'None of the above' at 55%.

Sexual orientation

Figure 11: Number and proportion of applicants by sexual orientation

Source: Table 5

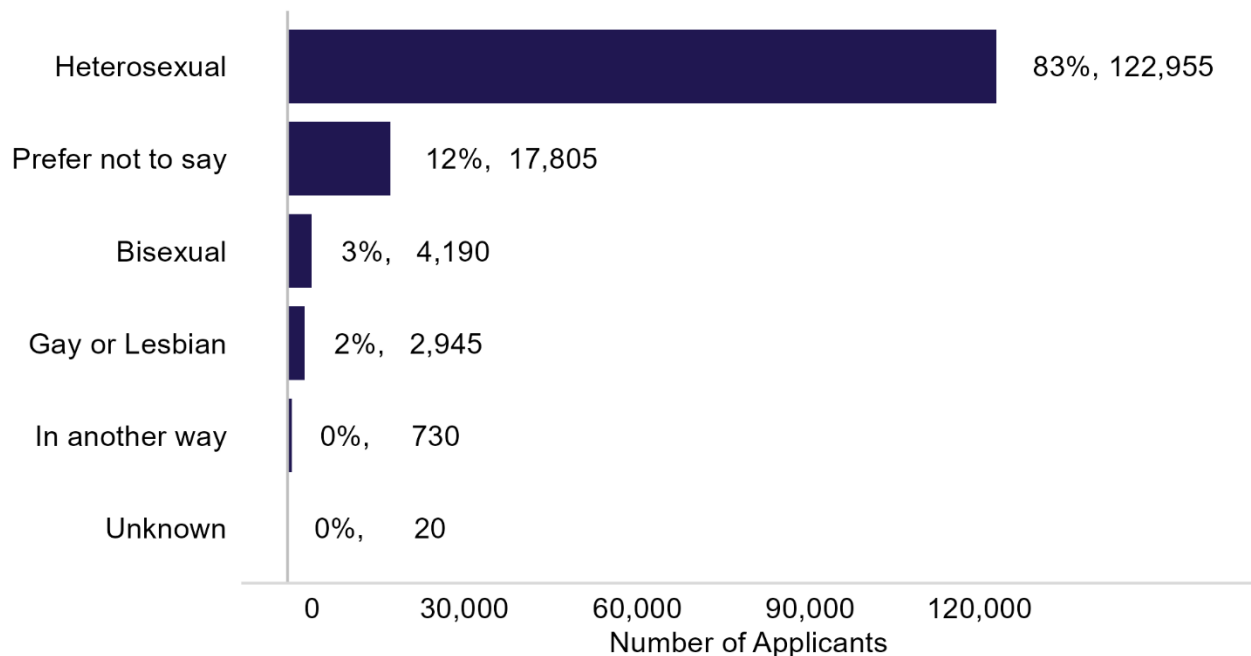


Figure 11 shows that 83% of applicants were Heterosexual, 3% were Bisexual, 2% were 'Gay or Lesbian'. Less than 1% described their sexuality 'In another way' and 12% of applicants chose 'Prefer not to say'.

According to [Scotland's Census 2022](#), 88% of Scottish adults identified as Heterosexual, 2% as 'Gay or Lesbian', 2% as Bisexual, 0.5% as other and 8% did not answer.

At the benefit level, Job Start Payment had the highest rate of applicants that were Bisexual or 'Gay or Lesbian' at 9%, while Funeral Support Payment had the highest proportion of applicants choosing 'Prefer not to say' at 36%.

Figure 12: Approval and denial rates by sexual orientation

Source: Table 5

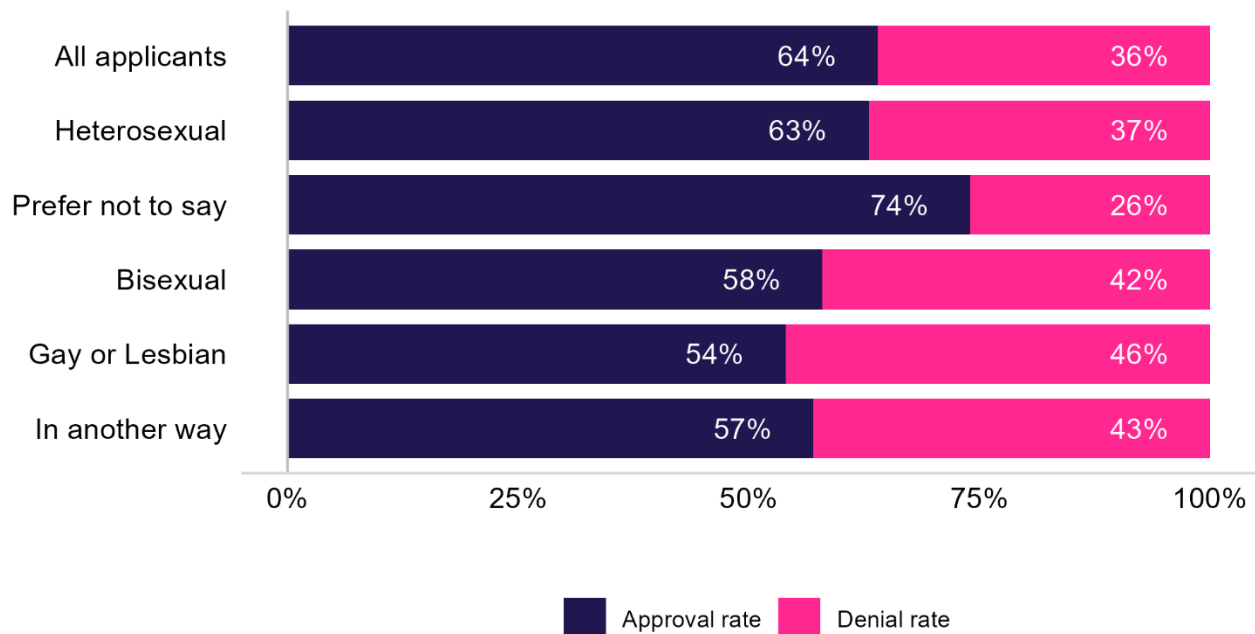


Figure 12 shows that overall approval rates were highest for applicants choosing 'Prefer not to say' at 74%, followed by Heterosexual at 63%, Bisexual at 58%, 'In another way' at 57%, and 'Gay or Lesbian' at 54%.

While approval rates had decreased for all sexual orientation groups compared to the last publication, 'In another way' and 'Gay and Lesbian' applicants had the largest decreases at 5 percentage points, while 'Prefer not to say' had the smallest decrease at 1 percentage point.

Approval rates varied between benefits. Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods and Pension Age Disability Payment had the largest differences in approval rates between sexual orientations. These differences were likely affected due to small applicant numbers.

Transgender

Figure 13: Number and proportion of applications by transgender

Source: Table 6

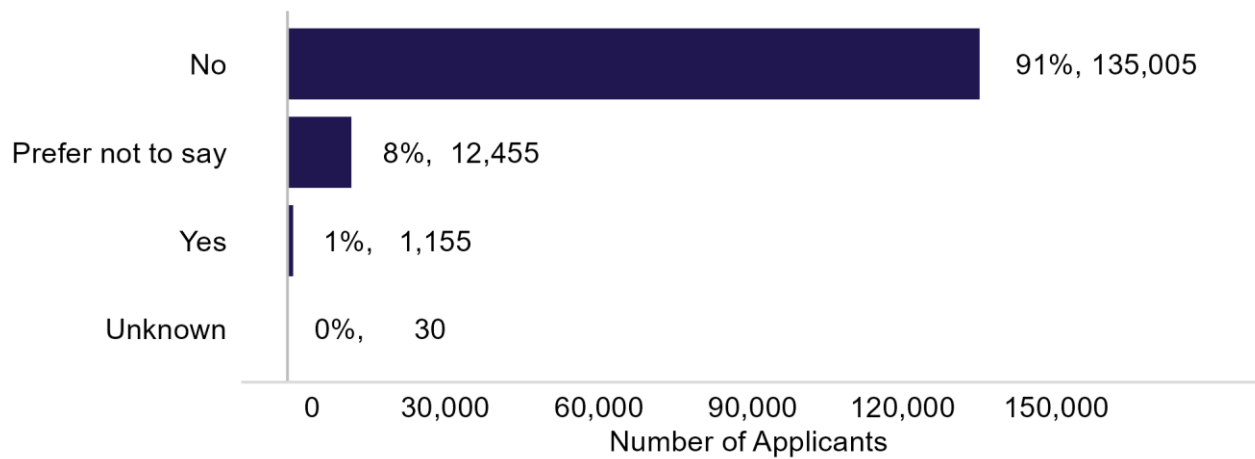


Figure 13 shows that approximately 1% of applicants were transgender and 8% chose 'Prefer not to say'.

According to [Scotland's census 2022](#), 93.6% of the Scottish population were not transgender, 0.4% were transgender, and 5.9% did not answer.

The benefits with the highest proportion of transgender applicants were Job Start Payment at 2%, and Adult Disability Payment and Young Carer Grant at 1%.

Figure 14: Approval and denial rates by transgender

Source: Table 6

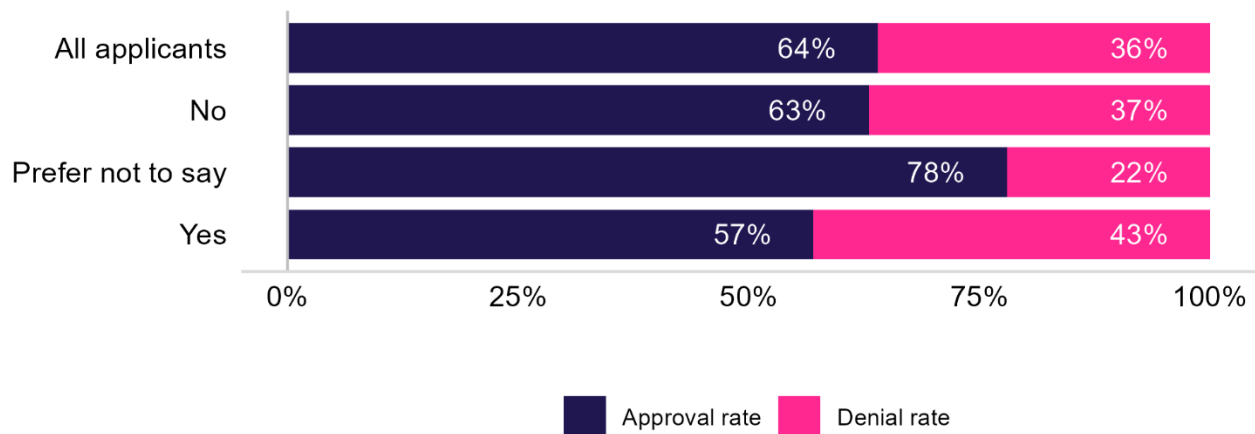


Figure 14 shows that transgender applicants had an approval rate of 57% compared to applicants who were not transgender who had an approval rate of 63%. Those who chose 'Prefer not to say' had the highest approval rate at 78%.

For Adult Disability Payment, Carer Support Payment and Funeral Support Payment transgender applicants had a higher approval rate compared to those who were not transgender.

Religion

Figure 15: Number and proportion of applicants by religion

Source: Table 7

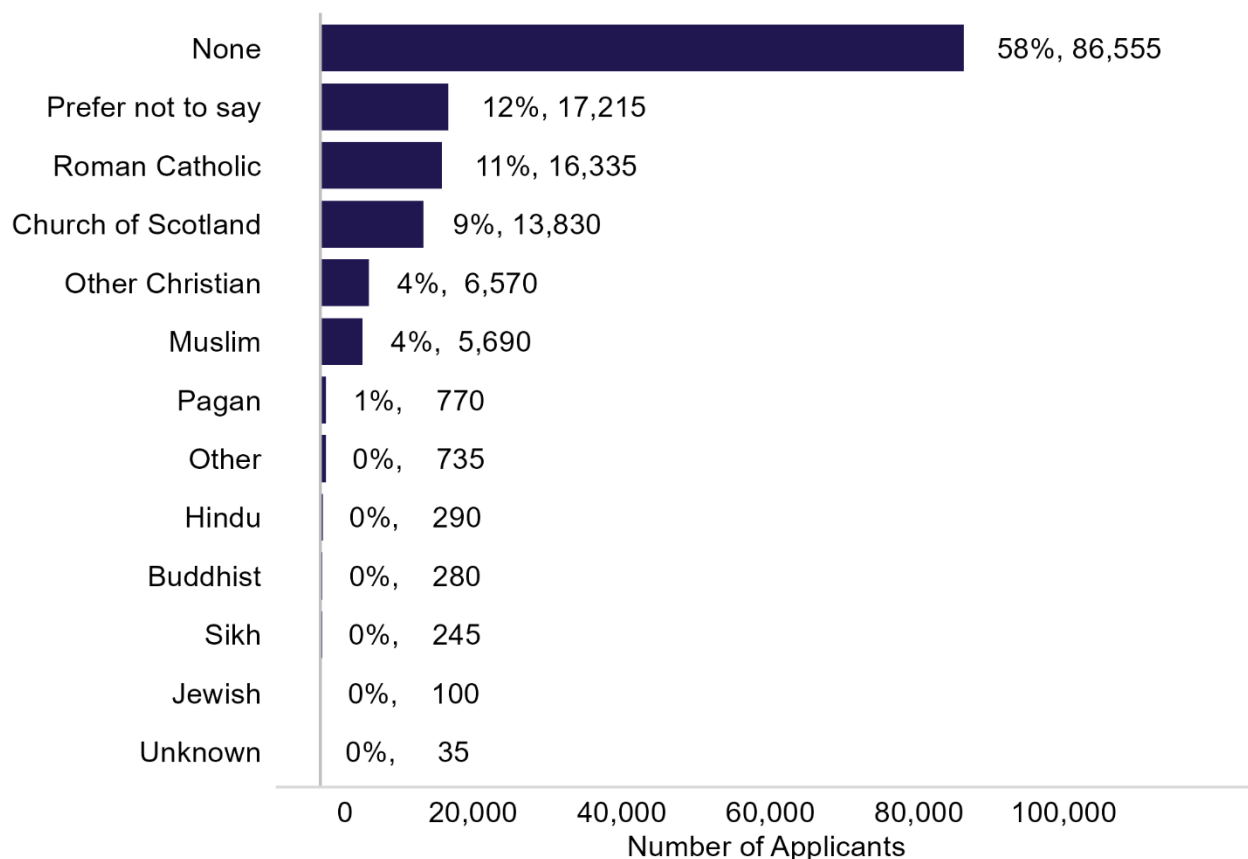


Figure 15 shows that 58% of applicants had no religion, compared to 11% who were 'Roman Catholic', 9% 'Church of Scotland', 4% 'Other Christian' and 4% Muslim. All other religious groups accounted for 1% or less of applicants each and 12% chose 'Prefer not to say'.

According to [Scotland's census 2022](#), 49% of Scottish adults reported having no religion, 13% reported their religion as 'Roman Catholic', 23% 'Church of Scotland', 5% 'Other Christian', 2% Muslim and 2% were another religion.

At the benefit level, the proportion of applicants responding with no religion was lowest for Pension Age Disability Payment at 35% and highest for Job Start Payment at 75%. The difference in no religion between these benefits could be

related to the different age profiles of applicants, with a higher proportion of Pension Age Disability Payment applicants being from older age groups. According to [Scotland's census 2022](#), people aged 16-34 are more likely to have no religion compared to older age groups.

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment had the highest proportions of Muslim applicants compared to other benefits, with 8% and 7% respectively.

Carer Support Payment and Funeral Support Payment had a much higher proportion of 'Prefer not to say' at 34% and 20% respectively, compared to between 7% and 12% for other benefits.

Figure 16: Approval and denial rates by religion

Source: Table 7

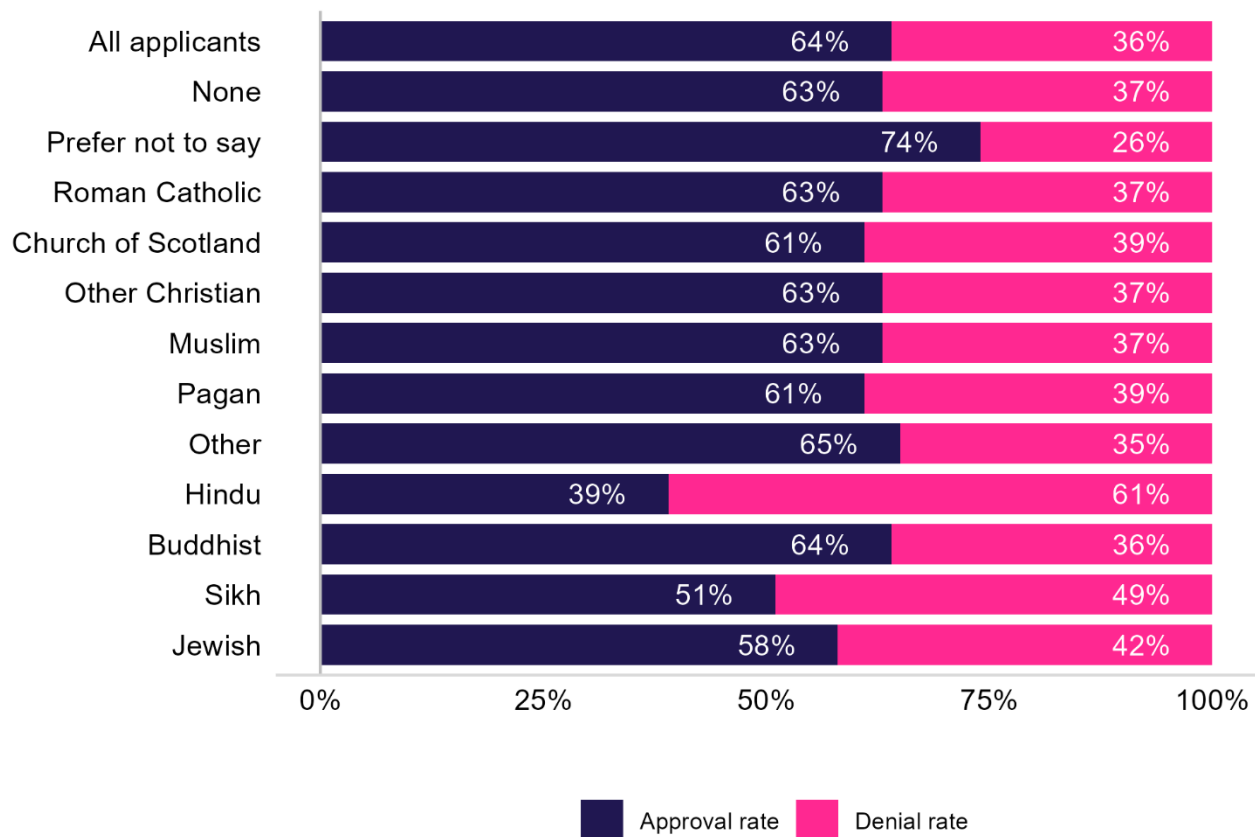


Figure 16 shows that overall approval rates were very similar for no religion, Christian groups ('Roman Catholic', 'Church of Scotland', 'Other Christian'), and Muslim applicants, with approval rates ranging from 61% to 63%. Approval rates were the lowest for Hindu applicants at 39%, which was 12 percentage points lower than Sikh applicants with the second lowest approval rate at 51%.

There was more variability in approval rates at the benefit level. For instance, Best Start Food and Best Start Grant approval rates varied between 17% for Hindu applicants and 72% for Pagan applicants.

Across benefits, approval rates were the most variable for religions with smaller applicant numbers, such as Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Jewish.

Age

Figure 17: Number and proportion of applicants by age

Source: Table 8

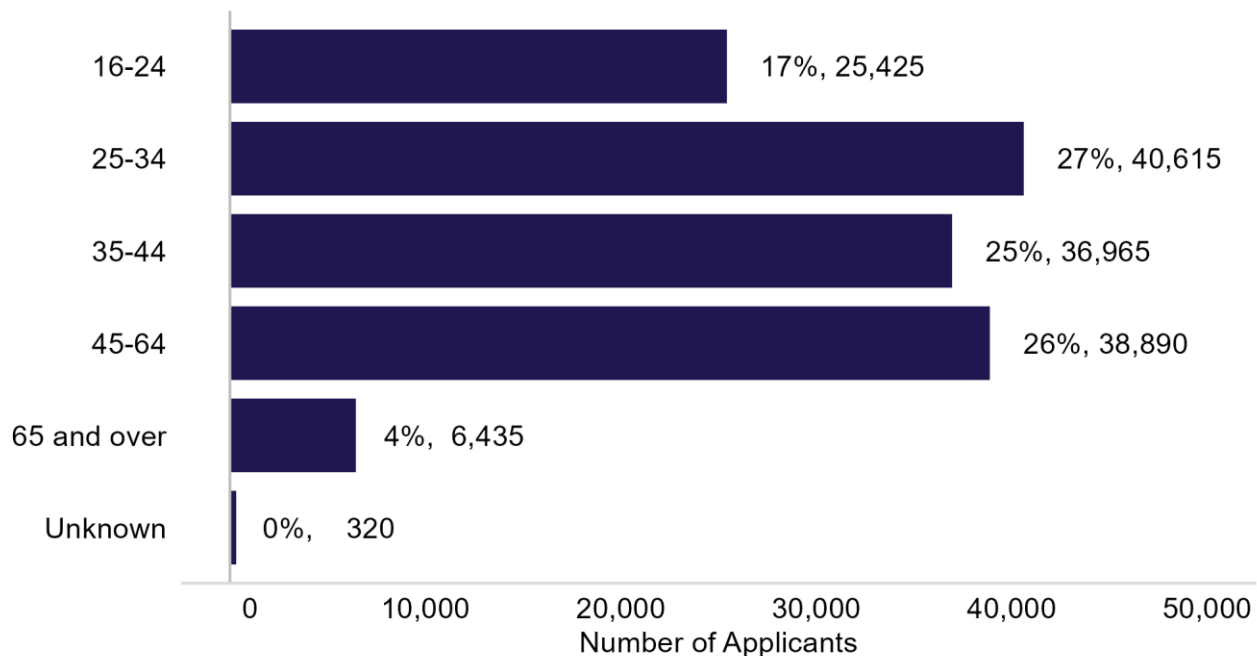


Figure 17 shows that 69% of applicants were between 16 and 45 years of age. The highest proportion of applicants were aged 25-34 years at 27%. This was followed by the 45-64 age group at 26% and 35-44 age group at 25%. Only 4% of applicants were aged 65 or over and 17% were aged 16-24.

The age profile for applicants differed from the Scottish Adult Population according to [Scotland's census 2022](#). Specifically, a higher proportion of applicants were aged 16-44 and a lower proportion were aged 45 or over compared to the Scottish population. This is due to most of the benefits included in this publication being targeted at families with children, young people, and non-pension age adults with disabilities.

Compared to the last publication, the proportion of applicants from each age group has remained similar.

Figure 18: Approval and denial rates by age

Source: Table 8

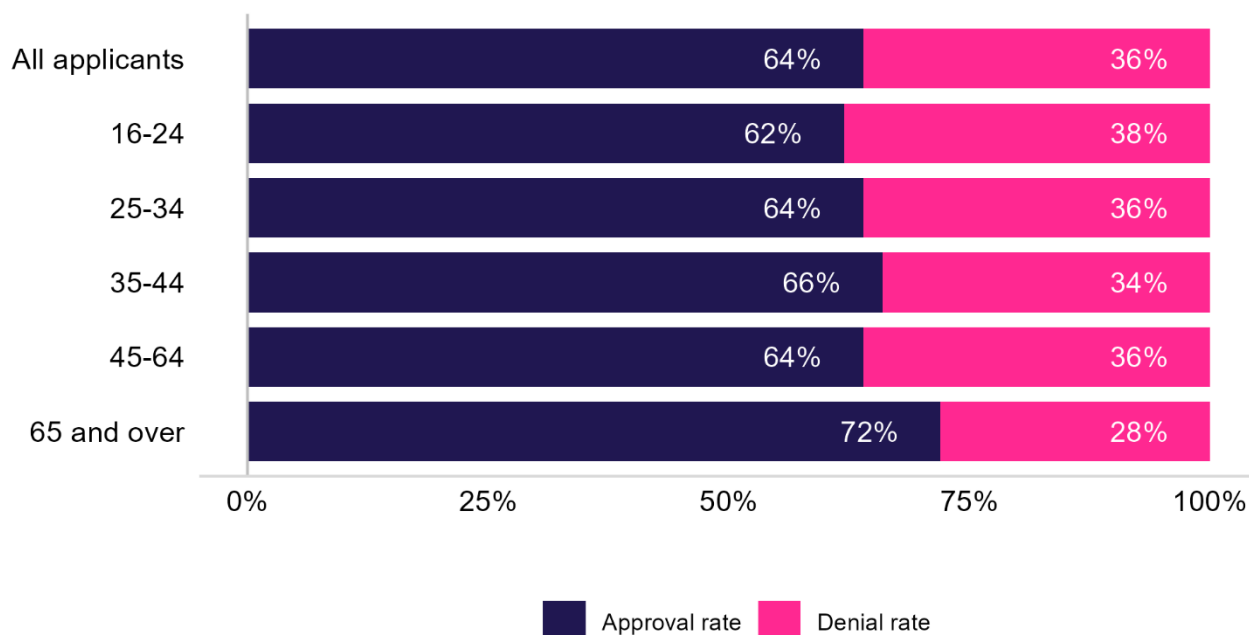


Figure 18 shows that overall approval rates were highest for the ‘65 and over’ age group at 72% and approval rates were lowest for the 16-24 age group at 62%.

Compared to the last publication, approval rates have remained similar for most age groups, but decreased for both the 35-44 and 45-64 age groups, by 4 and 5 percentage points respectively.

At a benefit level, Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods had higher approval rates for applicants aged 16-34 and lower approval rates for the older age groups. Adult Disability payment showed the opposite pattern, with applicants aged 45 or over having higher approval rates than the younger age groups.

Some benefits are only available to people of certain ages. For example, Job Start Payment clients must be aged 16-24 or 25 if they are care leavers. These criteria impact the age profiles and approval rates for these benefits.

Geography

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is used to rank areas from the most deprived areas to the least deprived areas of Scotland. Approximately 10% of the population of Scotland live in each decile.

Figure 19: Number and proportion of applicants by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Source: Table 9

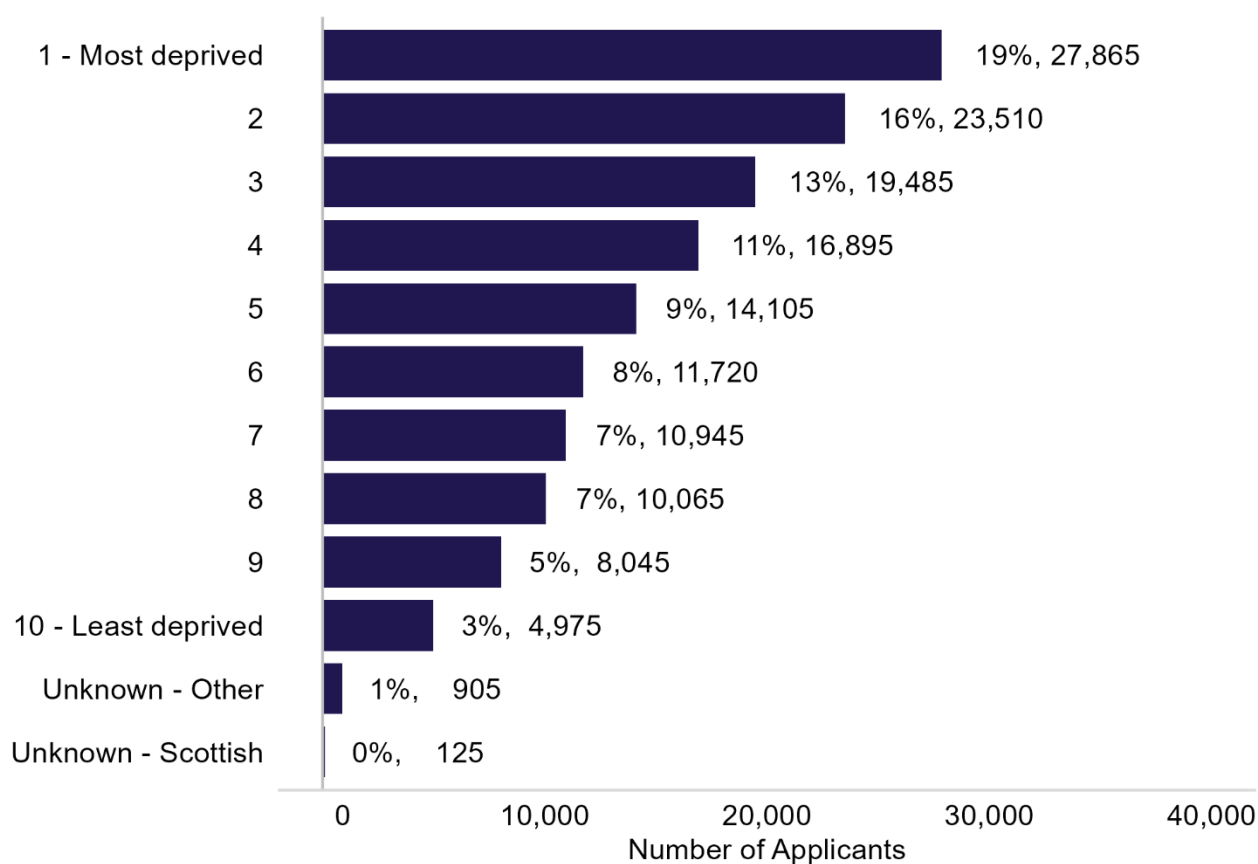


Figure 19 shows that applicants lived across all deciles. A higher proportion of applicants lived in the more deprived deciles, with 19% of applicants living in the most deprived decile and 48% living in the three most deprived deciles. This compares to 9% and 28% of the population aged 16 and over according to [National Records of Scotland 2021 estimates](#).

A similar trend was seen across all benefits except Pension Age Disability Benefit, where only 2% of the applicants lived in the most deprived decile and over half of applicants lived in deciles 6 to 10.

Figure 20: Approval and denial rates by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Source: Table 9

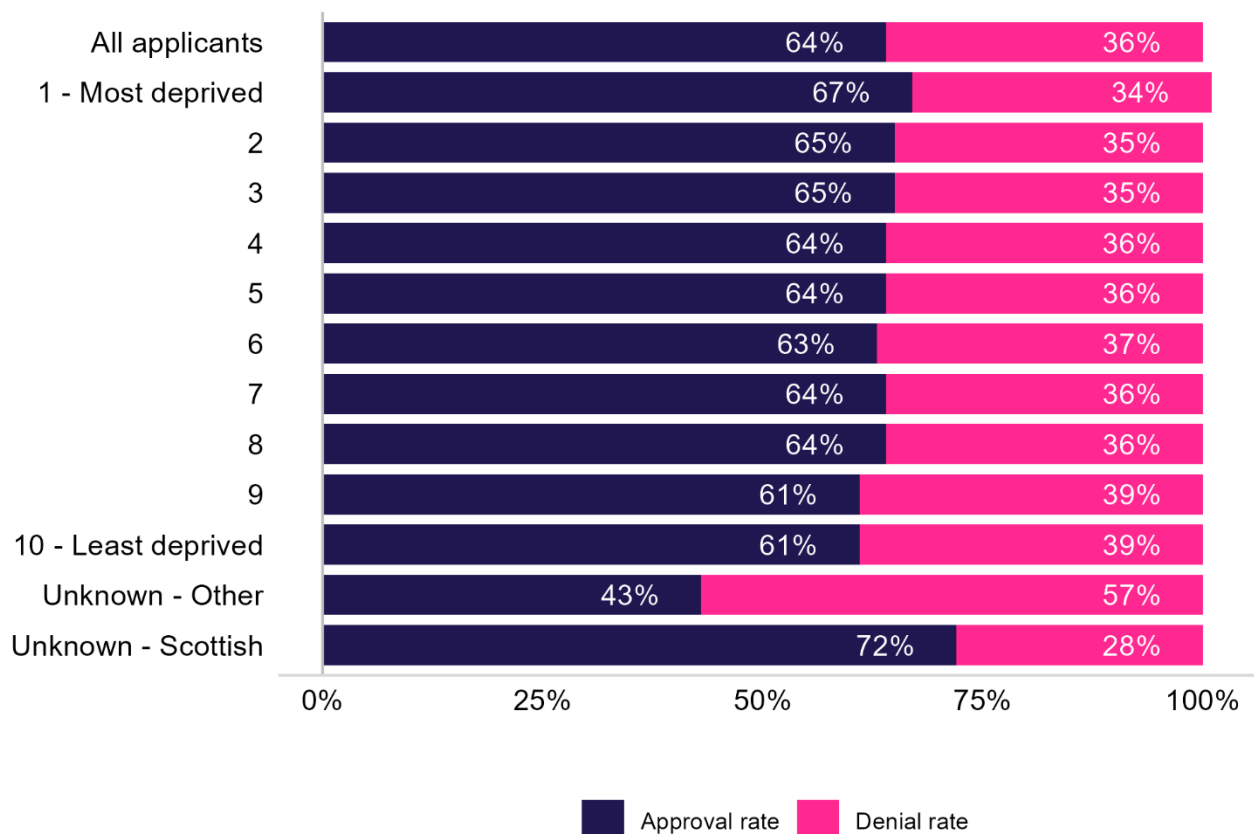


Figure 20 shows that overall approval rates were higher for applicants living in the more deprived deciles, with a 6 percentage point difference between the most and least deprived decile.

At a benefit level, this trend was observed across Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, Funeral Support Payment, and Scottish Child Payment. Child Disability Payment and Young Carer Grant showed the opposite trend with those in the least deprived areas having the highest approval rates. Approval rates were comparable across all deciles for Adult Disability Payment and varied across deciles for Carer Support Payment, Job Start Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment.

Figure 21: Number and proportion of applicants by geography

Source: Table 10

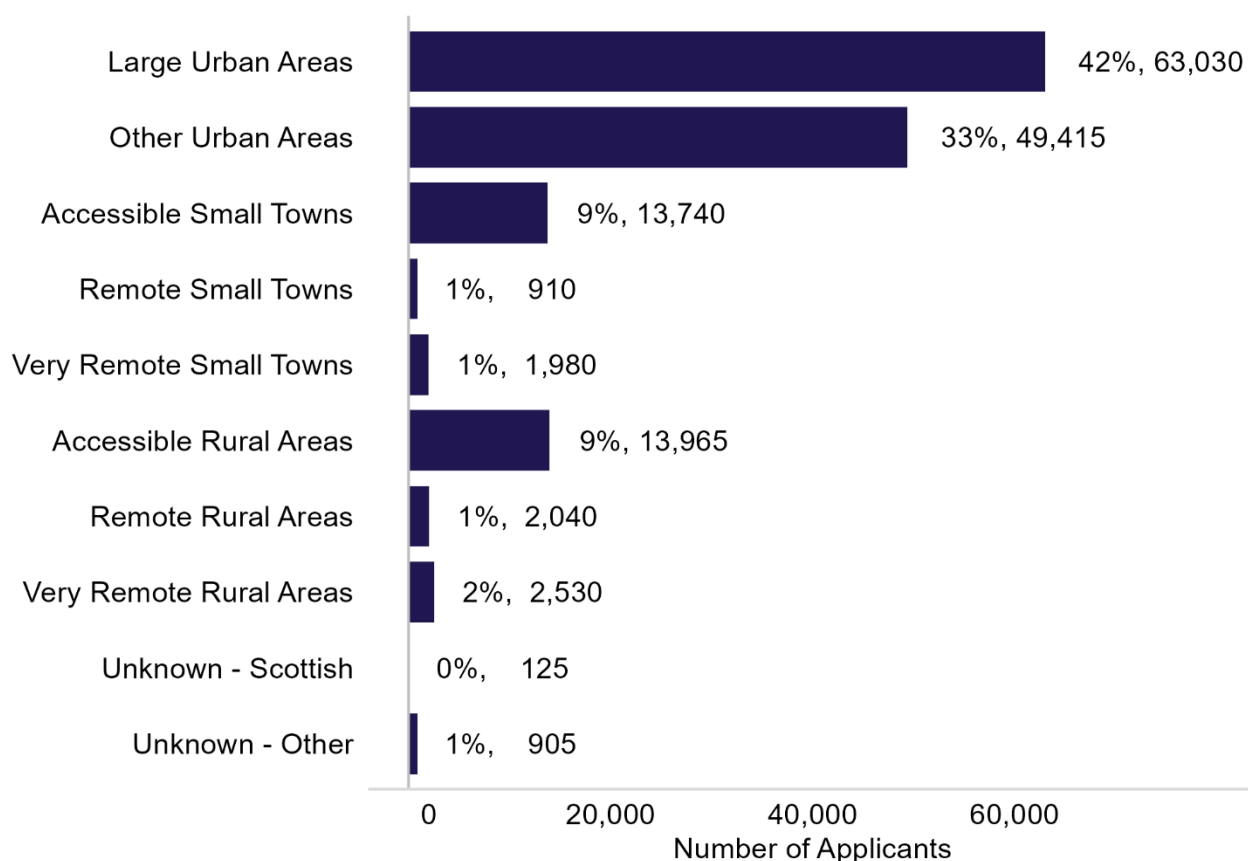


Figure 21 shows that 75% of applicants lived in 'Large Urban' or 'Other Urban' areas. This compares to 72% of people aged 16 or over living in Scotland according to [National Records of Scotland 2021 estimates](#).

Across benefits, the percentage of applicants living in 'Large Urban' or 'Other Urban' areas varied between 74% and 80%, except for Pension Age Disability Payment where only 52% of applicants lived in 'Large Urban' or 'Other Urban' areas.

Overall, approval rates were similar across each urban rural area, ranging from 64% to 67%.

Across most benefits, approval rates varied but were still comparable for most urban rural areas and benefits. Funeral Support Payment, Job Start Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment had the largest range of approval rates between

areas which was partly influenced by the small numbers of applicants living in some areas for these benefits.

Around 1% of applicants lived on Scottish islands and 98% lived on the Scottish mainland. In comparison, 2% of the Scottish population lived on islands according to [Scotland's census 2022](#). This was similar across all benefits except Pension Age Disability Payment, where 8% of applicants lived on Scottish islands and 90% lived on the Scottish mainland.

Overall, approval rates were slightly higher for island applicants compared to mainland applicants at 67% and 64% respectively.

Across most benefits, island applicants had a higher approval rate than mainland applicants. However, Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, Funeral Support Payment and Scottish Child Payment had higher approval rates for mainland applicants than island applicants. There was no difference in approval rates between island and mainland applicants for Young Carer Grant.

Application channel

In this publication, 91% of applicants submitted their application online, with 9% applying by phone and 1% by mail. This is similar to the previous publication.

The proportion of applicants applying online was 89% or higher for most benefits. Carer Support Payment, Funeral Support Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment had the lowest proportion of online applications at 75%, 60% and 78% respectively, and had a higher proportion of phone applications compared to other benefits.

For most benefits, application channel proportions were similar in this publication compared to the proportions in the [benefit specific statistics publications](#). More

information on why these figures differ can be found in the [related publications](#) section.

Out of the three main channels, applicants applying via phone had the highest approval rate at 82%, followed by mail at 77% and online at 63%. Applicants applying via phone had the highest approval rate for most benefits.

Compared to the previous publication, approval rates increased for the mail channel by 6 percentage points and decreased for the online channel by 3 percentage points. Approval rates remained unchanged for the phone channel.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality analysis reports on how the number of applicants and their approval rates vary when looking at two characteristics combined e.g. age and gender. Tables containing the intersectionality analysis are in a separate Excel workbook on the [Social Security Scotland website](#).

It is important to note that of the intersecting characteristic groups there are a few that are large groups, meaning that many applicants share the same two characteristics. For example, 60% of applicants were white women (89,915 applicants). There were many intersecting characteristic groups which had very few applicants and as such these small numbers have a bigger impact on the approval rates. Caution should be applied when drawing any conclusions about groups with small numbers of applicants.

When looking at the proportion of applicants from intersecting groups, there were a higher proportion of women aged 25-34 and 35-44 applying for benefits than men in the same age groups. The 45-64 age group was the only age group to have more than half of applicants with a health condition or illness at 65%.

There were some larger intersecting characteristic groups which had higher approval rates, for example women with no physical or mental health condition or illness at 73%, white applicants with no physical or mental health condition or illness at 72%, and applicants with no religion and no physical or mental health condition or illness at 72%.

Applicants that responded 'Prefer not to say' for both intersecting characteristics had consistently high approval rates between 78% and 80%.

Glossary

Appeal – A person can appeal a decision on their application if they do not think the right decision had been made. This will be considered by the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland, which is independent from Social Security Scotland.

Applicant – A person who completes an application for a social security benefit. This may be the person benefitting from the payment or someone applying on behalf of another person.

Case Management System – The system used by Social Security Scotland to process benefit applications. Equalities information from telephony applications is stored in this system, separately from application information.

Client – A person who would benefit from a social security payment if an application was successful.

Data warehouse – The platform used to store data extracts for use by Social Security Scotland's analysts. Equalities data from online applications is stored directly within the data warehouse.

Deduplication – The process of removing multiple data records relating to a single person. In this publication, data is deduplicated so that one record is retained per applicant.

Local Delivery - a service for clients provided by specially trained advisers based in every Local Authority across Scotland. They support new and existing clients to access our benefits in a way that works best for them and importantly, at a time and place that is convenient for them.

Manual database – The database used to store information from mailed paper returns of the equalities monitoring form and from local delivery applications. Data is entered manually into this database by Social Security Scotland staff.

Outcome of the application – The outcome of the application refers to the decision of whether the application is approved or denied. Applications with a pending or withdrawn outcome are not included in the outcome based measures within this publication. Approved and denied outcomes will represent the most up-to-date decision, either the initial decision or the outcome of appeal or redetermination if there was one.

Redetermination – If a person does not agree with a decision about their application, they can ask for someone else to look at their application.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation - The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is used to rank areas from the most deprived areas to the least deprived areas of Scotland. Approximately 10% of the population of Scotland live in each decile. See the [Scottish Government website](#) for more information.

Background

Social Security Scotland is the executive agency of Scottish Government responsible for delivering social security benefits for Scotland. Social Security Scotland collects equalities data in order to fulfil their Public Sector Equality Duty under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and their reporting duties under section 20(2) of the [Social Security \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#).

Social Security Scotland collects and publishes information about the following characteristics of applicants and clients guided by the [Equality Act 2010](#).

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Transgender
- Physical or mental health condition or illness
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

Social Security Scotland does not currently collect information on marriage and civil partnership or pregnancy and maternity from applicants. Social Security Scotland does not collect information on wider diversity characteristics including care experience, criminal justice, socio-economic status or veteran and armed forces experience.

The analysis in this publication helps Social Security Scotland to understand who is using their services and how their processes work for different groups of people. For example, Social Security Scotland can identify if certain groups are more likely to have their applications denied than others. This information can help to inform improvements to Social Security Scotland's processes. This includes improving how information about benefit eligibility is communicated to different groups.

Detailed background information on each benefit included in this publication can be found in the benefit specific statistics publications on the [Social Security Scotland website](#).

About the data

Data collection

When someone applies for a benefit to Social Security Scotland, they are asked to complete an equalities monitoring form alongside their application. People can apply online, by telephone, by mail or with support from a local delivery advisor. Equalities data about the applicant is collected in a separate form as part of an online or a mailed application, or is collected by a client advisor during a telephone application or a local delivery appointment.

Most benefits have a single application form, however if the benefit application is in two parts (i.e. Adult Disability Payment, Child Disability Payment or Pension Age Disability Payment) the equalities data is collected with part 2 of the application. If Adult Disability Payment, Child Disability Payment or Pension Age Disability Payment applicants apply by telephone, they will usually be sent a paper copy of part 2 of the application and the equalities monitoring form to complete and return by mail.

Data storage

When an online application is submitted, the equalities information is stored in a data warehouse for analysis while the application data is stored separately in Social Security Scotland's case management system.

When applying by telephone, applicants are asked to answer the equalities monitoring form questions by a client advisor. This information is entered in the case management system by the client advisor and stored separately from the application information.

When applying by mail, applicants are asked to complete a paper version of the equalities monitoring form. Once this form is received, the information is entered

into a manual database which is separate from the case management system. This database is also used to store equalities information for local delivery applications.

The data in this publication is sourced from Social Security Scotland's case management system, the data warehouse and the manual database.

Information that could be used to identify individuals i.e. name and address are kept in the case management system and are used by client advisors when dealing with individual applications. Analysts do not have access these personal identifiers.

Data processing

Data cut

To account for backdating and for any delays between receiving and processing equalities data, all data was downloaded on 3 June 2025 to produce these statistics on applications received up to 31 March 2025.

For disability benefits, some part 2 applications and mailed paper forms may not have been received and inputted in time for this publication. These returns could not be included in this publication and will not feature in future publications due to application date cut offs. Later data cuts may include retrospective changes to application data. This includes corrections made in the case management system and changes in outcomes due to redeterminations and appeals.

Inclusion criteria

This publication includes data on people who made an application between April 2024 to March 2025 for one or more of the following benefits:

- Adult Disability Payment
- Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods
- Carer Support Payment
- Child Disability Payment

- Funeral Support Payment
- Job Start Payment
- Pension Age Disability Payment
- Scottish Child Payment
- Young Carer Grant

For benefits that have applications in two parts (Adult Disability Payment, Child Disability Payment, and Pension Age Disability Payment) equalities information is only available for people who have submitted part 2 of the application. The date that part 1 of the application form was received has been used to decide who is included in the analysis.

The information in this publication relates to the person making the application which may be different from the person benefitting from the payment. Most applications are made by the person who would benefit from the payment if the application was successful. However, some applications are made by another person on behalf of the person who would benefit. For Adult Disability Payment, Carer Support Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment equalities information can be collected for both the applicant and the person benefitting if these are different people. In these cases, only the information about the person applying is included in this publication.

Adult Disability Payment, Carer Support Payment, Child Disability Payment, Funeral Support Payment, Job Start Payment, Pension Age Disability Payment and Young Carer Grant applications have a single application outcome associated with each application. Applications for Best Start Foods are automatically assessed for Best Start Grant payments and vice versa. To handle this, an application was given an approved outcome if it was approved for any Best Start payment. An application was given a denied outcome if it was denied for all Best Start payments.

Scottish Child Payment can be applied for on its own or jointly with Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods. Joint applications for Scottish Child Payment and Best Start

Grant and Best Start Foods were split into two parts and treated as two separate applications in this analysis.

Exclusion criteria

If someone applied for the same benefit more than once or applied for more than one benefit during the publication period, they are only counted once within this publication. See the [Deduplicating multiple applications](#) section for more information. Therefore, when the data is broken down by benefit, applicants are only counted under the benefit with the most recent outcome.

Social Security Scotland deliver Carer's Allowance Supplement, Child Winter Heating Payment, and Winter Heating Payment. These benefits are paid automatically for most clients and equalities information is not captured in this process. Therefore, these benefits are not included in this publication.

For Adult Disability Payment, Carer Support Payment, Child Disability Payment, and Pension Age Disability Payment, some clients have been transferred from equivalent benefits administered by the Department for Work and Pensions. This publication does not include equalities information for clients that have been transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions because the information that the Department for Work and Pensions is not comparable to the equalities information that Social Security Scotland collects.

Data cleaning

Some equalities monitoring forms received via mail or local delivery contained typographical errors. Where postcode or date of birth data were entered into incorrect columns, this was corrected manually. Around 6% of mail responses and 7% of local delivery responses were missing postcode or date of birth information. These were excluded from the analysis as they could not be linked to application data.

There was a small number of equality records received by mail or local delivery for some benefits which had the same postcode and date of birth. If these cases had identical responses for certain equalities questions, they were assumed to be duplicates and one record was retained. If the answers to these questions were not the same, all records were removed from the analysis as it was not possible to tell whether these were duplicates from the same person.

For Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment some paper applications have an incorrect part 1 application date. These were corrected by using part 2 application date, as internal analysis suggests this is more accurate. For more details, see the [Data and Methodology Changes](#) report.

Linking data

The equalities data received online or by telephone were linked to application data using a unique application identifier. The remaining application data was linked with the manual database using the applicants' postcode and date of birth.

Linkage was close to 100% for each benefit except Adult Disability Payment, Carer Support Payment, Child Disability Payment, and Pension Age Disability Payment, which had a linking rate of 67%, 80%, 78% and 53% respectively. For more information about the data linkage rate, see the [Data quality](#) section.

Deduplicating multiple applications

Applicants can make multiple applications to Social Security Scotland. For example, they can:

- apply for the same benefit more than once
- apply for more than one benefit
- make a joint application for Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment

After the application data was linked with equalities records, multiple applications were identified and deduplicated, ensuring that only one application was retained

per applicant. Where an applicant made more than one application, the application with the most recent outcome was kept. This latest outcome might represent the initial decision or the outcome of appeal or redetermination if there was one. If an applicant had multiple applications with the same outcome date, one record was randomly selected to keep. If an applicant made multiple applications and none of these had an outcome, one record was randomly selected to keep.

This method of deduplicating of applications has been used so that these statistics represent Social Security Scotland's applicants instead of the number of applications and their outcomes. However, this method does have some limitations. Firstly, it may impact approval and denial figures reported in this publication. For example, applicants with multiple applications may have later applications denied because they are already receiving a benefit. Alternatively, applicants who make multiple applications may have a better understanding of the application process and thus have a better chance of having later applications approved. This method may also impact benefit breakdowns as an applicant can apply for multiple benefits but would only be counted for one of them in these statistics.

Suppression

All figures have been rounded to the nearest five to prevent the disclosure of sensitive personal information relating to applicants. Additionally, figures have been suppressed where information would be disclosed about a small number of applicants. These values are indicated with a [c] in the publication tables.

Suppression has not been applied to statistics that do not contain sensitive information. This includes statistics relating to unknown characteristics, application channel, benefits type or SIMD. Where these statistics would be rounded to zero, they have a value of [low] in the publication tables to differentiate them from true zeros.

Data quality

Quality assurance

The application data used to produce official statistics is the same as the data extracted from the case management system on a monthly basis that is used for internal reporting within Social Security Scotland. As such, the data is checked regularly for consistency with previous extracts. For example, checking applications, decisions and payments figures increase as expected over time and they are in proportion to each other.

Each stage of the data processing is tracked in detail and compared to the previous publication. Through these quality assurance processes, aspects that affected the quality of the data used in this publication were identified. These are outlined in this section.

The final figures in this publication are quality assured by a different member of the statistics team and finally by the lead statistician.

Response rates

For most online and telephone applications, applicants will complete an equalities monitoring form as part of the application process. However, in some rare circumstances, it is possible for an applicant to submit an online or telephone application without completing an equalities form.

Response rates are lower for applications received through mail and local delivery as it is possible that applicants can return their application form without completing the equalities monitoring form. In addition, a system error resulted in some applicants not being sent the associated equalities monitoring form when they requested a paper application pack, and for some benefits the equalities monitoring form was not available alongside the downloadable application form on the websites. Social Security Scotland is working towards this being rectified.

Telephone applications for Adult Disability Payment, Child Disability Payment and Pension Age Disability Payment are usually sent a paper copy of the equalities monitoring form to complete after their application. Response rates were therefore lower for these benefits due to a larger proportion of equalities monitoring forms being mailed out compared to other benefits. Lower response rates may mean that the equalities data is less representative of applicants applying for these benefits.

Prefer not to say

The equalities monitoring form includes a 'Prefer not to say' option for all questions. This option is for applicants who do not want to disclose information. However, due to a consequence of service design, 'Prefer not to say' was sometimes used as a response for all equalities questions by client advisors to allow them to submit an application when a client's equalities data was not available. To rectify this, where possible these records were linked to the accurately completed equalities record in the manual database. Otherwise, the initial record that had a 'Prefer not to say' response to all equalities questions was retained. As such, the statistics for 'Prefer not to say' responses may be inflated within this publication.

Case management system

Due to a system error in Social Security Scotland's case management system no equalities data were collected for any Carer's Support Payment applications that required payments to be backdated more than 13 weeks. A number of equalities data records were also overwritten due to a processing error in the case management system.

Both these system limitations have now been resolved, although both have resulted in a lower number of equalities records being reported on in this publication.

For a small number of records, an issue in the case management system has resulted in no unique identifier being applied to the equalities record. Unfortunately, in these instances we are unable to report on these equalities records. Social Security Scotland is working on resolving this issue.

There were few instances when a client's application data needed to be captured manually due to an error in the case management system. In these cases no equalities data was collected.

Unknown category

When completing an equalities monitoring form, a small number of applicants did not answer certain equalities questions. These applicants were categorised as 'unknown' within the publication tables.

Applicants were categorised as 'unknown' in the age tables if information about their date of birth was missing, contained errors or if they were under 16 years old.

In the geography tables, applicants were categorised as 'unknown' if their postcode was missing or contained errors. Applicants were also categorised as 'unknown' if their postcode has not been matched to the Scottish Government lookup file, which is used to match postcodes to higher geographies.

Data analysis

Comparing approval rates for groups of different sizes

Groups of smaller sizes tend to have more variable approval and denial rates than groups with larger numbers. For example, there were over 10,000 people in the no religion, Roman Catholic and Church of Scotland religious groups and less than 500 in the Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish and Hindu groups. When making comparisons between these groups, it is expected that approval rates for the smaller groups will be more variable within and between benefits compared to the larger groups.

Weighting of equalities data towards the largest benefits

After the data were cleaned and deduplicated, a larger number of equalities responses were related to applications for Adult Disability Payment, Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment (Table 13). Thus, the

equalities characteristics of these applicants had a greater influence on the overall figures in this publication compared to applicants applying for other benefits.

Geography

Applications are assigned to sub-national geographical areas by matching the applicant's postcode to a Scottish Government lookup file. For some applications, the postcode will not match to the lookup file. This can happen if the postcode was not in a Scottish local authority area. It can also happen if the postcode has been introduced too recently to appear in the lookup file, for example a property is within a new development area.

Postcodes are linked to client's profiles and data extracts are automatically updated in the case of a client changing address. As a result, postcodes reflect the latest address of clients and may not be the same as the address at the time of application. Therefore, a small number of addresses may not reflect the correct local authority area at the time of the application, decision, or payment. This may impact on the linking of equalities information.

Approval and denial rates

Approval rate figures are calculated as the proportion of applicants with approved applications out of the total applicants with approved or denied applications. Denial rate figures are calculated as the proportion of applicants with denied applications out of the total applicants with approved or denied applications.

Applications can be denied for multiple reasons. This includes the client not being a Scottish resident, not being in receipt of a qualifying benefit, or the application being made outwith an application window. It is not currently possible to analyse the data based on denial reasons. Social Security Scotland are working with the Scottish Government to improve the data.

Intersectionality analysis

Alongside this publication, there are separate tables showing the intersecting characteristics of the applicants applying for benefits from April 2024 to March 2025.

Social Security Scotland previously published [intersectionality analysis in 2021](#). The 2021 publication is not comparable to the data published in the current publication due to the different make up of benefits included in the analysis.

Related publications

Detailed background information and application level statistics for each benefit can be found in the benefit specific statistics publications on the [Social Security Scotland website](#). Figures in this publication are different and not comparable to those published for individual benefits because:

- this publication includes one application per applicant while the benefit specific publications include all applications
- this publication only includes applications which can be linked to equalities data while the benefit specific publications include all applications
- this publication calculates approval rates based on the latest decision whereas the benefit specific publications calculate approval rates based on the initial decision
- this publication excludes withdrawn and pending applications from the approval and denial rates while the benefit specific publications include these applications
- this publication reports on applicants' self-reported physical or mental health condition or illness while the disability benefit specific publications report on clients' primary disabling condition based on the supporting information that is provided in their application

The equalities monitoring form asks applicants for feedback on their application experience. Analysis of this information is published separately as part of Social Security Scotland's [Client Survey annual publication series](#). The next publication is due to be released in late 2025.

Social Security Scotland also publishes [statistics on the diversity characteristics of its workforce](#). The most recent publication covers to the end of March 2025.

In 2025, Social Security Scotland published the [Mainstreaming Equality Report 2025](#), which outlines progress on the organisation's equality outcomes.

Future developments

We are seeking users' views on the content of this publication, and the associated data tables, to ensure it best meets their requirements. In particular we are interested in users' views on the intersectionality analysis. If you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to provide us, please email MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot.

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available via an alternative route. Summary tables are available at: [Social Security Scotland statistics](#)
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot for further information

Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, e-mail statistics.enquiries@gov.scot.

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at [ScotStat](#).

Details of forthcoming publications can be found on the [Social Security Scotland website](#) and the [Scottish Government Website](#).

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