Social Security Panels research - Buildings

Summary report

Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

social research

Dignity, fairness, respect.

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Contents

Background

This report presents a summary of results from a survey with Client Panel and Experience Panel members. The Experience Panels were established in 2017 to help design a social security system that works for the people of Scotland. Members have experience of at least one of the benefits delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions that has or will come to Scotland. Established in 2020, the Client Panels are made up of Social Security Scotland clients from across Scotland. Client Panels research helps us understand what people's experience of Social Security Scotland has been like. The research informs decisions about Social Security Scotland's systems, processes and policies.

The survey explored views about the Social Security Scotland buildings in Dundee and Glasgow. Panel members who lived within travelling distance to the Dundee or Glasgow buildings were invited to take part in the survey. The survey took place between July and August 2021. In total, 85 members across both Panels took part in the survey (a response rate of 13 per cent). Slightly more Experience Panel members took part in the survey 45 compared to 40 Client Panel members).

This survey built upon existing research about expectations around Social Security Scotland buildings and facilities. It explored views about travelling to and entering the buildings, as well as about staff uniform and behaviours. In this summary, results are shown as percentages of all responses. Where the total number of responses is below 50, whole numbers are used instead.

Before the visit

- A majority of respondents said that they would consider visiting either Agnes Husband House or the Glasgow office for an appointment if they needed advice or support. (27 out of 33 in Dundee. 36 out of 52 in Glasgow).

- Respondents said information about what to expect on arrival and information on parking were the most important to know before travelling to the buildings.

- Ranked as least important were: directions for driving; distance from the nearest train or bus stop; and information about the building layout.

- Other information respondents wanted to know before visiting the building included: information about accessibility; COVID-19 safety measures; and likely waiting times.

Distance from disabled car parking bays to entrance and is it level; how many disabled parking bays; is there more than one lift in the building?

Experience Panel member

Images of the inside of the building, or a video walk through would be very helpful to me as an autistic adult. New places can be very overwhelming and knowing what to expect really helps. It also helps me identify what kinds of sensory overwhelm I'm likely to experience, so that I can prepare or bring someone with me for support.

Experience Panel member

Entering the building

Welcome

- Nearly four in ten (38 per cent) of respondents said that they would like to approach a staff member when they were ready to ask for help.

- A majority (81 per cent) said that they would feel confident telling a staff member the reason for their visit.

- Most respondents (89 per cent) said that any accessibility information they provide before an appointment should be shared with staff who welcome them to the building. Respondents said that sharing this information would enable staff to help and support clients.

If the person welcoming is aware of any accessibility issues then any necessary allowances can already be sorted (translators, signers etc).
Client Panel member

If the staff member is aware of any issues this will avoid the need to explain it again and make the interaction smoother.
Client Panel member

I think the staff greeting clients into the building should be made aware of any additional needs prior to the clients arrival. This helps with peoples' anxiety of the unknown when they get there.

Client Panel member

Entering the building

Team name

- Respondents were asked what the team of staff who welcome visitors to the buildings could be called. The most common suggestions were for a name that included "reception" for example, "Receptionists" or "Reception Staff" (17 comments). "Welcome" was also a popular term across the suggestions (12 comments).

- Respondents were told that 'front of house team' was one suggestion for the team of staff who welcome visitors to the buildings. Six out of ten respondents (61 per cent) said that it was clear from the name who these staff were and what they do. Four out of ten said the name either was not clear (27 per cent) or that they were unsure (13 per cent).

> Front of house indicates they are first point of contact.
> **Client Panel member**

> The name says it all. They are there to welcome people to the facility.
> **Client Panel member**

> Sounds like a theatre or entertainment environment not government building.
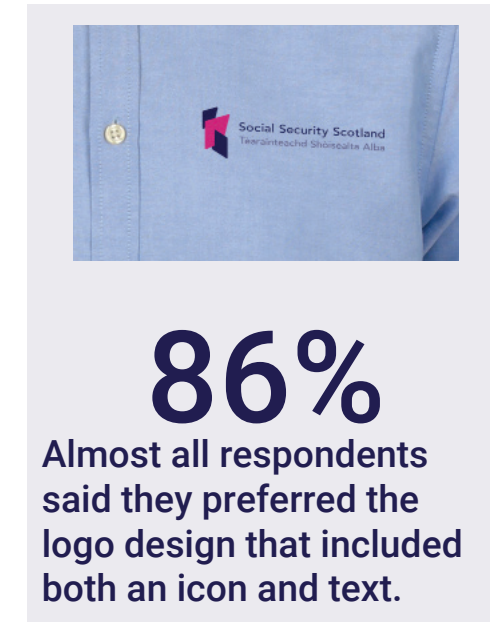> **Experience Panel member**

> It doesn't really explain their job.
> **Experience Panel member**

Uniform

Staff

- Around half of respondents (49 per cent) said that staff should wear a uniform. The most popular style of uniform was a shirt (47 per cent).

- Respondents who preferred shirts said this style was smart and professional. Those who preferred polo shirts said they liked a less formal uniform style.

- Many respondents, regardless of which style they preferred, said it was important that staff were easily recognisable.

48%
of respondents preferred a badge with staff first name and team name.

86%
Almost all respondents said they preferred the logo design that included both an icon and text.

> I selected shirt because I don't think staff should appear too casual.
> **Client Panel member**

> I would not be really bothered about the style of the uniform, just something that makes staff easily identifiable to clients.
> **Experience Panel member**

> More comfortable for staff member and would be viewed as less officious, making clients more relaxed.
>
> **Client Panel member who preferred polo shirt**

Uniform

Security Staff

- The majority of respondents (80 per cent) said that security staff should wear a uniform.

- Of these respondents, almost all (84 per cent) said that this uniform should be different to that worn by other staff.

- Respondents said it was important that visitors were able to easily tell the difference between staff and security personnel:

  - To help avoid confusion about staff's job roles and what questions they might be able to help with.

  - To help clients to feel safe should they need assistance.

They should stand out from other staff so as to indicate that they are security staff and avoid any awkwardness if a client should ask them about something regarding their appointment which is of course nothing to do with the duties of a security guard.

Client Panel member

Security should have a distinctive uniform to make them easily identifiable. This is reassuring to me, when I can see that security are around to help if they are needed.

Client Panel member

Next Steps

Findings are being taken into consideration by the teams who are preparing the Dundee and Glasgow buildings to welcome visitors. Preferences for the appearance of staff are being used to help make decisions around what staff will wear and their identification. Views about staff behaviour will be used to provide staff with training on how best to support clients who visit these buildings.

Alongside previous research, these findings are also being used by colleagues who support clients in their local areas across Scotland. For example, the types of information respondents want before a visit to a Social Security Scotland location. This includes the offices in Dundee and Glasgow and the Outreach venues located across the country.

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