



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Mainstreaming Equality

Visual Summary

Dignity,
fairness,
respect.

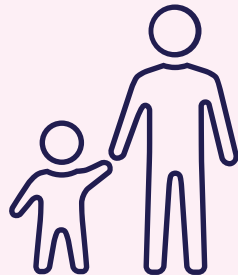
1. Introduction

Social Security Scotland was set up in 2018.

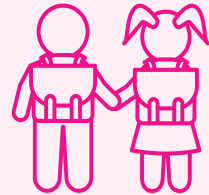
We deliver the following benefits.



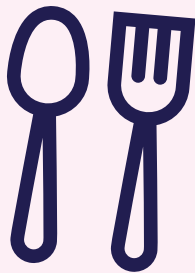
[Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment](#)



[Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment](#)



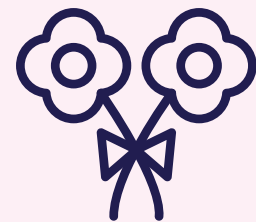
[Best Start Grant School Age Payment](#)



[Best Start Foods](#)



[Carer's Allowance Supplement](#)



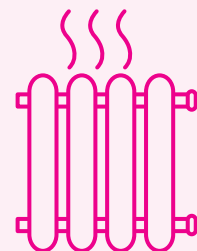
[Funeral Support Payment](#)



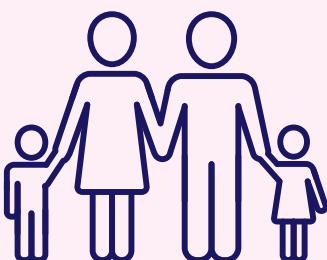
[Job Start Payment](#)



[Young Carer Grant](#)



[Child Winter Heating Assistance](#)

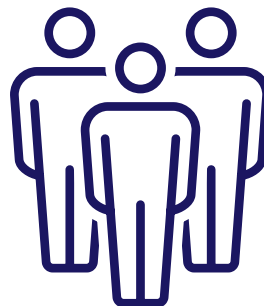


[Scottish Child Payment](#)

2. Our progress so far.....



Our approach to equality links to our values of dignity, fairness and respect. Equality is front and centre to our approach.



We have established an internal and external equality network and inclusive communication stakeholder group.

Commitment to inclusive communication



Our clients can contact us through multiple channels.



We have a range of interpretation and translation services.



We introduced web chat during Covid-19 as another communication channel.



Agreed Inclusive Communication principles.



Our publications and guidance are available in Easy Read and Plain English.

Evidenced based decision making

Data and evidence



Quarterly workforce data
People survey
Client diversity and equality analysis
All client survey
Client Panels



Equality impact assessments

Guidance developed and published for staff
Workshops delivered to increase understanding
External stakeholders providing comment and challenge
All completed assessments published on our website

Our workforce



We have removed qualification requirements for entry level posts.



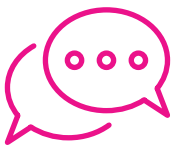
We have implemented improvements to our workplace adjustment process.



We hold candidate workshops to help people understand our process.



We are developing our approach to equality learning and have held sessions for managers on inclusiveness.

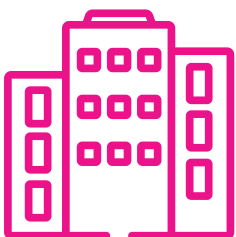


We support the Fair Work agenda and Fair Start placements and wider internships.



Client experience informs our learning. We have worked with the Carer's Trust and One Parent Families.

Building our service



Consultation with client base has informed site locations in Dundee and Glasgow.



We will continue to make sure these buildings are accessible to our diverse workforce and clients.



We are building a Local Delivery service across Scotland, co-locating with partner organisations to help improve client experience. We will also provide home visits.

3. Our equality outcomes



Outcome 1 - Our workforce

Our workforce will be as diverse as the people who are entitled to our service.

We particularly want to increase the number of employees who are disabled or from ethnic minority backgrounds. We aim to do this by 'narrowing the gap' in the recruitment process from application to job offer for people from an ethnic minority or disabled candidates compared with people who are white or who are not disabled



Outcome 2 - Our culture

We will encourage our staff to listen and respond and to be inclusive. We will increase the diversity of our workforce at decision-making and management levels. In particular, we will support people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people who are disabled to move on to more senior levels.



Outcome 3 - Delivering and improving our service

We will learn from people entitled to our service and those organisations who provide support and advocacy (representation), in order to increase the number of people who use our service and improve how we deliver our service to all those who are eligible for benefits.

This includes people who:

- currently use our service;
- may use it in the future; and
- are eligible for our services but are not currently using them.

In particular, we want to increase awareness and uptake of benefits from people from ethnic minority communities, people who communicate in different ways and people with care experience.

4. Our information

This report summaries evidence about our clients and workforce that has helped us to develop our [Equality Strategy and Outcomes](#). Additional information about our organisation is included within the [Scottish Government Mainstreaming Report 2021.](#)



Workforce

- [Quarterly published workforce data](#)
- Recruitment analysis that was done to support equality impact assessments
- Our annual People Survey



Clients

- [Client equality and diversity analysis](#)
- [Client survey](#)



5. Workforce equality monitoring



Information about our workforce is important it:

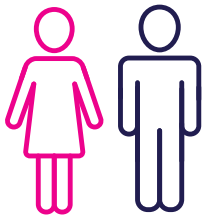
- informs our workforce planning decisions;
- informs our equality outcomes;
- helps us identify areas for improvement in our recruitment approach;
- informs equality impact assessments and
- shapes the work of our People Engagement Group.

5.1 Workforce data



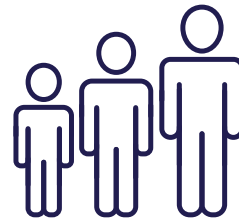
We publish [reports](#) on our workforce every three months. We collect information on date of birth and gender for all colleagues. People are regularly encouraged to add extra diversity information voluntarily on the online system. There is a 'prefer not to say' option. There are some gaps in our data which are shown as 'unknown'.

The information presented overleaf is up until September 2020.



Gender

61% of staff are female and 39% are male.



Age

The most common age ranges of staff is 30-39 (27%) and 40-49 (26%).



Disability

12% of staff declared they had a disability.



Ethnicity

3% declared that they came from an ethnic minority background.



Religion or belief

The majority of staff stated they have no religion or belief at 50%. 15% stated they were Roman Catholic, 10% are Church of Scotland, 5% are other Christian and 3% stated other religion or belief.



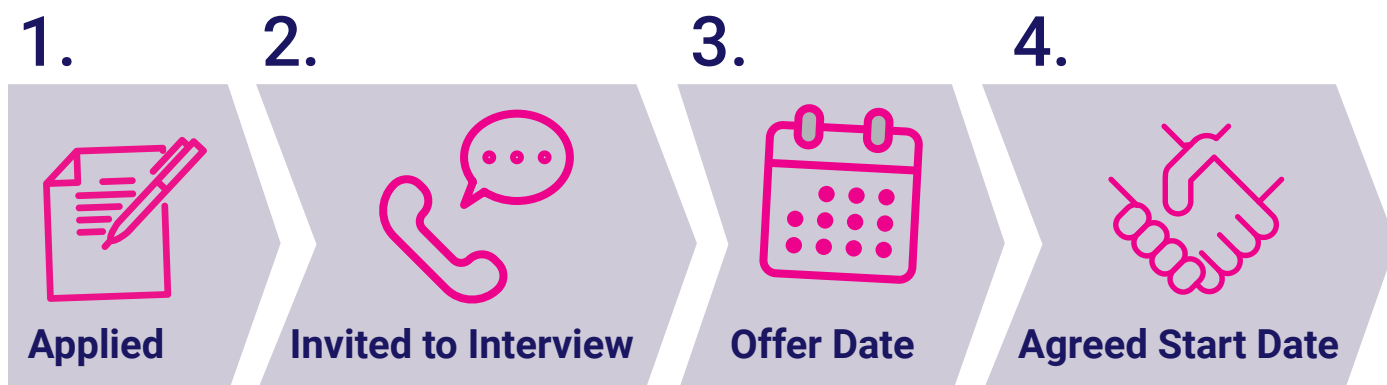
Sexual orientation

The majority of staff were Hetero-sexual/straight at 76%. 7% declared their sexual orientation as 'Lesbian, gay, bisexual, other'.

5.2 Recruitment information

We have also looked at information from job applications. This information is taken from our online vacancy system, and covers completed recruitment campaigns between 6 November 2018 to 31 December 2020. In total we received 17,022 applications covering 255 recruitment campaigns.

The information is broken down by protected characteristics and can be analysed at each of these four stages. We have looked specifically at any changes in proportions across each of these stages.



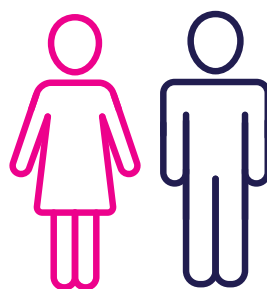
This information has helped inform the focus of Outcome One for 2021-2022. We are aware that further, more detailed analysis is needed to inform the actions needed to increase the diversity of our workforce. We will explore this further as part of our overall commitment to using a wide range of data and embedding an intersectional understanding to inform our approach to mainstreaming equality.

Age

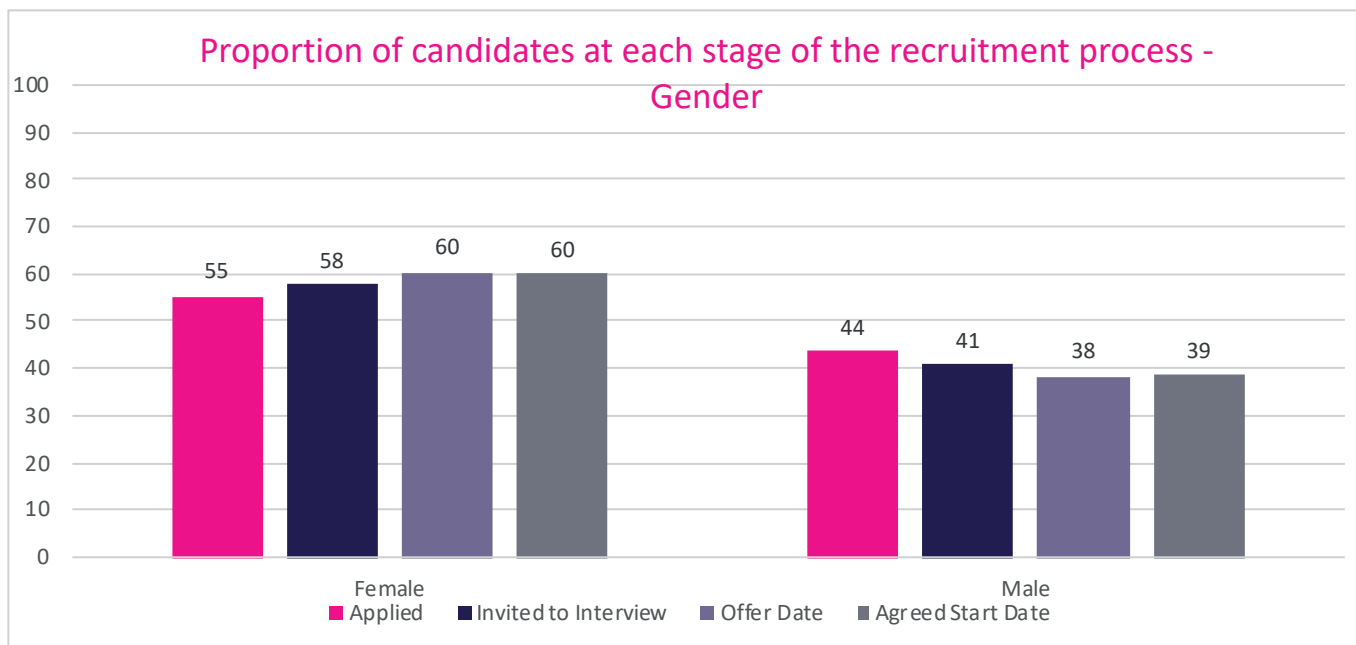


The proportion of applications for each age group remained relatively stable throughout the recruitment process. Those age groups that had a higher proportion of successful applications, compared to the proportion that applied, were the 16-19, 30-39 and 40-49 age group.

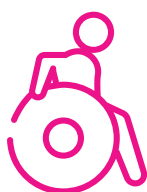
Gender



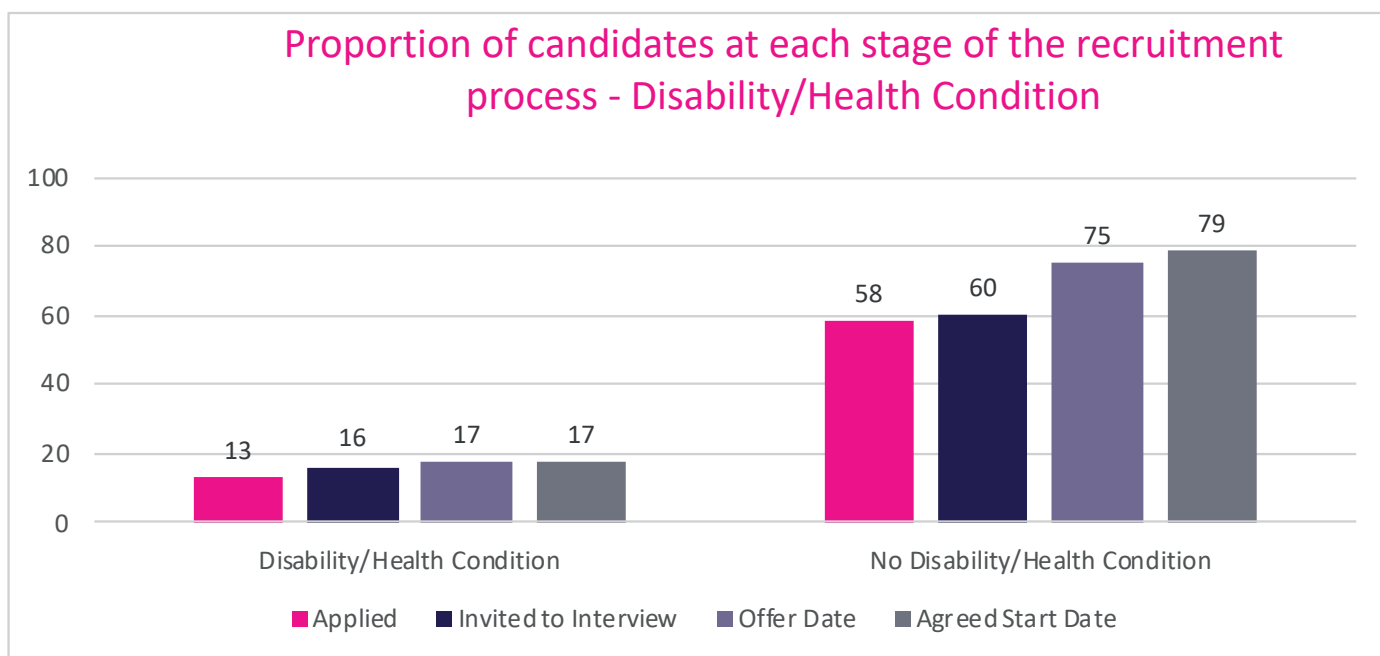
The proportion of successful applications for female candidates (60%) was higher than the proportion that applied to vacancies (55%). This was different for male candidates, with the proportion of successful applications (39%) lower than the proportion that applied to vacancies (44%).



Disability and Guaranteed Interviews



The proportion of applications for candidates with a disability rose at each stage of the process from 13% at the applied stage to 17% with an agreed start date. This was the same for non-disabled candidates, but the increase was far higher.

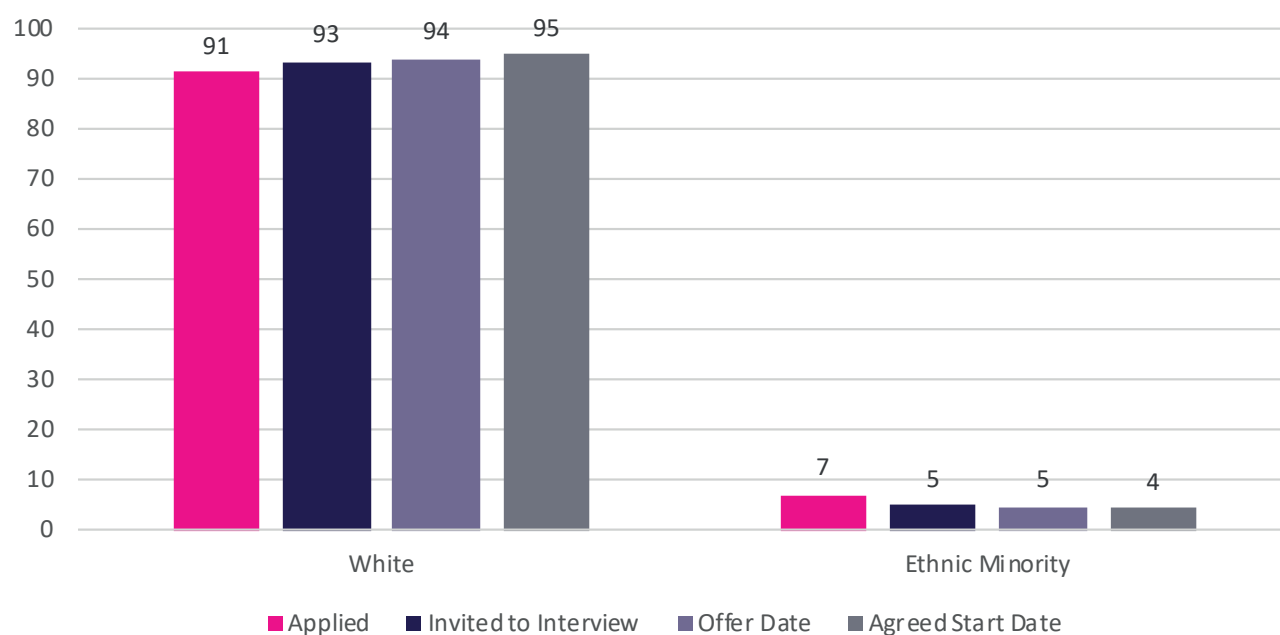


Ethnic Group



The proportion of successful applications for ethnic minority decreased throughout the recruitment process. 4% agreed a start date compared to 7% that applied. A converse pattern was found for applications from white candidates.

Proportion of candidates at each stage of the recruitment process - Ethnic group



Sexual Orientation



The proportion of applications for each sexual orientation group remained relatively stable throughout the recruitment process. 8% of successful applications were for candidates who were lesbian, gay, bisexual or another orientation, while 88% of successful applications were for heterosexual candidates.

Religion



The proportion of successful applications from candidates with no religion (58%) is higher than the proportion that applied to vacancies (54%). The opposite pattern can be observed for all other religion groups.

5.3 People Survey

We take part in the Civil Service People Survey every year. The results help us take action on the issues that matter to our people. The results presented are from the 2020 survey.

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741 colleagues participated in the People Survey this year, this was a response rate of 77%.



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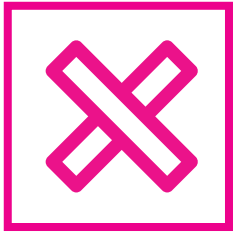
One of the main scores we look at in the People Survey is our Engagement Score. This covers questions asking:



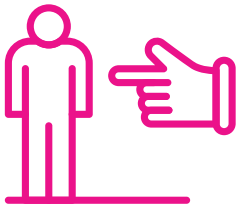
Our score for 2020 was 79%, a slight reduction from the previous year's score of 82%.



There are nine core themes in the People Survey. These include inclusion and fair treatment, my manager and pay and benefits. There are average scores for each. For 2020 we scored 90% for inclusion and fair treatment. For 2019 it was the same.



We did not find any significant variation by protected characteristic. Where there were lower scores to questions, the respondent had chosen the “prefer not to say” option.



The discrimination question asked whether during the past 12 months have you personally experienced discrimination at work? 6% responded yes. This was a reduction from the previous year’s survey.

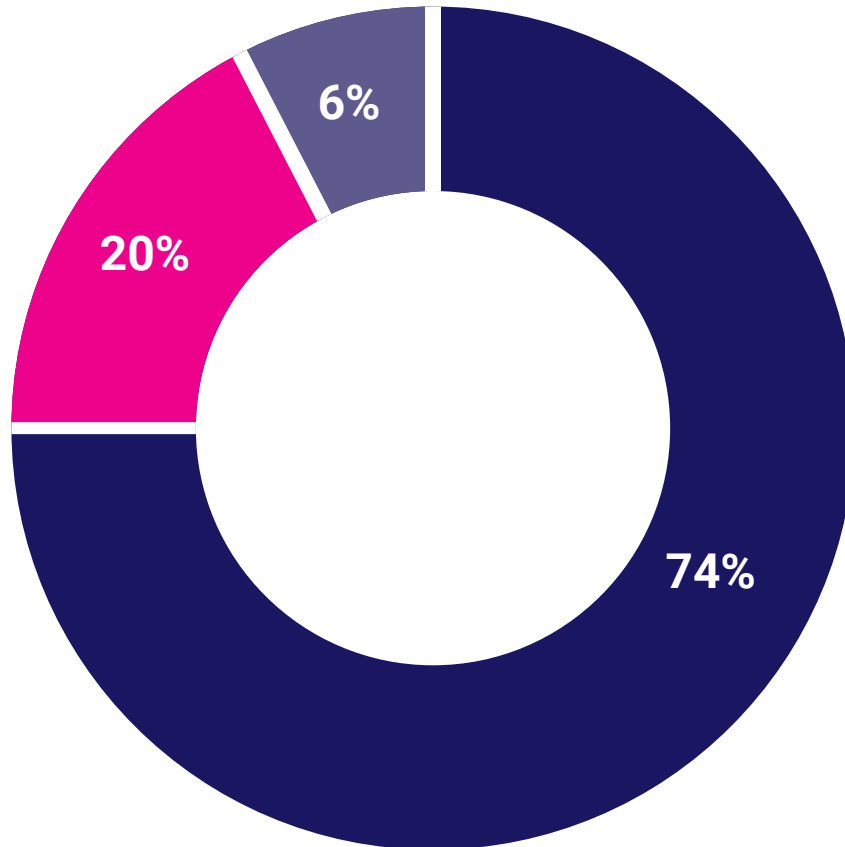


When asked about whether someone had been subject to bullying and harassment 6% said yes, and this was a reduction from the previous people survey.



There were also questions on mental health. These questions were asked in the 2020 People Survey, and in two surveys we carried out in 2020, to understand the impact of Covid 19.

How would you rate your mental health now? People Survey 2020



- Excellent/very good/good
- Fair
- Poor

In addition to this, in the most recent Covid-19 staff survey, over 69% of respondents rated their overall mental health as excellent, very good or good. We did notice some differences in results when focusing on age and health conditions. The score for those aged between 16-34 was lower at 61%, and for those with a health condition at 62%.

6. Client equality information

6.1 Client equality and diversity analysis



Social Security Scotland collects diversity information from clients by asking them to complete an Equality Monitoring and Feedback form. We do this so we can identify who is using the service, and to see how our processes work for different groups of people.

We published this information in March and September 2020. Key findings are presented below from the [September publication](#), which covers applications received between December 2019 to May 2020.

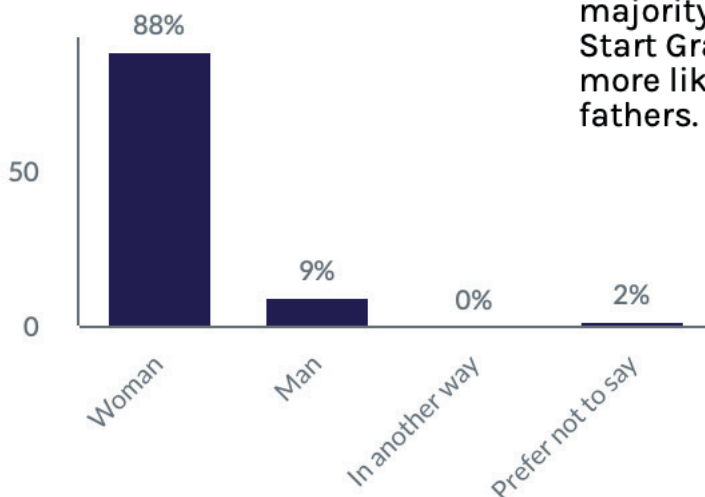
89%

The majority of responses were from applicants for Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods, as there are a greater number of applications for these benefits compared to other.

Our future clients

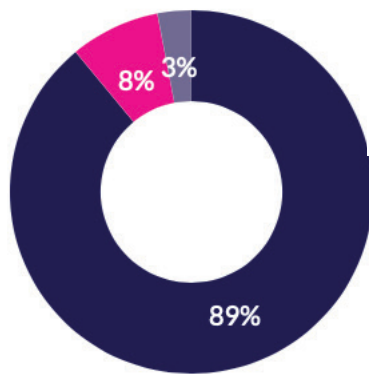
Over the next two years the demographics of the people who are our clients will change as new benefits are launched. This means we need to continue to develop how we work with stakeholders to support our workforce to deliver our service.

Gender



- 88% of clients self-identified as women. The majority of the data was from applicants for Best Start Grant and/or Best Start Foods which may be more likely to be filled out by mothers rather than fathers.

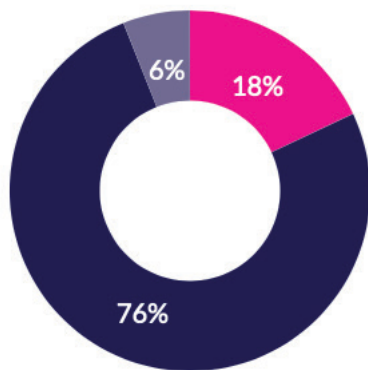
Ethnic group



■ White (89%) ■ Other ethnic group (8%)
■ Prefer not to say (3%)

- 8% of clients were classed as "other ethnic group". This includes 4% who described their ethnic group as "Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British". In Scotland's 2011 census 96% of the total population of Scotland were "White".

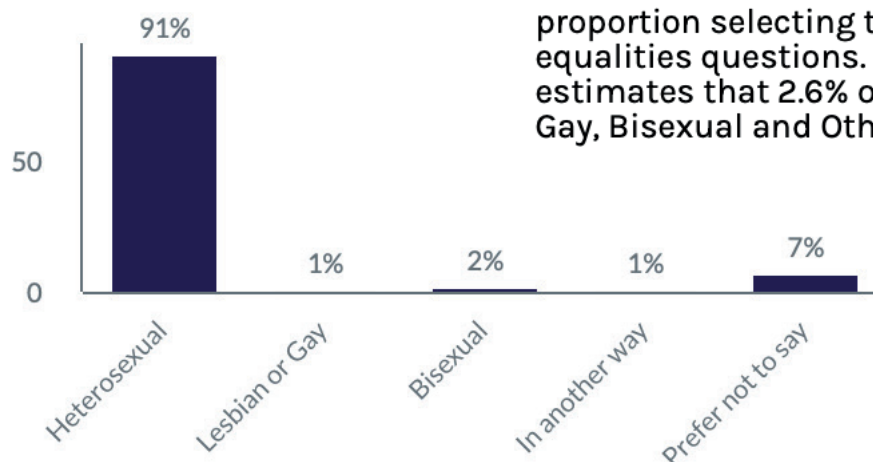
Physical or mental health condition or illness



■ Yes (18%) ■ No (76%)
■ Prefer not to say (6%)

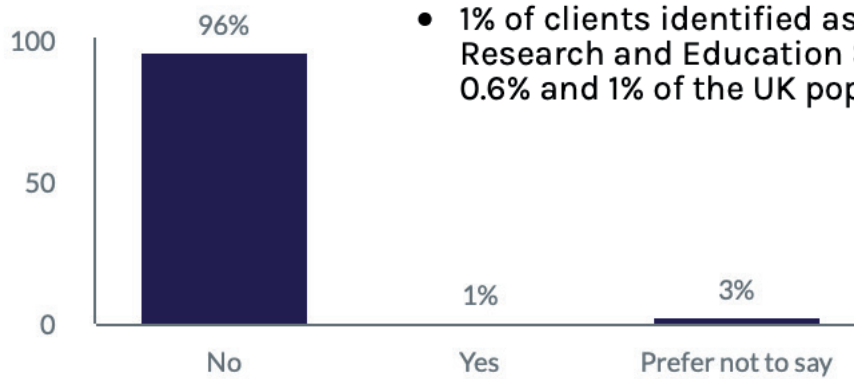
- 18% of clients declared they had a physical or mental health condition or illness. There is no directly comparable data for Scotland as a whole, but 24.7% of adults had a limiting long-term physical or mental health condition in Scotland in 2018, according to the Scottish Health Survey.

Sexual orientation



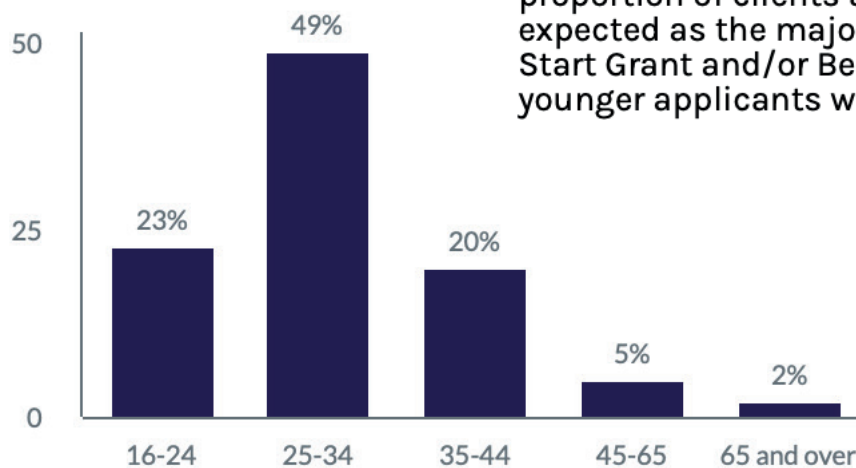
- 1% of clients identified as Lesbian or Gay and 2% as Bisexual. 7% of clients prefer not to say, the highest proportion selecting this option out of all of the equalities questions. Scottish Survey Core Questions estimates that 2.6% of respondents identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Other.

Transgender



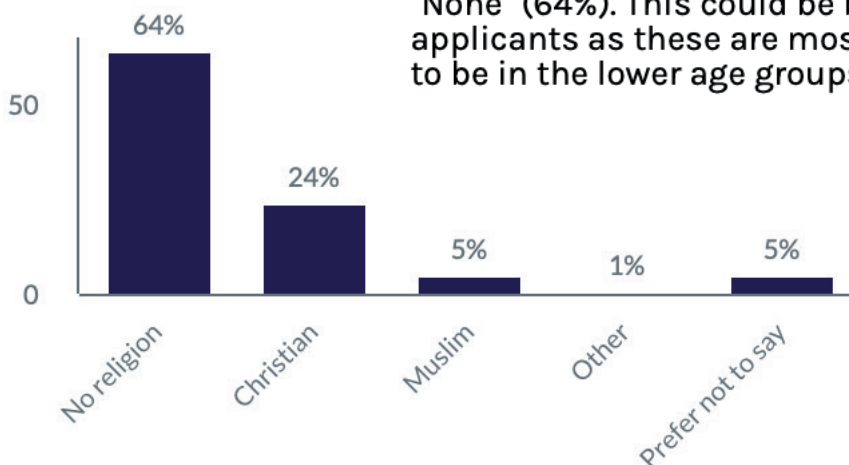
- 1% of clients identified as transgender. The Gender Identity Research and Education Society estimates that between 0.6% and 1% of the UK population identify as transgender.

Age



- 93% of clients are under 45 years old. The highest proportion of clients are in the 25-34 age group. This is expected as the majority of applicants are for Best Start Grant and/or Best Start Foods and are likely to be younger applicants with a child under 6 years old.

Religion



- The majority of clients recorded their religion or belief as "None" (64%). This could be based on the age group of applicants as these are mostly new parents who are likely to be in the lower age groups.

6.2 Social Security Scotland - Client analysis



The All Client Survey was open to everyone who had received a decision on a benefit application. It covered from September 2018 to July 2020. This included people who had applied for at least one of: Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods, Funeral Support Payment or Young Carer Grant. The survey was also open to anyone who had received Carer's Allowance Supplement, which does not need an application. Full survey results are available and a full [visual summary](#)



Respondents living with a long-term health condition were less likely than people without such a condition to agree with each of the statements. The table below shows the results broken down by whether respondents have a long-term physical or mental health condition.

Proportion strongly agreeing or agreeing that:	With long-term physical/ mental health condition (n=1,046-1,087)	No condition (n=1,759-1,846)	Prefer not to say (n=207-214)
Social Security Scotland treated me fairly	83%	90%	82%
Social Security Scotland treated me with respect	83%	90%	82%
Social Security Scotland treated me with dignity	83%	89%	81%
Social Security Scotland did not waste my time	84%	88%	82%
I understand what Social Security Scotland does	78%	84%	72%

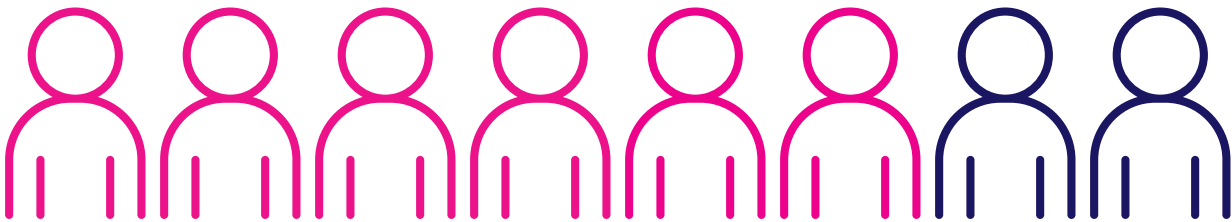
Proportion strongly agreeing or agreeing that:	With long-term physical/ mental health condition (n=1,046-1,087)	No condition (n=1,759-1,846)	Prefer not to say (n=207-214)
I feel I can trust Social Security Scotland	78%	83%	74%
Social Security Scotland is an honest organisation	76%	79%	72%
Social Security Scotland is an open organisation	64%	69%	57%



Respondents were asked whether they had experienced barriers with Social Security Scotland. 7% said they had experienced some sort of barrier in getting help from Social Security Scotland.

Of that 7% a quarter felt that:

- Social Security Scotland understood the barriers and
- Social Security Scotland supported them in overcoming the barriers



Respondents were asked whether they had experienced any discrimination when dealing with Social Security Scotland. One in fifty (2%) said they had been discriminated against during their experience with Social Security Scotland. 3% preferred not to say.



Three in five (64%) of those who had experienced discrimination didn't feel it was clear how to challenge the discrimination or felt they couldn't challenge it.

6.3 Social Security Experience Panels – Ethnic Minorities



In 2020, the Social Security Experience Panels published a report on the findings of research conducted with people from an ethnic minority in Scotland.

The research asked participants about their experiences of using the benefits system. It also asked how Social Security Scotland can make sure it is accessible to ethnic minorities in Scotland. Full results of the research are available [here](#).

Key findings included:



Lack of awareness of where information is available. Reasons for this can include being socially isolated or lack of digital skills. Word of mouth and local networks are where information would most likely come from.



Almost all focus groups felt that language barriers prevented people from ethnic minorities accessing what they were entitled to.

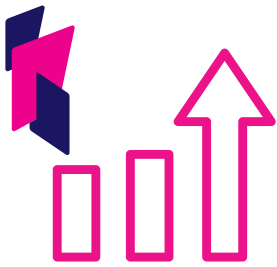


Lack of confidence in dealing with public sector staff based on previous experiences.



Participants spoke about attitudes towards receiving benefits. Some said that they didn't see benefits as a right they were entitled to. Others said that feeling ashamed was a reason why they would be less likely to seek help and try and get what they were entitled to.

7. Forward look

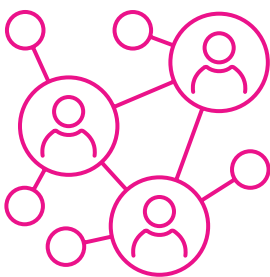


As a new public body we are still developing our evidence and our understanding of what we need to do to mainstream equality.

Some of our information sources have a short history This applies to both our workforce and client information.



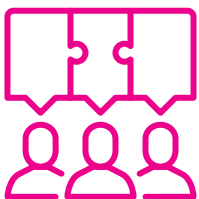
We recognise we have information gaps and have identified a number of actions we need to take. As our systems still align with Scottish Government for a lot of our workforce information we will continue to work in collaboration with them on improvements . We will also make sure equality information is thought about when developing our own systems. This includes our Learning and Development systems, so we get a greater understanding of how our staff are accessing opportunities to develop.



Intersectionality is a commitment we have made in our Equality Strategy. It is about the connected nature of the different protected characteristics and can create further opportunities for discrimination and disadvantage. As an organisation we want to improve awareness and understanding of its effect on our decision-making. We are creating a series of workshops, cafes and blogs to support this understanding.



Accessibility of our information is important. We have already started producing visual summaries to support our research and this is something we develop further in consultation with our stakeholders.



Working with our people and stakeholders to improve our information will also continue. We will continue to use our Internal and External Equality Networks to help inform the actions we take on issues identified from our information.



We will also create a Social Security Scotland People Panel. This will be a group of employees who have agreed to participate in in-house research.



Social Security Scotland
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Contact us

 socialsecurity.gov.scot

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 Social Security Scotland