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Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Social Security Scotland Statistics

Analytical Performance Report – 2018-19

Introduction

This publication provides information on the performance of Social Security Scotland at 31 March 2019 in relation to the administration of Carer’s Allowance Supplement (CAS) from September 2018 and Best Start Grant (BSG) Pregnancy and Baby Payment from December 2018.

The [About the data](#) section provides details of the full research and statistics publications from which the data in this performance report has come.

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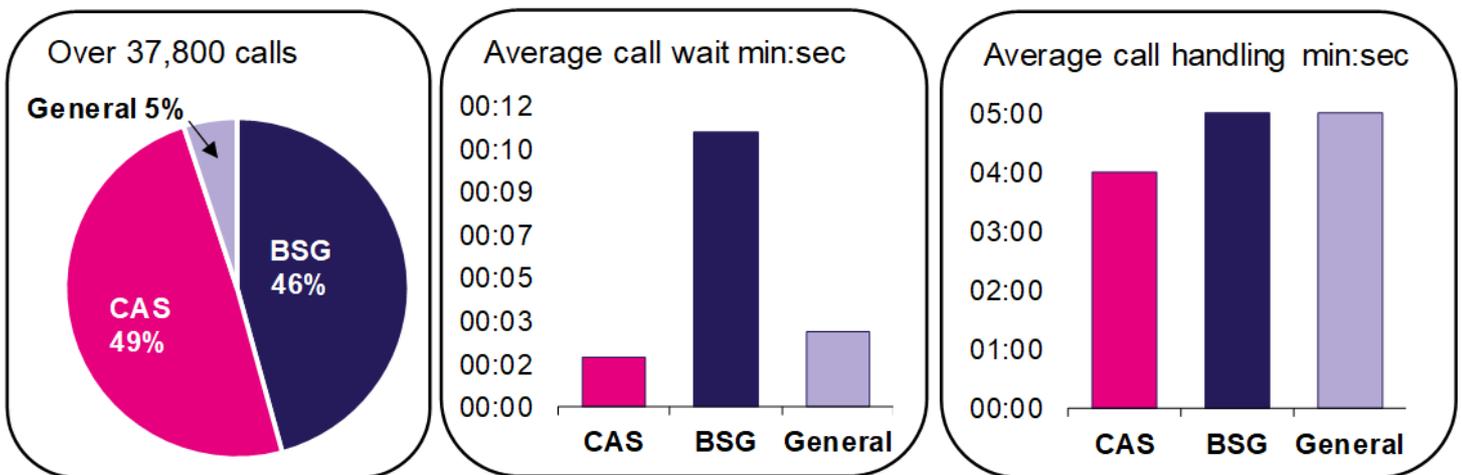
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Client and Staff Insights

In June 2019 we published the findings of the insights program, which has had feedback from clients and staff on their experiences of engaging with Social Security Scotland during the period from September 2018 to March 2019.

Contacts by telephony

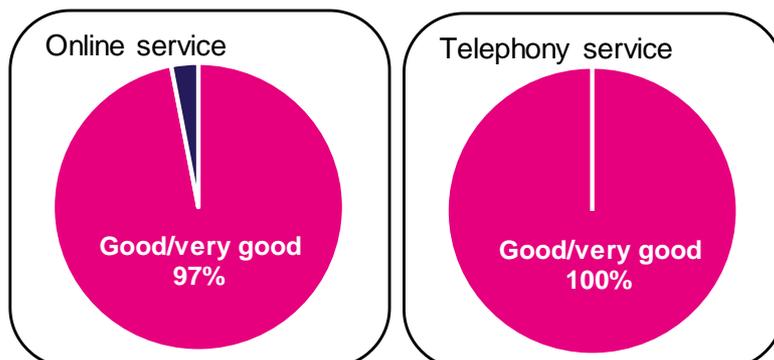
From September 2018 to 31 March 2019 Social Security Scotland received over 37,800 contacts by phone. Of these, approximately 17,300 were in relation to Best Start Grant, 18,600 were in relation to Carer’s Allowance Supplement and 1,900 were general enquiries. Call handling times were on average 4 minutes and 30 seconds long; approximately 5 minutes for Best Start Grant, 4 minutes for Carer’s Allowance Supplement and 5 minutes for general enquiries.



Over 300 clients left ratings on their experience of engaging with the Social Security telephony services. Of those who left a rating, 89% felt their call had been answered quickly. 80% felt they got everything they needed from the call and 86% rated the service positively overall.

Contact by applications (online and telephony)

Over 1,000 clients left ratings following online and telephony applications for Best Start Grant – Pregnancy and Baby. Of online applicants who responded, 97% rated the service as good or very good. For telephony applicants, 100% of those who left a rating rated the service as good or very good.

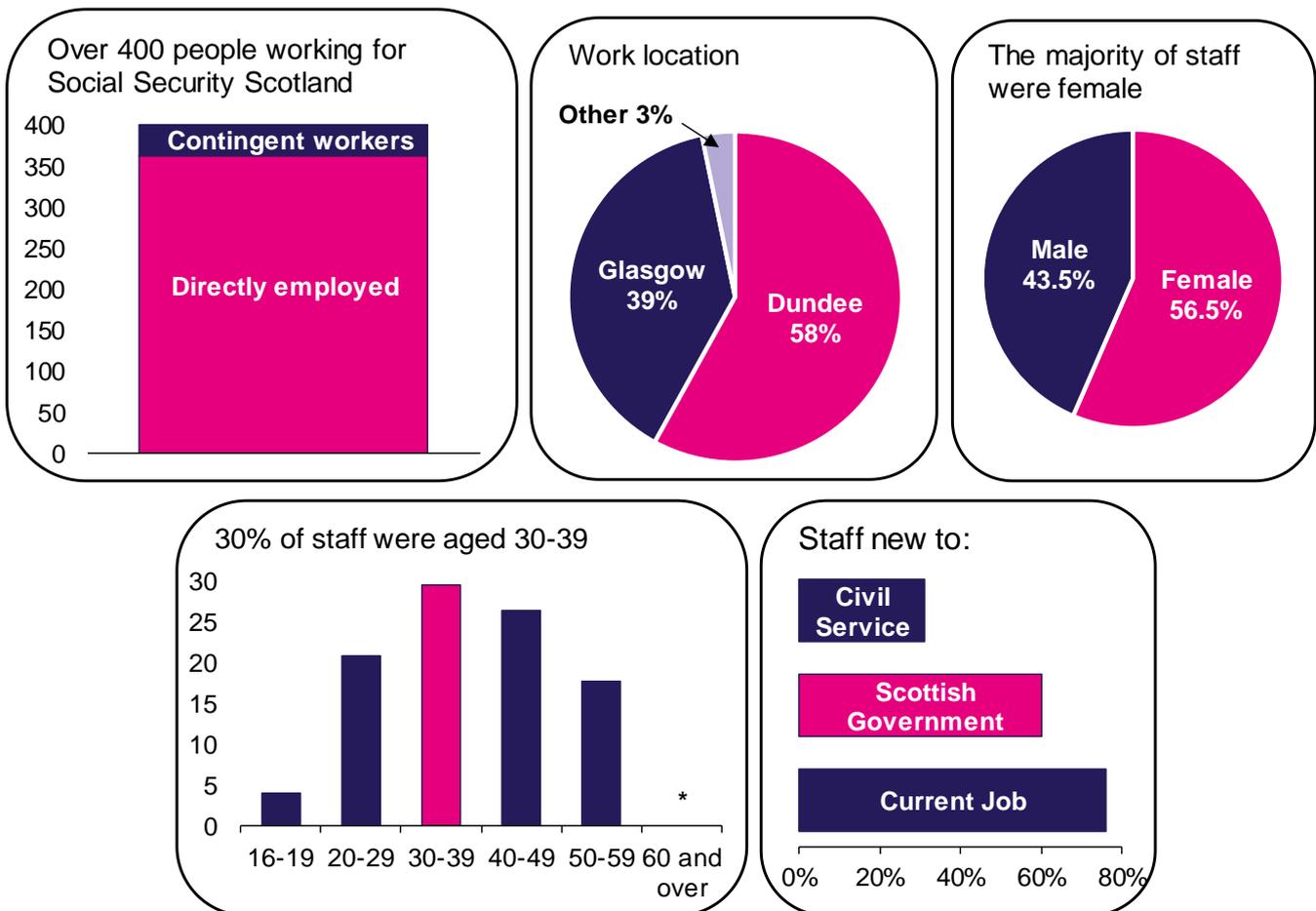


People and Recruitment

Data from the agency’s HR system (e-HR) show that for the period up to end March 2019 there were 363 directly employed staff and 39 contingent workers¹ working for Social Security Scotland. The majority of these (58%) were based in Dundee. The largest proportion of Social Security Scotland staff (30%) fell into the 30-39 age bracket, and the majority were female (57%).

At this stage in the organisation’s development, e-HR diversity data do not present a fully accurate picture of staff characteristics. For example, as of March 2019, information on disability status is 58% unknown. Work will be undertaken within the organisation to improve diversity declaration rates on the agency’s HR system. In contrast, 100% of those who completed a staff survey in October 2018 provided information relating to disability.

There were 193 staff members who participated in the staff survey in October 2018, a response rate of 97% at the time of completion. Results from the survey show that the majority of staff (60%) were new to working for the Scottish Government or its predecessors.



¹ Contingent workers are non-directly employed workers that are engaged in any capacity for the Scottish Government, such as contractors, inward secondments, and temporary agency workers.

Early indications from the staff survey data² suggest that Social Security Scotland staff are representative of the Scottish working population. For example, 22% of those who completed the survey reported having a long-standing physical or mental health condition, illness, impairment or disability, compared to 19% in the Scottish working age population. Regarding ethnicity, 8% of staff survey respondents identified as ethnic minorities, compared to 4% in the Scottish working population. 7% of survey respondents identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other compared to 2% in the working population.

Feedback Statistics

In June 2019 we published statistics covering feedback (complaints, compliments and suggestions) received by Social Security Scotland since it was introduced on 4 September 2018 until 31 March 2019.

Complaints

In total 75 complaints³ were received by 31 March 2019, including 45 for Carer's Allowance Supplement and 30 for Best Start Grant. This compares to 86,305 carers eligible in 2018/19 and 19,465 Best Start Grant applications made by 31 March 2019⁴.

Complaints fall under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and their complaints handling procedure. This sets out a 2 stage internal complaints process. Frontline resolution – stage 1, allows 5 working days to respond to the client's complaint. Where a client remains unhappy with this response they can proceed to investigation – stage 2, which allows 20 working days to investigate and provide a response. If the client still remains unhappy then they can choose to take their complaint to the SPSO.

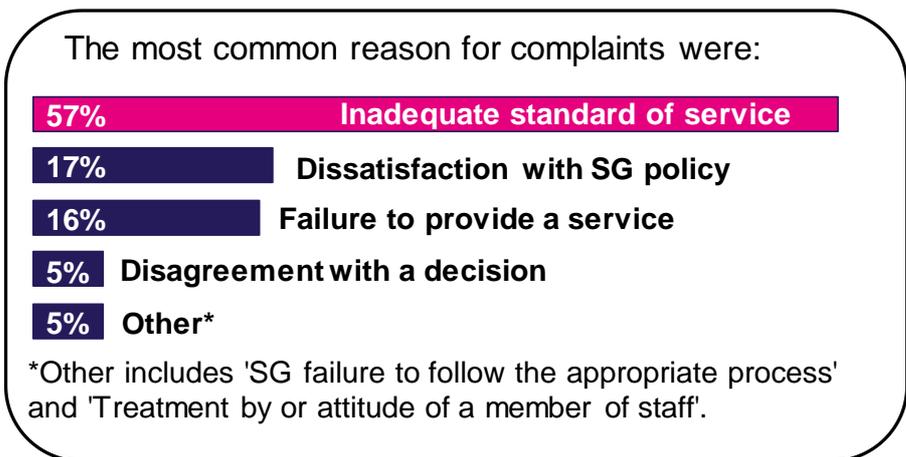
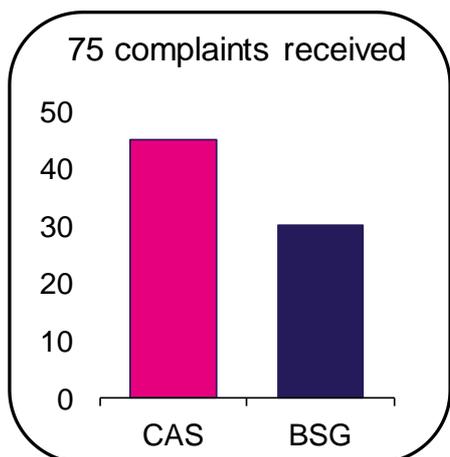
Overall, 22% of complaints reached stage 2 (either progressing from stage 1 to stage 2, or being received at stage 2). A higher proportion of Carer's Allowance Supplement complaints reached stage 2 (24%) than for Best Start Grant (19%). This may be due to Carer's Allowance Supplement being live since September, while Best Start Grant has only been live since December. We have had no cases referred to Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO).

² First published in the "Social Security Scotland – insights research programme: overview" Chapter 5 Initial Findings: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-security-scotland-overview-client-staff-insights-research-programme-initial-findings/pages/5/>

³ Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 for disclosure control purposes. Some totals may not sum due to this rounding.

⁴ Best Start Grant: high level statistics to 30 June 2019 <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland/BSGMay2019>

Complaints are categorised by reason by Social Security Scotland staff, based on the information received from clients. The most common reason for complaints was 'Inadequate standard of service' (45, 57%). This is where we did not provide the level of service the client should have expected, for example, we said we would call back but did not call back within the agreed timescale. The next most common reason was 'Dissatisfaction with SG policy' (15, 17%), followed by 'Failure to provide a service' (10, 16%). 'Failure to provide a service' is where we did not carry out a process, for example, when the client should have received a re-determination form but did not.



By the end of March, 75 complaints had been responded to and five were outstanding and did not have an outcome at end March. All complaints were dealt with within the appropriate timescales. For stage 1, the median average processing time was zero days (meaning that on average complaints were decided on the same day they were received). For stage 2, the median average processing time was 17 days.

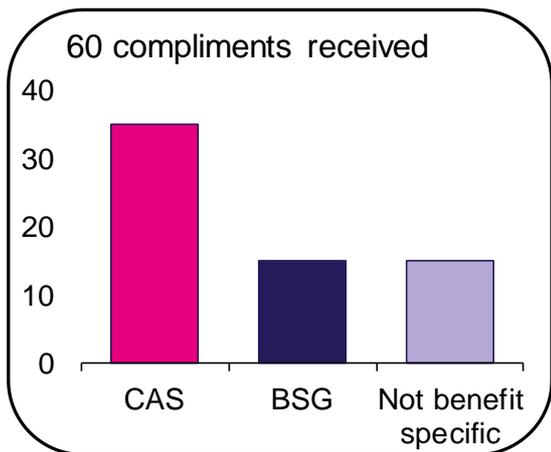
In total, over all benefits and both stages, 40 complaints were upheld (44%), 45 were not upheld (50%) and 5 were partially upheld (6%)⁵. For Carer's Allowance Supplement, the majority of complaints were not upheld (64%), while for Best Start Grant the majority were upheld (72%).

Compliments and suggestions

Across both areas we received a total of 60 compliments, including 35 (55%) for Carer's Allowance Supplement, 15 (22%) for Best Start Grant and 15 (23%) that were not specific to a benefit. The most common reason for compliments was 'For being so helpful' (25, 43%), followed by 'For getting it right' (20, 33%).

Across both areas we received a total of 5 suggestions, mostly on 'Improving information available'.

⁵ Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received

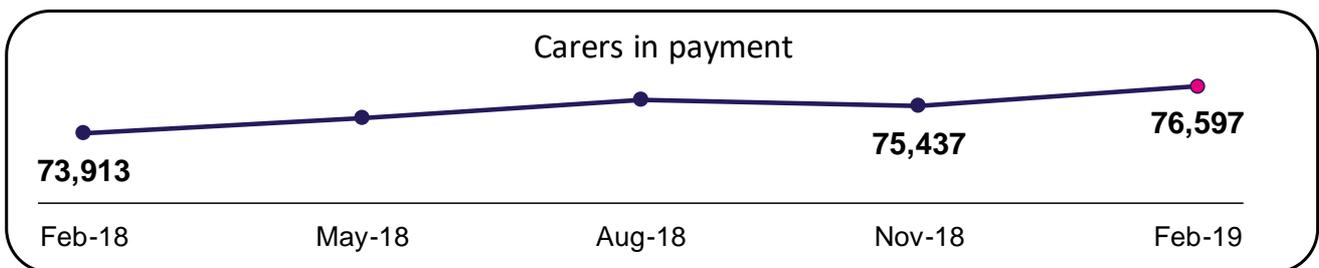


Carer's Allowance and Carer's Allowance Supplement Statistics

Executive competency of Carer's Allowance was transferred from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to Social Security Scotland in September 2018. We produced the first official statistics on recipients of Carer's Allowance (CA) in Scotland in May 2019. The publication was published in parallel to the Carer's Allowance statistics published by the DWP using their online tool, Stat-Xplore⁶.

Carer's Allowance

At the end of February 2019 there were 76,597 carers in Scotland in receipt of Carer's Allowance. This is an increase of 4% since the previous year (73,913 at the end of February 2018) and a 2% increase since the last quarter (75,437 at the end of November 2018).

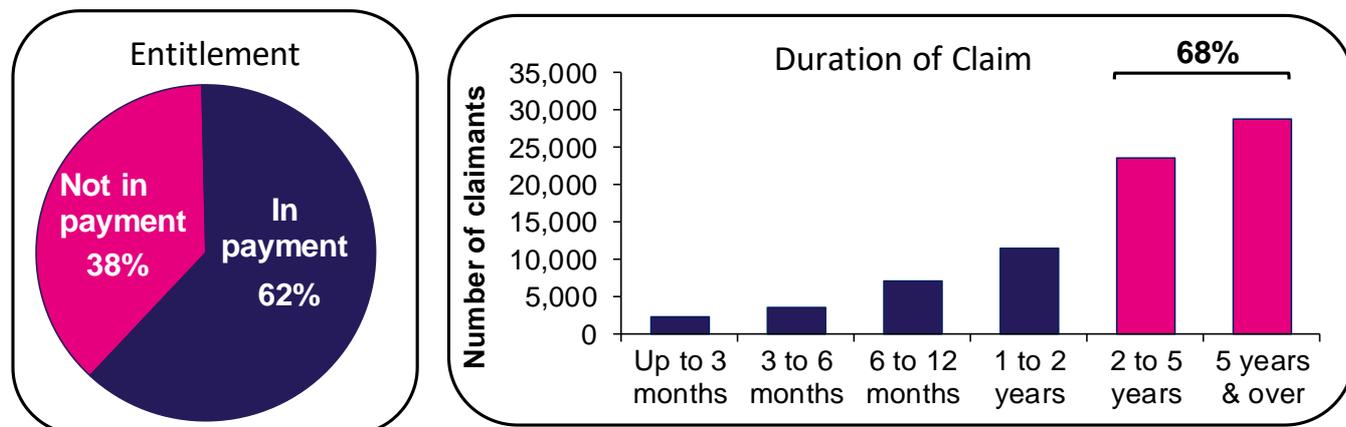


A further 46,025 carers were entitled to Carer's Allowance but did not receive a Carer's Allowance payment because they receive another benefit with a value equal to or exceeding their weekly rate of Carer's Allowance. The majority of these carers (79%) were over the State Pension age, so may have been eligible to a State Pension.

⁶ Stat-Xplore is a browser based client to explore benefit data administered by the Department for Work and Pensions: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Two thirds of claimants (68%) have been receiving Carer's Allowance payments for over two years, with 38% receiving Carer's Allowance payments for over five years.

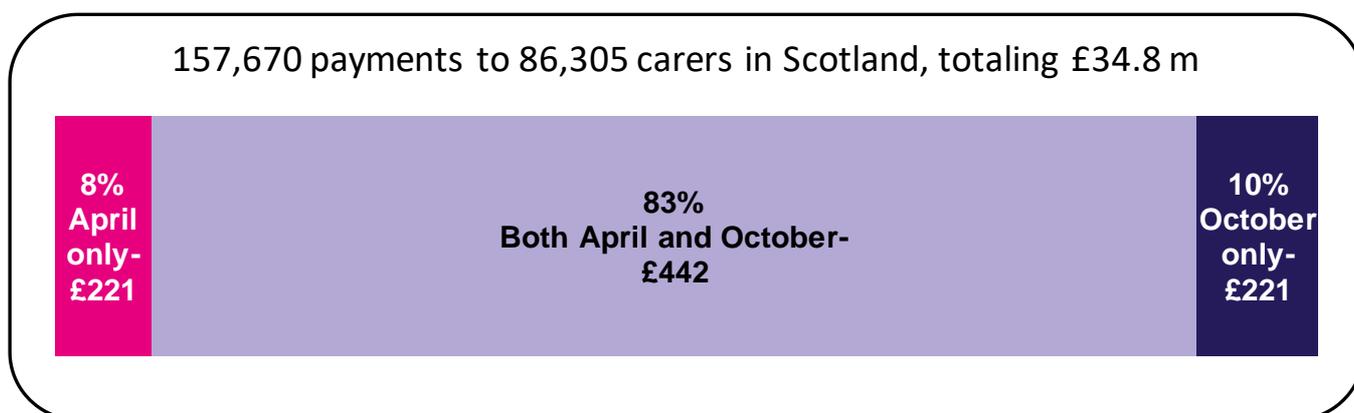
Carer's Allowance Supplement



The publication also provided information on recipients of the Carer's Allowance Supplement (CAS) for the April and October eligibility dates in 2018. This supplement is given to people in Scotland who receive Carer's Allowance on the Carer's Allowance Supplement eligibility dates. These are two dates each year - one in April and one in October - which are set by the Scottish Government.

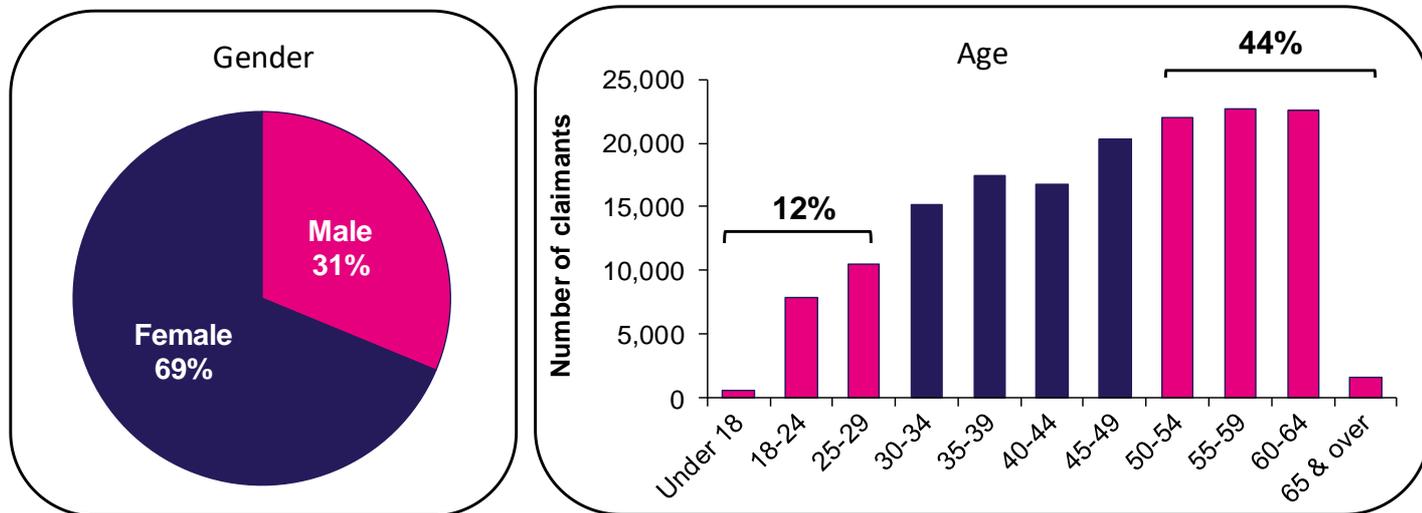
Since September 2018, 157,670 Carer's Allowance Supplement payments have been made to 86,305 carers who were eligible in either or both of the eligibility dates in 2018⁷. Each payment was £221, giving a total expenditure of £34.8 m. These Carer's Allowance Supplement payments were made for the two eligibility dates:

- 77,990 Carer's Allowance Supplement payments were made to carers who were eligible in April 2018, giving a total expenditure of £17.2 m.
- 79,680 Carer's Allowance Supplement payments were made to carers who were eligible in October 2018, giving a total expenditure of £17.6 m.



⁷ These figures have been revised to take account of backdating – see [About the data](#).

Over two thirds of Carer's Allowance Supplement payments were made to female carers (108,255 payments, 69%), while 31% of payments were made to male carers (49,290 payments). Almost four times as many Carer's Allowance Supplement payments were made to carers aged over 50 (68,865 payments, 44%), compared to those aged under 30 (19,060, 12%). Only a small proportion of Carer's Allowance Supplement payments were made to carers aged 65 and over (1,590 payments, 1.0%) or under 18 (645 payments, 0.4%).



Best Start Grant Baby and Pregnancy Payment Statistics

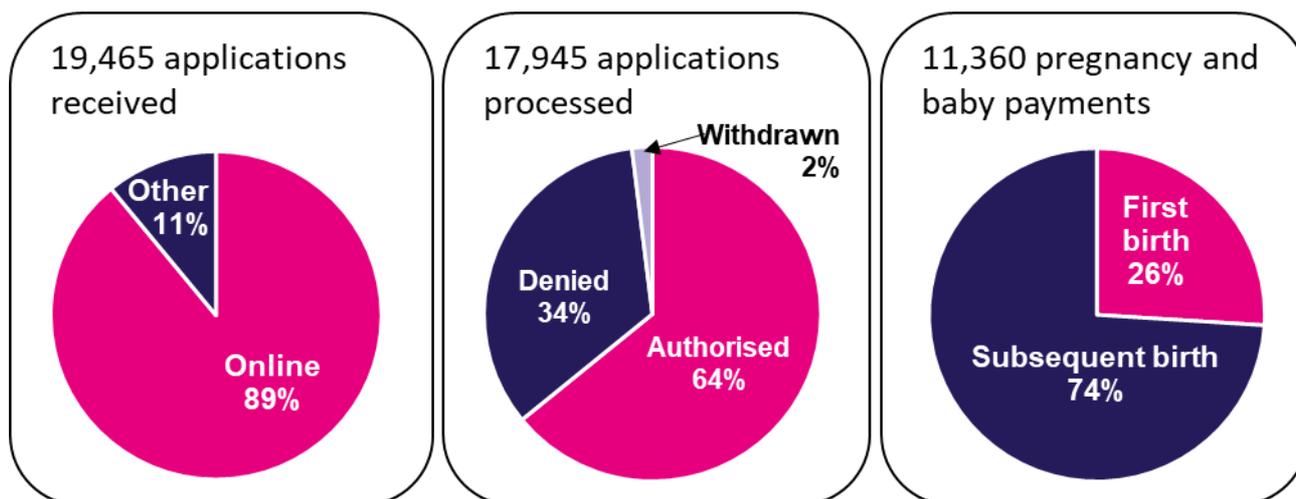
Best Start Grant (BSG) Pregnancy and Baby Payment was launched on 10 December 2018 when it replaced the UK Government's Sure Start Maternity Grant in Scotland. Best Start Grant provides lower-income families with financial support during the early years of a child's life. We produced the first official statistics on Best Start Grant in April 2019, covering from the first day Social Security Scotland began taking applications on 10 December 2018 until the 31 March 2019.

Applications

From 10 December 2018 to 31 March 2019, 19,465 applications for Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment were received. Around 89% of these applications were made online (17,350 applications). The remaining 2,120 (11%) applications were made through other channels such as phone or paper application form.

Around 17,945 (92%) applications had been processed by 31 March 2019. Of these, around two thirds (11,505, 64%) were authorised, one third (6,090, 34%) were denied, and a small proportion (350, 2%) were withdrawn.

Just over half of applications received between 10 December 2018 and 31 March 2019 were processed within 10 working days (9,780, 55%). Around four out of five applications (13,945, 79%) were processed within 15 working days. Around 14% of applications took 21 days or more to be processed.



Payments

In total, £4.2 m of Best Start Grant payments had been issued to clients by 31 March 2019. More payments were made for subsequent births than first births. By 31 March 2019, 74% authorised applications that included a pregnancy and baby payment (8,425) were for subsequent births (i.e. to clients that already had children under 16 that lived with them and that they were responsible for), whereas 26% (2,935) were for first births.

Redeterminations and Appeals

Applicants can ask Social Security Scotland to look again at what they have decided if their application is denied, or if they think the amount they are going to be paid is wrong. This is known as a redetermination. Once a redetermination request is received, Social Security Scotland has 16 working days to make the a new determination.

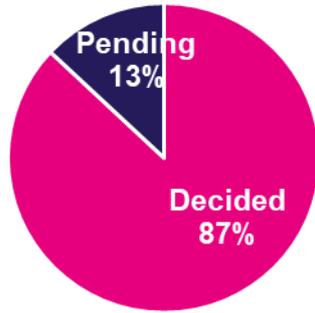
Management information collected manually by the Client Experience team at Social Security Scotland indicates that around 345 redeterminations were requested by 31 March 2019. This represents around 1.9% of the total number of applications received during this period.

By 31 March 2019, 300 redetermination requests had been decided, with half of these disallowed (150, 50%), 115 allowed (39%) and 35 (11%) withdrawn. A further 45 redetermination requests (13% of the 345 received) were pending an outcome.

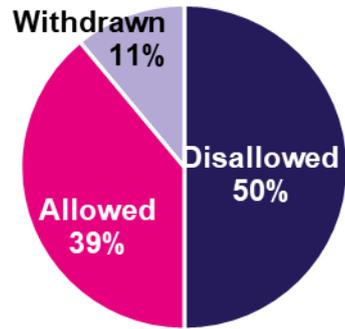
Of those closed by 31 March 2019, 98% were closed within the deadline of 16 working days from receiving the re-determination request. Where redeterminations were closed after the deadline of 16 working days, extensions were agreed with the client and the redeterminations were closed within the 20 working day deadline.

During the reporting period around five appeals were received. Information about appeals hearings and outcomes will be provided in future analytical performance reports when this becomes possible.

345 redeterminations received



300 redeterminations decided



About the data

Client and Staff Insights

The full findings regarding client and staff insights can be found in the research publication “Social Security Scotland – Client and Staff Insights – Research Findings” at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-security-scotland-client-staff-insights-research-findings/>

This includes a chapter of Dignity and Respect Findings (Client Insights) and a chapter of People and Recruitment / Equality and Diversity Findings (e-HR and Staff Survey data). More information about the client insights programme can be found in the Background and Methodology chapters of the research publication.

Feedback Statistics

The most up to date data on the number of complaints, compliments and suggestions were published in the statistical report “Social Security Scotland feedback Statistics to 31 March 2019” at:

<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland/FeedbackMar19>

This publication includes background information about feedback, including details of the complaints handling procedure. Details of data collection, quality assurance, data quality and comparisons with DWP complaints statistics can be found in the About the data section.

Carer’s Allowance and Carer’s Allowance Supplement Statistics

The most up to date data on carer’s who received Carer’s Allowance Supplement were published in the statistical report “Carer’s Allowance at February 2019 and Carer’s Allowance Supplement, April eligibility date 2019” at:

<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland/CASApr2019>

The latest publication includes details of the April 2019 eligibility date, but also an update to the 2018/19 statistics. Further charts and tables showing data by eligibility date and local authority are included. It includes background information about Carer’s Allowance and Carer’s Allowance Supplement. Details of data collection, data quality and comparisons between the statistics can be found in the About the data section.

Payment of Carer’s Allowance can be backdated, which may mean that someone who did not receive Carer’s Allowance on the CAS eligibility date is later considered to have been eligible on that date. To take account of backdating, each eligibility scan identifies those people that have retrospective entitlement for previous CAS eligibility dates. The data in this report shows revised figures for 2018-19, which takes account of this backdating.

Best Start Grant Baby and Pregnancy Payment Statistics

The most up to date data on the number of applications, decisions and payments were published in the statistical report “Best Start Grant: high level statistics to 30 June 2019” at:

<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/SocialSecurityforScotland/BSGJune2019>

This publication includes additional breakdowns of the data by local geographies: local authority and health board. It also includes background information about the payment amounts, eligibility and application process for Best Start Grant.

Details of data collection, quality assurance, data quality, further developments and comparisons with DWP Sure Start Maternity Grant statistics can be found in the About the data section.

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