Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

social research

Client Survey - Five Family Payments

April - September 2024

Summary report

Dignity, fairness, respect.

Contents

Background

- This report presents results from the Social Security Scotland Five Family Payments Client Survey.
- Everyone who had applied for any of Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods and received a decision on that application between 1 April 2024 and 30 September 2024 was invited to take part in the survey.
- This is the first Five Family Payments publication from the Client Satisfaction Survey since recent upgrades were put into effect:

  1. A review of the survey questionnaire to:
     - align it more tightly to the reviewed Charter Measurement Framework
     - reduce the length, and therefore, reduces the time for people to fill it out
  2. The launch of automatic notifications:
     - From July 2024 automatic invitations to the Client Satisfaction Survey have launched for most benefits which require an application. This means that the survey is to be issued on a rolling basis to all applicants following a decision on an application.

About the survey respondents

The report is based on responses from

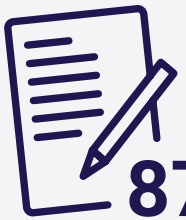
1,025

clients.

- Most described their ethnicity as ‘white’ (71%, compared to 24% minority ethnic)
- Most described their gender identity as ‘woman’ (81%, compared to 16% ‘man’)
- Most said their age was either 35-44 (45%) or 25-34 (29%)
- Most lived at a postcode categorised as SIMD quintile 1 (most deprived) (43%) or quintile 2 (25%)
- Most did not have a physical or mental health condition lasting or expected to last 12 months or more (68%), although a quarter did (25%)

Executive summary

- Around two fifths (42%) of respondents made an application for Scottish Child Payment only, or made a joint application for Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment (38%). A fifth of respondents made a joint application for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods (20%).
- The majority of respondents rated their overall experience with Social Security Scotland as either 'good' or 'very good' (90%), 2% of respondents rated their experience as 'poor' or 'very poor', while 7% were neutral.
- Nine-in-ten (90%) respondents rated the application process as either 'good' or 'very good'.
- Around four fifths (82%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the eligibility criteria was clear before they applied for a Five Family Payment benefit.



87%

agreed that the application process was clear

89%

agreed that the application asked only relevant questions

89%

agreed that they were treated fairly through the application process

87%

agreed with the decision they received

84%

agreed that their application was handled within a reasonable time frame

89%

agreed that their decision was explained clearly

Communication and finding information

- Most respondents found out about the benefit(s) they had applied for through word-of-mouth (21%), through a health service (for example, NHS worker, GP, Health Practitioner, Psychologist) (16%) or online or social media (for example X, Facebook) (10%).
- When respondents used a Social Security Scotland service to find information about benefits, they were most likely to visit our websites (82%) or to contact a member of staff via Webchat (9%).
- The majority (84%) of respondents who contacted Social Security Scotland agreed that they got the support, information or advice they needed.

> Helpful staff and got information and answers I required.

> The girl I spoke to was lovely helpful and made me comfortable to ask questions.

However, some respondents expressed that they did not feel properly informed about the Five Family Payment group of benefits:

> I just wish I'd known earlier, as I'd never heard of this payment that my son would have been eligible for.

> I wish I knew about the Scottish Child Payment when it first started. No one told me and it hadn't been very well advertised, so I didn't know about it. I saw it on a Facebook post and as a result I have missed out on payments I was entitled to.

> **One respondent suggested,**
>
> being able to backdate Best Start Grant, as I found out about it too late to be eligible, so that it is fair for those who are not aware of it at the time.

Application

- The majority of respondents were satisfied with the application process, with nine-in-ten (90%) rating their overall experience of applying for one or more of the Five Family Payment benefits as either “good” or “very good”.
- Minority ethnic respondents were most likely to rate the application process as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ (97%) compared with white respondents (88%).
- Most respondents agreed that the application process was clear (87%), asked only relevant questions (89%) and that they were treated fairly during the application process (89%).

	 Application process was clear	 Application asked only relevant questions	 Treated fairly during application	 Overall experience of application
Scottish Child Payment	86%	87%	88%	88%
Best Start Foods and Best Start Grant	85%	87%	87%	88%
Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Foods and Best Start Grant	90%	90%	90%	92%

Application – respondent comments

Really easy! I did not expect it to be such a quick application.

Staff member was lovely. I filled out the wrong application, but they helped to do it properly over the phone.

Application was easy and straightforward. Less time consuming to fill out the one application that covered everything.

Any correspondence I've had from Social Security Scotland has been thorough and very clear to understand. Customer communication is excellent and I have nothing but positive things to say about my experience with Social Security Scotland.

I was sent a link to upload documents, this was surprisingly very straightforward. What a great system.

Best Start Grant to fill in tomorrow but Best Start Food application all done and waiting acceptance. Very good communication from SSS of application process via text and email.

It is very clear that Social Security Scotland have invested in user experience as the website and online application process is very straightforward, user friendly, and helpful. This is an incredible relief during the stressful process of applying for benefits in general, and really helps.

Support to complete application

- Over a quarter (29%) of respondents received help to complete their application.
- One-in-five (22%) of those who made a joint application for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods reported receiving help to complete their application, while those applying for Scottish Child Payment only, or submitting a joint Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods application, reported receiving help more frequently (29% and 30%).
- Most respondents who received help from Social Security Scotland agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to get that support (95%).
- Some groups were more likely than others to receive help to complete their application. For example, 40% of men compared with 26% of women, 42% of minority ethnic respondents compared with 23% of white respondents, and 35% of those in SIMD quintile 1 (most deprived) compared to 27% in quintile 2.

There were several routes by which respondents were most likely to have received help to complete their application.

40% were helped by a friend or family member

38% were supported by Social Security Scotland

9% received help from Citizens Advice Scotland

Eligibility

- 82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the eligibility criteria was clear before they applied.
- 83% of respondents agreed that the information on the Social Security Scotland website made it clear whether they would be eligible.
- While most respondents agreed that eligibility criteria was clear before they applied, some respondents highlighted confusion around fluctuating entitlement and reapplication. Respondents were not always clear on how this worked, or if and when when they would need to reapply.

> Maybe worth making it clear that the Scottish Child Payment will be stopped if you stop getting any help from Universal Credit for three months.

> Give clear advice and improve protocols for people who don't qualify for the Scottish Child Payment every month but do on some months. There should be an easy way to keep an application open and update every month on whether you qualified for the payment or not.

> On Universal Credit sometimes I don't get a payment. I didn't for 2 months so Scottish Child Payment stopped. I didn't realise after 8 weeks I would have to reapply. When I sent in my evidence of getting Universal Credit again nobody contacted me to let me know I would have to reapply. I had to get in contact after weeks of waiting. I missed out on a whole month worth of payments because of this.

Decisions

- Overall, most respondents reported that they agreed that their application was handled in a reasonable timeframe (84%), that they agreed with and understood the decision(s) (88% and 89%) and that the decision(s) was explained clearly (88%).

	Application was handled in a reasonable time frame	Decision was explained clearly	Respondent understood decision	Respondent agreed with decision
Scottish Child Payment only	87%	89%	91%	89%
Joint application for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods	82%	86%	86%	82%
Joint application for Scottish Child Payment Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods	85%	90%	89%	88%

Decisions – respondent comments

Being accepted for Scottish Child Payment has helped me and my family out so much so far. I'm very grateful for this.

Very well handled, received appropriate updates, length of time understandable so can't really fault, very happy with service.

Only negative was it took around ten months from submitting application to getting decision.

I thought it was a quick and easy process. Decision was made quickly and everything was easy to understand. I didn't need any help filling out any questions and the letter I received about my claim was very detailed.

An efficient service was provided. I was at fault by not providing the required documentation, so I accepted the decision. I will consider reapplying in the future if my financial situation becomes dire again.

Clear and concise and received decision in a promptly manner.

My experience was great as the decision letter I received explained everything that I needed to know, keep up the good work.

Social Security Scotland

Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Contact us

socialsecurity.gov.scot

@SocSecScot

Social Security Scotland

ISBN: 978-1-83691-382-5