Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

Social Security Scotland Statistics

Scottish Child Payment statistics to 30 June 2026

Key findings

In the 2026/2027 financial year to date, covering April 2026 to June 2026:

- 9,090 applications were received for Scottish Child Payment.
- 8,725 applications were processed, of which 71% were authorised, 26% were denied and the remaining 3% were withdrawn.
- The average (median) processing time was 32 working days.
- £118.3 million had been paid to clients for Scottish Child Payment.
- As of 30 June 2026, 320,390 children aged 0-15 years were actively benefitting from Scottish Child Payment.

Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering up to 30 September 2026, will be released in November 2026. Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics[1] we publish a timetable of statistical releases for the twelve months ahead[2].

[1] The Code of Practice for Statistics is available on the UK Statistics Authority website.

[2] The forthcoming publication timetable is available on Social Security Scotland - Statistics.

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Introduction

Scottish Child Payment was initially introduced for low-income families with children aged under six. The payment was extended to eligible low-income families with children aged under 16 on 14 November 2022. It is intended to provide regular, additional financial support for families already in receipt of qualifying benefits to assist with the costs of caring for a child.

This publication includes statistics on applications and payments for Scottish Child Payment from 9 November 2020 to 30 June 2026. This publication also provides information on the number of clients and children in receipt of Scottish Child Payment.

As part of the continuous improvement of our outputs, a new table (Table 16) has been added. Table 16 reflects the number of clients in receipt of Scottish Child Payment on 30 June 2026 broken down by the number of dependent children benefitting.

All tables and charts referred to within this publication can be found on the Social Security Scotland statistics website.

If you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to provide us around these changes or other developments, please email MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot.

These statistics are considered to be meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice for Statistics and are published as official statistics[3]. More information on the decision to label these statistics as official statistics can be found on the About Statistics page on the Social Security Scotland website.

The data and methods underpinning Social Security Scotland statistics are routinely reviewed in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics. Ongoing data quality issues and revisions made to the statistics are detailed in our Data and Methodology Changes document. More information on how we create and use statistics can be found on our About Statistics page.

[3] More information on official statistics is available on UK Statistics Authority website.

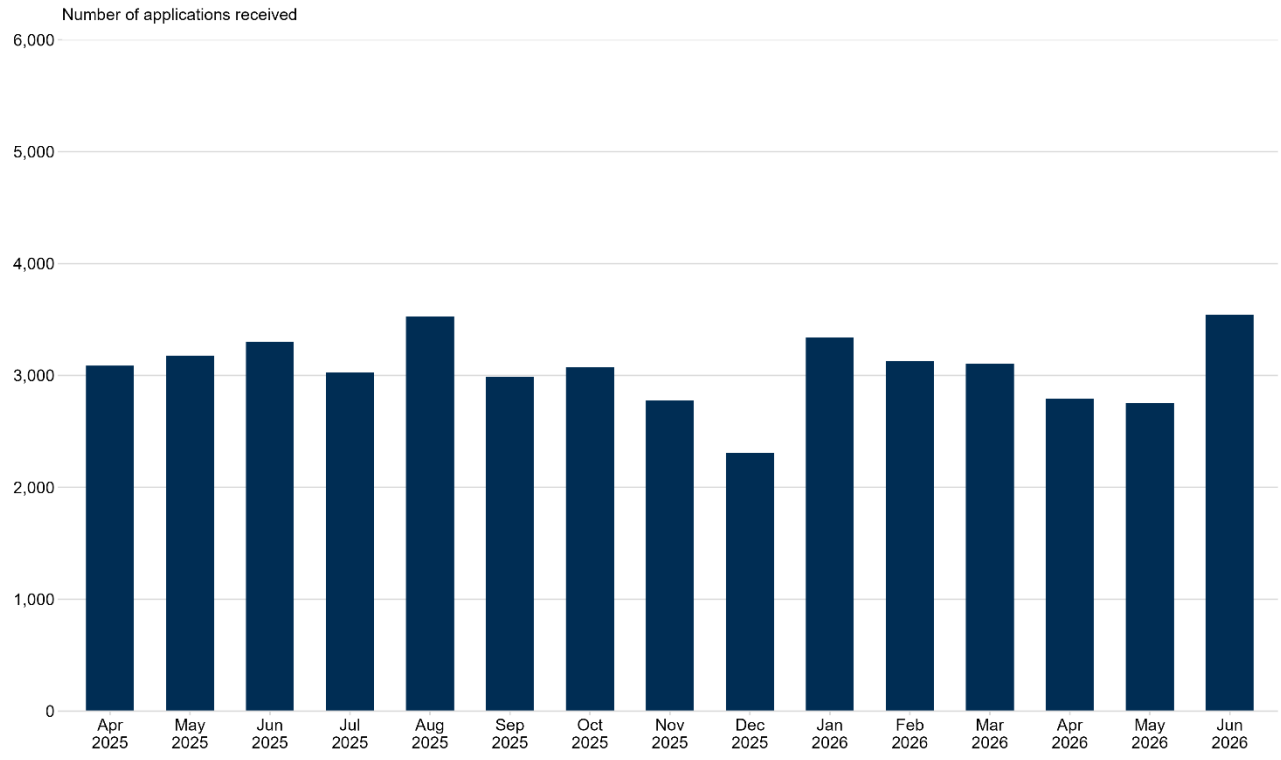
Main findings

Applications received have decreased over the last year.

460,660 applications for Scottish Child Payment have been received up to 30 June 2026. 9,090 of those applications were received in the 2026/2027 financial year to date covering April 2026 to June 2026.

Of the applications processed in the 2026/2027 financial year to date, 71% were authorised, 26% were denied and the remaining 3% were withdrawn.

Figure 1: Applications received have decreased over the last year.
Applications for Scottish Child Payment by month, from April 2025 to June 2026.



Most clients continue to apply online and most applications were made by people aged 18 to 44.

Around 91% of applications received by 30 June 2026 were made online and 7% were made through a telephone application. A small proportion of applications were made through paper application and other channels.

Around 89% of applications were made by people aged 18 to 44 in the 2026/2027 financial year to date. Around 10% of applications were made by people aged 45 or over, and 1% were made by people under 18.

More applications were from Glasgow City than any other local authority area.

16% of all applications received in the 2026/2027 financial year to date have come from Glasgow City. This is consistent with Glasgow City being the local authority area with the highest population[4].

The percentage of processed applications authorised in 2026/2027 financial year to date varied between local authority area, ranging from the lowest at 62% in East Ayrshire and Orkney Islands to the highest at 79% in Shetland Islands.

Median average processing times for applications have increased.

The median average[5] processing time for the 2026/2027 financial year to date was 32 working days. This compared to 22 working days reported in the 2025/2026 financial year. The median average processing time increased from 31 working days in March 2026 to 33 working days in June 2026.

Total payments of over £1.7 billion have been issued.

£118.3 million was paid to clients in the 2026/2027 financial year to date. At local authority area level, the highest total value of payments made to clients in the 2026/2027 financial year to date was in Glasgow City at £19.6 million, followed by North Lanarkshire at £9.1 million and Fife at £8.8 million.

Over 10.5 million payments were issued to 251,510 individual clients by 30 June 2026. 194,525 individual clients received at least one Scottish Child Payment in the 2026/2027 financial year to date**.**

The number of children actively benefitting from Scottish Child Payment as of 30 June 2026 decreased compared to 31 March 2026.

320,390 children were actively benefitting from Scottish Child Payment as of 30 June 2026, which was a decrease of 1,495 children compared with 31 March 2026.

At local authority area level, the highest number of children as of June 2026 was in Glasgow City at 53,020 (17%), followed by North Lanarkshire at 24,550 (8%) and Fife at 23,940 (7%).

188,255 clients were actively in receipt of Scottish Child Payment as of 30 June 2026. Of those clients, the vast majority (96%) had three or fewer dependent children benefitting from Scottish Child Payment at the same time, including around 85% who had one or two children benefitting.

Information on how caseload figures are calculated can be found in the Methodology and definitions section of the background notes.

[4] Information about the population of the local authority areas can be found on the National Records of Scotland website.

[5] The median average is the middle value of an ordered dataset, or the point at which half of the values are higher and half of the values are lower.

Fewer re-determination requests were received this financial year to date compared to the same period in the previous financial year.

By 30 June 2026, 8,150 re-determination requests were received. 360 re-determinations were requested in the 2026/2027 financial year to date. 330 re-determinations had been completed in the 2026/2027 financial year to date. Of these, 170 were allowed, 120 were disallowed and none were withdrawn. The remaining (40) were for when a re-determination decision was not made.[6]

The median average response time for re-determination requests in the 2026/2027 financial year to date was 14 working days.

In total, 380 appeals were received by 30 June 2026. 265 appeals were completed by 30 June. Of the appeals the tribunal have considered, 175 (65%) cases were not upheld in the clients' favour, whilst 95 (35%) cases were upheld in the clients' favour.

[6] Re-determination decision not made includes those which were Invalid, or exceeded the deadline and the client opted to cease the re-determination process and move to appeal.

Background to Scottish Child Payment

As a result of the Scotland Act 2016[7] a wide range of powers, including welfare powers, have been transferred to the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament.

Scottish Child Payment was introduced through secondary legislation, using the powers to top up a reserved benefit contained in section 79 of the Social Security Scotland Act 2018.

The Scottish Government are committed to reviewing the legislative footing on which Scottish Child Payment is based. The powers of the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2025 will allow Scottish Ministers to make regulations for Scottish Child Payment to be a stand-alone payment. This allows additional flexibility and better alignment of the payment with other forms of assistance delivered by Social Security Scotland whilst maintaining a close link to reserved benefits.

Social Security Scotland is the executive agency of Scottish Government responsible for delivering social security benefits for Scotland.

Further details about the benefit can be found on the mygov.scot website.

Scottish Child Payment

Scottish Child Payment is a benefit which has been introduced to tackle child poverty in Scotland. It is intended to help low-income families with the costs of raising a child and is available to parents or carers with one or more children under the age of sixteen.

Scottish Child Payment was increased from £27.15 to £28.20 in April 2026, in line with inflation, compared to initial payments of £10 per week made to eligible families in February 2021.

Scottish Child Payment is administered by Social Security Scotland through an application-based process and is paid on a four-weekly basis.

Scottish Child Payment does not count as earned income in the calculation of any other UK or Scottish Government benefits that the applicant, or any person in their household, currently receive.

The payment can be used for any purpose by the recipient and for example could help with the cost of childcare, nappies, activities or other essentials.

[7] More information on the Scotland Act 2016 is available on UK parliament website.

Eligibility

A person may be eligible for Scottish Child Payment if all of the following apply:

- They live in Scotland
- They or their partner are in receipt of certain qualifying benefits or payments
- They or their partner are the main person looking after a child who's under 16 years old.

The qualifying benefits are:

- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

Application and decision making process

Applications can be made online, by phone, and by paper form.

At the beginning of the application process, applicants are asked whether they would like to also apply for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods at the same time as they apply for Scottish Child Payment. To keep things as simple as possible for the client, if they choose to also apply for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods they are required to complete only one application form. Applicants can also apply for Scottish Child Payment or Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods separately should they wish to do so.

From the 28th November 2022, the Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment and School Age Payment was paid automatically to eligible individuals in receipt of Scottish Child Payment, without the need to apply. Where an individual chooses to opt out of receiving payment automatically, an automatic payment will not be made and the client can apply for the payments manually.

In terms of processing and the subsequent reporting of Official Statistics, the joint application can be thought of as two separate applications; one for Scottish Child Payment and one for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods. For this reason, only Scottish Child Payment applications are reported on in this publication. Official Statistics on Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods applications can be found on the Social Security Scotland statistics website.

Social Security Scotland processes each application received and makes a decision whether to approve or deny the application. An application will be denied if the client is not eligible to receive Scottish Child Payment. An application will be authorised if the client is eligible and provides the appropriate evidence to receive Scottish Child Payment. Applicants may also withdraw their application before a decision is made.

Applicants can choose to provide supporting evidence when making an application by post or through online document upload. If an applicant does not provide all the evidence required for an application, they will be contacted by a client advisor and asked to provide this. Once this evidence has been received, Social Security Scotland aims to make a decision as soon as possible with payments following soon thereafter.

Re-determinations and appeals

Scottish Child Payment applicants can ask Social Security Scotland to look again at a decision if their application is denied, or if they think the amount they are going to be paid is wrong. This is known as a re-determination. A request for a re-determination should be made within 31 calendar days of being notified of the determination. This is extended to up to 1 year when there is a good reason for lateness.

Social Security Scotland then has 16 working days to make the new determination. Scottish Child Payment applicants also have the right to appeal to a Tribunal if they do not agree with Social Security Scotland's re-determination, or if Social Security Scotland is not able to make a re-determination within 16 working days.

About the data

How the data is collected

The data in this publication is sourced from Social Security Scotland's case management system. The system holds information on all applications received, decisions and payments. Data about the applicant, their partner, and their children is collected through the online application form or is entered by client advisors during telephone applications or processing of paper applications. Information about the application outcome and payments is created in the case management system as an application is processed.

The information is held across multiple tables within the system. 100% extracts of administrative data are taken from this system monthly for internal reporting purposes. Data cuts combine information from the different tables in the system into one daily extract which includes details of all Scottish Child Payment applications made since 9 November 2020. A payments extract which contains information on the financial aspects of applications is used for calculations in this publication. Since June 2023, a new caseload data extract which contains live information on clients' and children's eligibility has been used for determining the caseload in this publication.

When Social Security Scotland extended the eligibility to children under 16, a decision was taken when designing the application process to minimise the information that clients presently receiving Scottish Child Payment for children under six had to provide in order to add older children to their existing case.

As a consequence, the case management system does not generate a full application case in this instance. Instead, any incoming requests to add children to existing cases generate a ‘task’ within the case management system. As the data source which underpins the application numbers in this publication contains information for each application case, this publication reports on full applications received only.

Whilst the case management system was being monitored in the period immediately after the benefit eligibility was extended, information was temporarily manually recorded on the number of tasks generated. The temporary availability of this information meant the management information releases published on 16 November 2022 and 20 December 2022 included both full applications and applications from existing clients requesting to add children over six to the existing Scottish Child Payment awards.

There was no provision to continually manually record this information beyond the post-extension monitoring period, meaning the last available date there was information total number of requests to add children to existing cases was 11 December 2022. As a result, a decision was made to continue to report on full applications only within this publication.

The management information release on 20 December 2022 indicated that approximately 123,000 applications in total had been received between 14 November and 11 December 2022. Of these approximately 85,500 (70%) were full applications and are reported on within this publication.

The remaining 37,500 (30%) were requests from existing Scottish Child Payment clients looking to add children to their existing payment cases. These requests are not included in any application counts reported in this release.

Whilst these requests are not reflected in the application counts, the clients and the payments they have received are reflected in the wider payments and caseload information presented.

To take into account backdating and delays between applications being authorised and payments being made, a data cut from 02 August 2026 has been used to produce statistics on applications received and decisions made up to 11.59 pm on 30 June 2026. Later data cuts may include retrospective changes to application details, including corrections to details in the case management system, and changes that have resulted from re-determinations and appeals.

When a re-determination or appeal is requested, the data in this publication will show the decision date, outcome, payment date and payment value after a re-determination or appeal has been decided. Where a re-determination or appeal has been requested but not decided, decision date, outcome, payment date and payment value will be updated to reflect information about the re-determination or appeal, rather than the original application.

Until March 2022, re-determinations and appeals were reported based on management information manually collected by the Client Experience team at Social Security Scotland. From April 2022 onwards, the figures reported in Table 17 for re-determinations are based on data extracted from the case management system.

Similarly, while information on appeals are still manually collected, from October 2023 onwards the figures reported in Table 18 for appeals are based on data extracted from the case management system. This is part of an ongoing piece of work to improve the reporting of re-determinations and appeals across all benefits.

Within our statistical reporting, key dates are used to assign applications received, applications processed and payments issued to time periods. This is a different methodology to that used in financial reporting and, as a result, there may be differences in the values reported for a given time period.

Quality assurance

The data used to produce official statistics are the same as the data extracted from the case management system on a daily basis that is used for internal reporting within Social Security Scotland. As such, the data is checked routinely for consistency with previous extracts (i.e. do applications, decisions and payments figures increase as expected over time, and are they in proportion to each other) and compared to other sources of information such as the number of payment instructions reported by the finance team.

Additional quality assurance and cleaning has been carried out on the variables used in the official statistics to:

- check for duplicate and missing application references
- check application dates, processing times and payment times are within the expected ranges
- check that payment date is present where a payment value is present
- check applicant dates of birth are within the expected range – see Age of applicant section
- check postcodes that do not match to local authorities – see Geography section
- remove of a small number of test applications which were used to test the case management system.

Once the data is aggregated and copied into the publication and supporting Excel tables, the final statistics are quality assured by a different member of the statistics team. The lead statistician checks the final documents.

Revisions

Each updated publication of Scottish Child Payment statistics can include revisions of numbers of applications received and processed, and processing times going back to November 2020. This is because each time figures are published they will be based from a new 100% data cut from the case management system, which can include retrospective changes to data going back to November 2020 as described in the How the data is collected section. Months that are more recent tend to be subject to a greater degree of revision than more distant ones.

Compared to the previous publication, there has been minor revisions in number of applications received and processed since February 2026 which is reflected in Table 1 and Table 2 of the publication tables. At the time of this publication, there were around 95 applications received on or after 14 November 2022 with known outcome and unknown decision date. Until the investigation on confirming the decision date for those applications is completed, those are excluded from all tables reporting statistics on processed applications within this publication. Additionally, there are several revisions since November 2020 relating to processing times, which can be seen in Table 5.

Payments freezing

We have made a change to the way that the payments information is produced in this publication. Since May 2026, due to the size and complexity of the underlying payments information, the time series will not be fully revised in each publication and only the latest three months of payments will be routinely updated in publications going forward, except when there is a methodological change in the calculation of payments metrics which could affect historical records.

As part of preparing to freeze the payments data we have conducted analysis of the impact that the revisions had been having on the payments information. The impact of revisions on published months is negligible. This means that whilst the freezing of the payments information does lead to these revisions not being included, it does not affect the interpretation of the statistics.

Methodology and definitions

Number of clients who have received at least one Scottish Child Payment by the financial year of the payment issued date

The number of clients to have benefitted from at least one Scottish Child Payment issued is calculated by summing up the number of unique individual clients who have received at least one Scottish Child Payment issued during each financial year.

Number of clients and children actively benefitting from Scottish Child Payment (client caseload and child caseload)

In order to accurately reflect the active caseload for Scottish Child Payment, it is important to take into account the flows in both directions, i.e. include any new clients and children who are receiving the benefit, and exclude those who are no longer eligible.

The methodology first introduced in 'Scottish Child Payment: high level statistics to 30 June 2023' uses a caseload data extract containing live information on client's and children's eligibility, which makes it possible to identify all clients (and, in turn, children) who are in receipt of, or have been approved for a payment as of the latest reporting point in time, even if they have not been paid yet. Importantly, this new data extract enables additional breakdowns of the total caseload counts to be produced e.g. by age of child, or by local authority area.

From the 'Scottish Child Payment: statistics to 30 June 2026' publication onwards, the methodology used to calculate the client caseload has been revised to align fully with the child caseload methodology.

Under the previous methodology, a client could be counted as actively in receipt of Scottish Child Payment where their case remained active, even if none of their children associated with the case met the eligibility criteria at the reporting date. This affected less than 1% of clients, typically where all children associated with the case had recently become ineligible, for example due to being aged out.

Under the revised methodology, a client is only counted in the active caseload if at least one child associated with their case is also actively benefitting from Scottish Child Payment at the reporting date. This ensures complete consistency between the published client and child caseload statistics.

The impact of this methodological change is small. If applying the revised methodology historically, then it would reduce the published client caseload by less than 1%, while there is no impact on the headline child caseload statistics. Previous publications have not been updated. Users should therefore be aware that breakdowns of client caseload by age and local authority area reported in publications prior to this release have not been revised.

This methodology is broadly outlined below:

- The client is actively in receipt of Scottish Child Payment as of the latest reporting period if their case remains active, and at least one child associated with that case continues to meet the eligibility criteria on that date. Additionally, the client must either:
    - Have had a payment issued in the last 28 days to the latest caseload period or
    - Have had their case activated within the 7-day period to the latest reporting point in time where a payment has not yet been issued.

- The child is deemed to be actively benefitting from Scottish Child Payment as of the latest reporting period if their parent or carer (client) is in receipt

of Scottish Child Payment and the child continues to meet the eligibility criteria on that date, including being under 16 years of age.

A data cut from 02 August 2026 has been used to produce statistics on the number of clients and children actively benefitting from, or have been approved for Scottish Child Payment up to 11.59 pm on 30 June 2026.

There are however a few limitations with this methodology:

- The caseload data extract is a snapshot of live information on both client's and children's eligibility. Consequently, as new payment cases for clients have been established once their applications are approved, or Change of Circumstance forms were submitted from existing clients, this can retrospectively add more children or update the existing information we hold on them. Thus, applying this methodology to caseload data extracts obtained at different points in time would yield different caseload counts for the same point in time.

- In related to the limitation mentioned above, although a client may be identified as 'active', this does not necessarily mean all children this client is responsible for are actively benefitting from Scottish Child Payment at the latest reported point in time. It is possible that some of the children are no longer eligible if, for example, they have turned 16. Similarly, it is possible for some children to be approved for the benefit shortly after the reported point in time – and while the client would receive payments in arrears for these children, these children won't have actively benefitted as of the latest reported point in time.

As a result, for each publication this methodology will be applied to calculate a caseload count for the latest reported point in time only i.e. no retrospective revisions to previous counts will be made unless a methodological error is discovered. For example, in the publication 'Scottish Child Payment: high level statistics to 30 June 2023', the snapshot taken on 1 August 2023 was used to report the caseload count as of 30 June 2023, but was not used to update the caseload count for previous reporting periods (31 March 2023 etc.)

The table below includes a comparison between the new methodology and the methodology used in previous publication releases to produce the number of children actively benefitting from Scottish Child Payment as of 31 March 2023 and as of 30 June 2023. Note, because of the limitations of the new methodology above, a data cut from 1 May 2023 was used to produce the caseload figure for 31 March 2023.

As at which financial quarter	Previous methodology	Current methodology
31 March 2023	303,000	299,710
30 June 2023	319,000	316,910

Previous methodology used to estimate the number of children actively benefitting from Scottish Child Payment (child caseload)

Prior to the 'Scottish Child Payment: high level statistics to 30 June 2023' publication, an estimate of caseload, or number of children receipt of Scottish Child Payment, had been reported in this publication series since August 2021 using a consistent methodology. For the caseload estimate as at 31 December 2022 and 31 March 2023, a minor change was made to this methodology due to the extension of the Scottish Child Payment eligibility in 14 November 2022, that resulted in a significant number of first payments to new clients for £25 (one week), £50 (two weeks), and £75 (three weeks) before settling into a regular four weekly cycle. This added strain to the assumptions behind the methodology made below.

Originally, the estimate was derived by calculating the total value of payments made in the final 28-day interval of the publication reporting period, and dividing by the value paid to cover a four-week period for one child – at the time, the latest rate would be £25 per child, per week. A 28-day period was chosen because payments were made to clients every four weeks from the day they receive their first Scottish Child Payment. This choice ensured that the total value of payments did not include more than one payment being made to any given client.

This measure provided users with a greater understanding of how many children were actively benefiting from Scottish Child Payment but did not enable any additional breakdowns of the caseload to be calculated. There were a few additional limitations with this approach:

- A true point-in-time measure of the number of children in receipt of Scottish Child Payment on the final day of the publication reporting period might differ to the derived published estimates. For example, it was possible that some of the children paid in the last 28 days were no longer eligible on the final day of the reporting period. Likewise, it was possible that some children may have recently been approved for the benefit but had not yet received their first payment by the end of the reporting period.

- By dividing by the rate for four weeks or, for the estimate as at 31 December 2022 and 31 March 2023 only, the weekly rate multiplied by the

length of the cover period for that payment, it was assumed that all children being paid were eligible for the entire cover period of their latest payment, however it was possible that a child was aged out within the payment cover period and was therefore paid less than the full rate. Equally, new clients received a one off payment in arrears if their case was not approved with the first week ensuring the receive payment from the date their application was made, which could be greater than the four-week rate.

Because of the inherent uncertainty with these derived estimates, a decision was taken to round the figures to the nearest thousand.

Data Quality

Rounding and disclosure control

Application and outcome figures have been rounded to the nearest five for disclosure control. Data has been suppressed where it would disclose fewer than five applications or payments.

Incorrect application dates

Quality assurance checks highlighted that a small number of cases (50) had an application date prior to the benefit opening for applications on 9 November 2020. These cases were confirmed by operational colleagues to be genuine applications with an application date entered in error. For the purpose of this publication, these cases have been reported as having been received in the month of November 2020.

Missing and duplicate applications

The data comes from a 100% data cut of the case management system.

The data cut was checked for applications where the field relating to application date and the outcome and payment of the application was blank. These applications represent temporary ‘prospect cases’, which are created when clients contact Social Security Scotland without a National Insurance number, and are later replaced once a National Insurance number is received from the applicant. Any such applications are therefore duplicates and are excluded from the statistics.

Unverified information from application form

Information about the client and their children is taken from the application form completed by the client or by a client advisor over the telephone. This information may contain errors because it has not been verified by comparison to other sources of information such as records held by the Department for Work and Pensions. This means for example that it is possible to have authorised applications where the original application form did not include details of any

eligible children, because the date of birth of any children was originally incorrect but was later amended as the application was processed.

Application authorisation and payment

To manage the anticipated demand, Scottish Child Payment opened for applications from 9 November 2020, ahead of its official launch on 15 February 2021. Anyone applying for Scottish Child Payment in this application window was made aware that they would not receive a decision until after 15 February 2021, and that the first payments would be made to clients from the end of February 2021 onwards.

Throughout the application window, client advisors began processing applications subject to an eligibility check on 15 February. The outcomes of all applications processed during this time were temporary and subject to change until the benefit officially launched and a final check was carried out to establish the entitlement for each case.

If a client advisor assessed an application and processed it as approved – subject to an automatic eligibility check on 15 February – then the month of decision would reflect the month the client advisor originally processed the application. This is why there are applications attributed to the months before the official launch of the benefit throughout this publication.

If a client advisor assessed an application as a denial – subject to the final check on 15 February – then the application was flagged but not processed. Due to the design of Social Security Scotland's case management system, these applications had to be formally denied on or after the 15 February to avoid denial letters being issued to clients before the final eligibility check had taken place. This is why there are no processed denials in the months before the official launch of the benefit.

For all applications, the date that applications were processed by client advisors is the date used to produce statistics of processed applications by month. After applications are authorised for payment by client advisors, a manager approves the decision, and then a payment is issued. In some cases, payments will be issued on the same day that payments are authorised by client advisors, however in other cases there can be a delay before payments are issued. Clients should receive money in their nominated account within four working days after payment is issued.

In this publication, we report on the value of payments that have been issued by the end of each month and not the payments successfully received by the applicants.

Application channel

Application channel is automatically entered into the case management system for online applications, and manually entered for applications taken by phone or

paper. If ever an application channel has been manually entered incorrectly, the application channel will be classed as ‘unknown’.

Age of applicant

In a small number of cases, the birth date of the child or the application date has been entered in the parent date of birth field in the case management system. In these cases, the date of birth of the parent has been changed to ‘unknown’. Further dates of birth of the parent showed very young ages. For these applicants, we have assumed that the dates contained typographical errors and have classed age as ‘unknown’, although we cannot be certain that their date of birth contained an error.

Geography

Applications are assigned to local authority area by postcode using a Scottish Statistics Postcode Lookup - National Records of Scotland (NRS) file. For some applications, the postcode will not match to the lookup file. This can be because the postcode is either not recognised as a valid postcode format for United Kingdom or not in a Scottish local authority area, or because the postcode has been introduced too recently to appear on the lookup file, for example if a property is in a new development. For postcodes that could not be matched to a Scottish local authority area, the postcode area was used to check whether the postcode was in Scotland or elsewhere. If the postcode was in Scotland, then it is assigned as ‘Scottish postcode’. Otherwise, the postcode would be assigned as ‘Non-Scottish postcode’ if it is a valid postcode format for United Kingdom, or else ‘Other’.

Postcodes are linked to client 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 application, decision or payment.

A small number of applications did not include address information and therefore could not be matched to a local authority area or country.

From May 2026, in line with the approach taken to freeze payments data, the geographical information associated with payments reflects a series of point-in-time data extracts rather than a consistently revised time series.

- Payments data for the period February 2021 to December 2025 are based on postcode information extracted in February 2026, when these data were finalised. For this period, postcode information will not be updated in subsequent publications.

- Payments data for January to March 2026 are based on postcode information extracted in May 2026.

- Payments data for April to June 2026 will be based on postcode information extracted in August 2026.

- This pattern continues, with each quarterly update reflecting postcode information at the time of data extraction, and only the most recent three months of payments being routinely updated in each publication.

As a result, there is a discontinuity in the time series in how geography is assigned. For earlier periods (February 2021 to December 2025), the local authority recorded for a payment reflects the client's address as at February 2026, rather than their address at the time the payment was made. For later periods, the recorded geography reflects progressively more recent snapshots of client addresses at the time each data extract is taken.

In practice, this means that:

- Payments made in earlier years may be attributed to a more recent address if a client moved before the February 2026 extract

- Payments in more recent periods may continue to be reassigned to different local authority area until the data for those months are finalised

For example, a client who received a payment in December 2025 while living in one local authority area, but moved before February 2026, will be recorded under their later address for that payment. Similarly, a client who received a payment in March 2026 may be recorded under a different local authority area if they moved before the May 2026 data extract.

Removal of re-determinations rate measure

Over time the size and complexity of the benefits being administered by Social Security Scotland has continued to evolve. There were known limitations in the calculation of "re-determinations as a percentage of application decisions made" which were having an increasing impact on reporting.

To ensure that our published statistics continue to meet high standards of trustworthiness and quality for our users, "re-determinations as a percentage of all decisions processed" was removed from this publication in December 2024. This remains the case until further options for reporting can be explored. We cannot currently put a timescale on when an alternative solution may be available.

For more information, please see our Data and Methodology Changes document which details ongoing data issues and revisions made to the statistics. As with all our statistics, we encourage users to get in touch if they have any feedback regarding these statistics or any ongoing continuous improvement.

Effect of re-determinations

Application decision dates, outcomes and payment amounts are updated to reflect information about re-determinations and appeals as described in the How the data is collected section. Information in tables about decisions, outcomes and payments should therefore be viewed as the final decision, outcome and payment value, after a re-determination request or appeal has been received and/or decided. This excludes the processing times table, where applications with re-determinations and appeals have been removed from the processing times calculations.

Processing time

Processing time is the number of days from the application being received to a decision being made or the application being withdrawn. It includes time spent waiting to receive evidence from clients through online upload or by post, but does not include additional time to make payments. It is calculated in working days. Weekends and public holidays are excluded from calculations, even if applications were processed by staff working overtime on these days. The time of day that an application was received or processed is not taken into account.

On 14 November 2022 a new feature titled ‘Straight-through Processing’ was introduced which allows certain applications which meet a specific set of criteria to be automatically passed to the payment approval stage. This applies to Scottish Child Payment only applications and does not cover joint Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment applications. Straight through processing allows the case management system to automatically process certain applications through to a decision without the need for client advisor intervention.

Processing times data does not include any applications that are flagged as having had a re-determination request because the decision date for these applications will represent the re-determination decision date, which can be some time after the original decision date. The number of applications in the processing times table is therefore lower than the number of applications shown as processed or decided in other tables.

Processing time is only calculated for applications that were decided within the period being reported on. Data is presented by the month of decision rather than month the application was received.

Future Developments

We will be 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 us please email MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot.

Related Social Security Scotland Publications

Future statistics published by Social Security Scotland will be available through the Social Security Scotland website.

Statistics on Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are published on the Social Security Scotland website.

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference.

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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, 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 Scottish Government website.

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