



Social Security Scotland – Client and Staff Insights – Research Findings

1. Introduction

An insights research programme is being established in Social Security Scotland. The results from this programme will be used to continuously improve services.

While the research programme is designed over the course of the next year, some work has already begun, with staff being in place for Carer Allowance Supplement and Best Start Grant, and these benefits going live.

To date, this has involved the collection of both routine monitoring and experience information. This is the second publication from the research programme, which reports on findings for the period September 2018 to March 2019. A previous publication can be found [here](#).

2. Key Findings

- The research programme has continued to gather client and staff insights during the period September 2018 to March 2019.
- During this period, Social Security Scotland received over 37,800 contacts by phone. Of these, approximately 17,300 were in relation to BSG, 18,600 were in relation to CAS and 1,900 were general enquiries.

- Call waiting times were on average 8 seconds; 11 seconds for BSG, 2 seconds for CAS and 3 seconds for general enquiries.
- Over 300 clients left ratings on their experience of engaging with the Social Security Scotland telephony service. Of those, 89% felt their call was answered quickly, 80% felt that they got what they needed from the call, and 86% were happy with the overall service they received.
- Over 1,000 clients left ratings following online and telephony applications for the Best Start Grant – Pregnancy and Baby Payment. Of online applicants who responded, 97% rated the service as good/very good. Of telephony applicants who responded, 100% rated the service as good/very good.
- At 31 March 2019 there were 363 directly employed staff and 39 contingent workers working for Social Security Scotland. The majority of these (58%) were based in Dundee.
- At the end of March 2019, the largest proportion of Social Security Scotland staff (30%) fell into the 30-39 age bracket, and the majority were female (57%).
- Staff survey results also show that the majority of staff (60%) are new to working for the Scottish Government or its predecessors.

3. Background

An analytical team within Social Security Scotland are responsible for collecting, analysing and publishing management information, research and statistics that relate to the delivery and performance of Social Security Scotland. Within this, a programme of client and staff insights research is being established, to gather the experiences, needs and priorities of those who use and deliver social security in Scotland. This information, in turn, will be fed back into the organisation's processes, policy and practice, to facilitate continuous improvement. This work will be co-designed with people who have lived experience of social security, building on the work undertaken as part of the Social Security Experience Panels and the development of the Social Security Charter.

Further detail on the background of the insights research programme and future plans can be found [here](#).

4. Methodology

Insights research to date has involved the collection of routine management information, and directly asking clients and staff about their experiences. The following section outlines the methods used to collect insights data during Social Security Scotland's first and second quarters.

4.1. Client Insights

To capture client interactions and experiences with Social Security Scotland processes and services at point of contact, research methods have been embedded in both telephony and online channels using embedded surveys.

4.1.1. Telephony – call data and general call experience

Telephony management information is taken from the organisation's MITEL reporting system.

An automated survey mechanism is in place to gain insights from clients about how well telephony services are being received. Clients have the option of completing the survey following any telephone interaction (e.g. from general enquiry to benefit-specific contact). The focus for this survey is the experience of the call.

Full telephony experience questions and response options are detailed in Annex A.

4.1.2. Applications

Clients' immediate views and feelings on the process of applying for benefits, across telephone, online and paper applications have also been gathered. Given that any survey following the application process will occur at the end of this contact, it is important that the number of questions are kept to a minimum. Two client satisfaction questions have therefore been embedded within a questionnaire which clients have the option of completing at the end of applications, as standard.

Full application experience questions and response options are detailed in Annex B.

For clients applying via paper application, the questionnaire is included in their application pack, with a freepost envelope for returning both forms. For clients applying online, a link to the questionnaire is available at the end of the application. For clients applying over the telephone, a client advisor offers to take the client through the questionnaire over the phone, or to post it out to them.

In addition, clients have the opportunity of completing the automated telephony survey (described in section 4.1.1) following their phone call, which may be beneficial if the client has (for example) additional feedback about that call specifically and/or feedback that they do not wish to disclose to the client advisor directly.

4.2. Staff Insights

4.2.1. Workforce statistics including diversity information

Social Security Scotland collect workforce data via e-HR, the organisation's employment record system. One hundred per cent of directly employed staff have provided information on their age and gender. This is because these details are needed for legislative purposes for use by HM Revenue and Customs, and also for baseline security clearance.

Directly employed staff can also voluntarily disclose diversity information on e-HR for the remaining protected characteristics. At this early stage in the organisation's development, many employees have not yet entered their diversity information into the system, and as such, the e-HR data do not present a fully accurate picture of staff diversity characteristics. Work will be undertaken within the organisation to improve e-HR diversity declaration rates.

Some information on contingent workers is presented below. 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. Diversity data is not held for this group.

Comparator data for the working age population of Scotland is also presented below, and comes from a number of different sources which are the most up to date at the time of producing this report. Caution

should be exercised when comparing Social Security Scotland figures with those of the general population. For example, a significant proportion of the 16-29 age group of the Scottish population may be students and, therefore, not in the labour market. Also, data taken from population surveys may not be directly comparable to Social Security Scotland data because of differences in the questions asked and the options available to respondents.

4.2.2. *Staff survey*

Social Security Scotland conducted a standalone staff survey in October 2018, one month after the launch of the organisation. The survey replicated the formal UK-wide Civil Service People Survey, which the organisation plans to participate in from 2019 onwards. 193 staff members participated, a response rate of 97% at the time of completion.

Questions ask staff about their engagement with the organisation, their work, organisational objectives and purpose, their teams, learning and development, inclusion and fair treatment, resources and workload, pay and benefits, and leadership and managing change. Social Security Scotland's organisation-level survey results are published, and can be found [here](#).

An 'about your job' section in the survey asks staff about job characteristics such as length of service. An 'about you' section also asks about staff diversity characteristics. Although the survey is based on an earlier snapshot of staff than the e-HR data, the information is more complete, and is therefore the focus of the diversity results discussed in a previous publication, found [here](#).

5. Dignity and Respect Findings

5.1 Client Insights – telephony contacts

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 BSG, 18,600 were in relation to CAS and 1,900 were general enquiries.

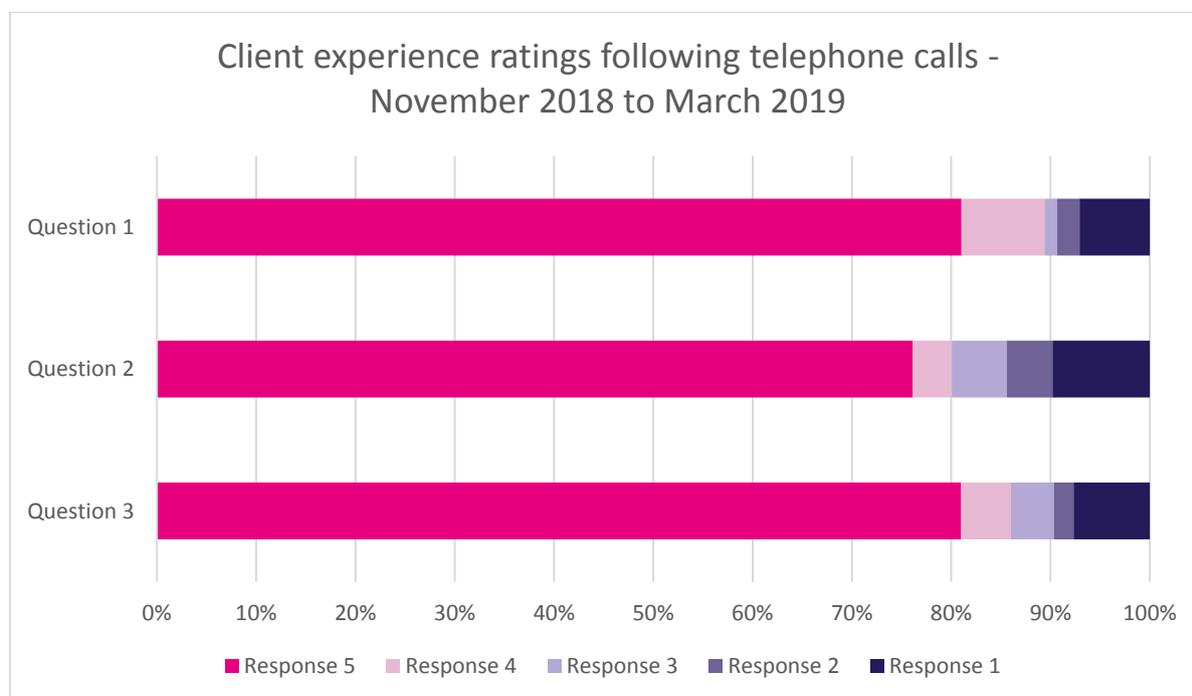
Call waiting times were on average 8 seconds; 11 seconds for BSG, 2 seconds for CAS and 3 seconds for general enquiries.

Call handling times were on average 4 minutes and 30 seconds; approximately 5 minutes for BSG, 4 minutes for CAS and 5 minutes for general enquiries.

5.2 Client Insights - satisfaction following general telephony contact

After any phone call with a client advisor, clients can stay on the line and answer a series of three questions about their experience with Social Security Scotland.

Of those who left a rating, 89% felt their call had been answered quickly [Question 1] 80% felt they got everything they needed from the call [Question 2] and 86% rated the service positively overall [Question 3].



Total number of responses to Question 1: 311

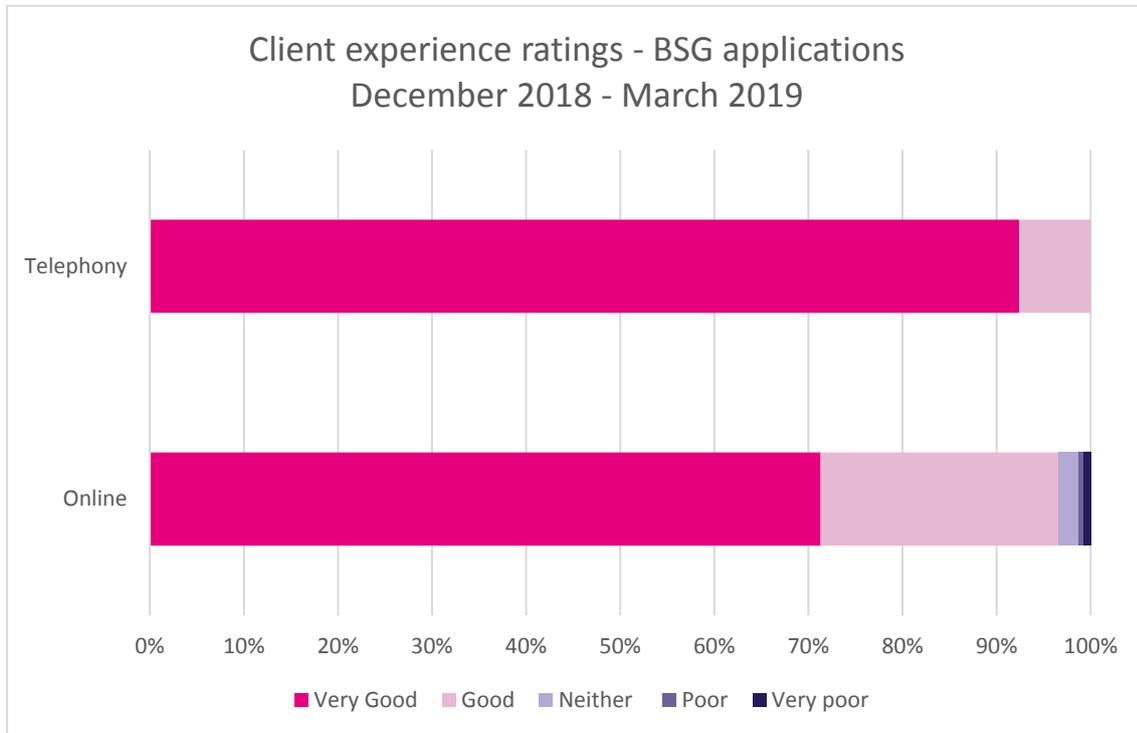
Total number of responses to Question 2: 306

Total number of responses to Question 3: 300

5.3 Client insights - satisfaction following applications

Social Security Scotland launched the Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment on 10th December 2018 – the first application-based grant for the organisation. Following both online and telephony applications, a questionnaire offers applicants the opportunity to make ratings on how the experience has been for them.

Of online applicants who left a rating between December 2018 and March 2019, 97% rated the service as Very good or Good. For telephony applicants, 100% of those who left a rating rated the service as Very good or Good.



Total number of ratings following a telephony application: 369

Total number of ratings following an online application: 641

6. People and Recruitment / Equality and Diversity Findings

The tables in Annex C present both e-HR data (for the period up to end March 2019) and staff survey data (collected in October 2018) on Social Security Scotland's workforce characteristics. Population comparator data is also presented where available.

At 31 March 2019 there were 363 directly employed staff and 39 contingent workers working for Social Security Scotland. The majority of these (58%) were based in Dundee.

At the end of March 2019, the largest proportion of Social Security Scotland staff (30%) fell into the 30-39 age bracket, and the majority were female (57%).

Staff survey results from October 2018 show that the majority of staff (60%) were new to working for the Scottish Government or its predecessors.

At this early 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 e-HR diversity declaration rates. In contrast, 100% of those who completed a staff survey in October 2018 provided information relating to disability. As discussed in a [previous publication](#), early indications from these data suggest that Social Security Scotland staff are representative of the Scottish working population.

7. Conclusion

This report summarises insights research programme findings for the period September 2018 to March 2019. As the organisation grows, clients and staff will continue to have opportunities to feed their views back into the system.

To date, findings reveal that the vast majority of clients who have left a rating or comment in relation to a telephone or application-based interaction with the organisation have been positive about the experience.

Staff insights data shows that the organisation is growing, and information on workforce characteristics will continue to be monitored over time. Another insights research publication is planned for September 2019, which will build on the findings presented here.

8. Annex A – Telephony experience survey content

Thanks for staying on the line. You're about to hear 3 short questions about your call today.

Question 1: How quickly did we answer your call today? Press a number from 1 to 5, where 1 is not quickly at all and 5 is very quickly.

Question 2: Did you get what you needed from this call? Press a number from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is you got everything you needed.

Question 3: How would you rate our service today? Press a number from 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.

Thanks for taking part. We'll use your answers to improve our service.

9. Annex B – Application experience survey content

About your experience with Social Security Scotland

10 Overall, how would you rate the service provided by Social Security Scotland e.g. in making your application?

1 1 – Very poor

2 2 – Poor

3 3 – Neither poor nor good

4 4 – good

5 5 – Very good

11 Is there any further feedback you would like provide?

10. ANNEX C – Social Security Scotland workforce information and population comparisons

Age – e-HR data

| Year | Quarter to end: | Age Group ¹ | | | | | | | | | | | | Total head count | | |
|------|-----------------|------------------------|-----|------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|------------|-----|------------------|-------------|-----|
| | | 16-19 | | 20-29 | | 30-39 | | 40-49 | | 50-59 | | 60-64 | | | 65 and over | |
| | | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | | Head count | % |
| 2018 | Sep | * | * | 35 | 20.0 | 47 | 26.9 | 53 | 30.3 | 28 | 16 | * | * | 0 | 0.0 | 175 |
| | Dec | 13 | 5.1 | 52 | 20.6 | 71 | 28.1 | 67 | 26.5 | 45 | 17.8 | 5 | 2.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 253 |
| 2019 | Mar | 14 | 3.9 | 75 | 20.7 | 107 | 29.5 | 96 | 26.4 | 64 | 17.6 | * | * | * | * | 363 |

1. Age at end of quarter; * Numbers between 1-4 are suppressed for disclosure reasons.

Age – Scottish working population data

| | 16-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-65 |
|----------------------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Scottish population (age 16-65) | 28% | 19% | 21% | 11% | 10% | 11% |
| Scottish population data source: | Mid-2016 Population Estimates | | | | | |

Gender – e-HR data

| Year | Quarter to end: | Gender | | | | Total head count |
|------|-----------------|------------|------|------------|------|------------------|
| | | Female | | Male | | |
| | | Head count | % | Head count | % | |
| 2018 | Sep | 105 | 60.0 | 70 | 40.0 | 175 |
| | Dec | 151 | 59.7 | 102 | 40.3 | 253 |
| 2019 | Mar | 205 | 56.5 | 158 | 43.5 | 363 |

Gender – Scottish working population data

| | Female | Male |
|----------------------------------|---|------|
| Scottish population (age 16-65) | 51% | 49% |
| Scottish population data source: | Mid-2016 Population Estimates | |

Disability – e-HR data

| Year | Quarter to end: | Disability | | | | | | | | Total head count |
|------|-----------------|------------|-----|--------------|------|-------------------|-----|------------|------|------------------|
| | | Disabled | | Not Disabled | | Prefer not to say | | Unknown | | |
| | | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | |
| 2018 | Sep | 11 | 6.3 | 55 | 31.4 | 2 | 1.1 | 107 | 61.1 | 175 |
| | Dec | 22 | 8.7 | 70 | 27.7 | 3 | 1.2 | 158 | 62.5 | 253 |
| 2019 | Mar | 29 | 8 | 118 | 32.5 | 4 | 1.1 | 212 | 58.4 | 363 |

Disability – staff survey data

| Year | Survey period | Disability | | | | | | Total returns |
|------|---------------|-----------------------|------|----------------|------|-------------------|-----|---------------|
| | | Disabled ¹ | | Not Disabled | | Prefer not to say | | |
| | | Number returns | % | Number returns | % | Number returns | % | |
| 2018 | Oct | 42 | 21.8 | 140 | 72.5 | 11 | 5.7 | 193 |

Disability – Scottish working population data

| | Disabled ¹ | Not disabled |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Scottish population (age 16-64) | 19% | 80% |
| Scottish population data source: | Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2015 | |

*includes long-standing physical or mental health condition, illness, impairment or disability

Ethnicity – e-HR data

| Year | Quarter to end: | Ethnicity | | | | | | | | Total head count |
|------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----|------------|------|-------------------|-----|------------|------|------------------|
| | | Ethnic minority ¹ | | White | | Prefer not to say | | Unknown | | |
| | | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | |
| 2018 | Sep | 6 | 3.4 | 144 | 82.3 | 3 | 1.7 | 22 | 12.6 | 175 |
| | Dec | 8 | 3.2 | 211 | 83.4 | 2 | 0.8 | 32 | 12.6 | 253 |
| 2019 | Mar | 12 | 3.3 | 273 | 75.2 | 1 | 0.3 | 77 | 21.2 | 363 |

Ethnicity – staff survey data

| Year | Survey period | Ethnicity | | | | | | Total returns |
|------|---------------|------------------------------|-----|----------------|------|-------------------|-----|---------------|
| | | Ethnic minority ¹ | | White | | Prefer not to say | | |
| | | Number returns | % | Number returns | % | Number returns | % | |
| 2018 | Oct | 15 | 7.8 | 165 | 85.5 | 13 | 6.7 | 193 |

Ethnicity – staff survey data

| | Ethnic minority ¹ | White |
|----------------------------------|--|-------|
| Scottish population (age 16-64) | 4% | 96% |
| Scottish population data source: | Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2015 | |

1. 'Ethnic minority' includes: African, Caribbean or Black; Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British; Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group; Other Ethnic Group.

Religion or belief – e-HR data

| Year | | Quarter to end: | | Religion or Belief | | | | | | | | | | | | Total head count | | |
|------|-----|-----------------|------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|-------------------|------|------------------|------------|---|
| | | | | None | | Church of Scotland | | Roman Catholic | | Other Christian | | Other religion or belief ¹ | | Prefer not to say | | | Unknown | |
| | | | | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | | Head count | % |
| 2018 | Sep | 82 | 46.9 | 24 | 13.7 | 24 | 13.7 | 8 | 4.6 | 6 | 3.4 | 5 | 2.9 | 26 | 14.9 | 175 | | |
| | Dec | 129 | 51.0 | 28 | 11.1 | 36 | 14.2 | 13 | 5.1 | 7 | 2.8 | 4 | 1.6 | 36 | 14.2 | 253 | | |
| 2019 | Mar | 170 | 46.8 | 36 | 9.9 | 48 | 13.2 | 15 | 4.1 | 10 | 2.8 | 3 | 0.8 | 81 | 22.3 | 363 | | |

Religion or belief – staff survey data

| Year | | Survey period | | Religion or belief | | | | | | | | Total returns |
|------|-----|---------------|------|--------------------|------|----------------|-----|---------------------------------------|-----|-------------------|---|---------------|
| | | | | None | | Christian | | Other religion or belief ¹ | | Prefer not to say | | |
| | | | | Number returns | % | Number returns | % | Number returns | % | Number returns | % | |
| 2018 | Oct | 105 | 55.3 | 59 | 31.1 | 11 | 5.8 | 15 | 7.9 | 190 | | |

Religion or belief – Scottish working population data

| | None | Christian | Other religion ¹ | Prefer not to say |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Scotland (age 16-64) | 51% | 44% | 3% | 1% |
| Scottish population data source: | Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2015 | | | |

1. Other religion or belief includes: Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Hindu, Pagan, and Other.

Sexual orientation – e-HR data

| Year | Quarter to end: | Sexual orientation | | | | | | | | Total head count |
|------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|------|-------------------|-----|------------|------|------------------|
| | | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, other | | Hetero-sexual /straight | | Prefer not to say | | Unknown | | |
| | | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | |
| 2018 | Sep | 8 | 4.6 | 135 | 77.1 | 5 | 2.9 | 27 | 15.4 | 175 |
| | Dec | 14 | 5.5 | 195 | 77.1 | 5 | 2.0 | 39 | 15.4 | 253 |
| 2019 | Mar | 19 | 5.2 | 253 | 69.7 | 7 | 1.9 | 84 | 23.1 | 363 |

Sexual orientation – staff survey data

| Year | Survey period | Ethnicity | | | | | | Total returns |
|------|---------------|-------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|------|-------------------|-----|---------------|
| | | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, other | | Hetero-sexual /straight | | Prefer not to say | | |
| | | Number returns | % | Number returns | % | Number returns | % | |
| 2018 | Oct | 14 | 7.3 | 166 | 86.5 | 12 | 6.3 | 192 |

Sexual orientation – Scottish working population data

| | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, other | Heterosexual/ Straight | Prefer not to say |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------|
| Scottish population (age 16-64) | 2% | 96% | 2% |
| Scottish population data source: | Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2015 | | |

Directly employed staff and contingent workers' location – e-HR data

| Year | Quarter to end: | Office Location | | | | | | Total head count |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|------|------------|------|------------|-----|------------------|
| | | Dundee | | Glasgow | | Other | | |
| | | Head count | % | Head count | % | Head count | % | |
| 2018 | Sep | 83 | 43.5 | 106 | 55.5 | 2 | 1.0 | 191 |
| | Dec | 144 | 53.1 | 117 | 43.2 | 10 | 3.7 | 271 |
| 2019 | Mar | 233 | 58.0 | 156 | 38.8 | 13 | 3.2 | 402 |

Length of service – staff survey data

| | Number of responses | < 6 months | 6 months - <1 year | 1- <3 years | 3- <5 years | 5- <10 years | 10- <20 years | 20 years + | N/A |
|---|---------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|------------|-----|
| How long have you been working in your current job? | 193 | 76% | 11% | 10% | * | 0% | 0% | * | * |
| How long have you been working for the Scottish Government or its predecessor(s)? | 182 | 60% | * | 13% | * | * | 7% | * | 8% |
| How long have you been working in the Civil Service? | 179 | 31% | * | 11% | 8% | * | 23% | 17% | * |

* Numbers between 1-4 are suppressed for disclosure reasons.



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