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Interim Evaluation of Scottish Child Payment



EQUALITY AND WELFARE



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Executive Summary

Background

The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 introduced a range of new benefits devolved to Scotland. Scottish Child Payment has been implemented using these new powers. The payment is designed to deliver regular, additional financial help to low-income families who are in receipt of certain benefits. It is also one of a range of Scottish Government policies set out in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan¹ which are intended to reduce child poverty in Scotland.

Social Security Scotland began taking applications for Scottish Child Payment on 9 November 2020. This report presents an interim evaluation of the benefit which is based on progress towards its immediate and short-term policy outcomes. However, it also considers progress towards Scottish Child Payment's medium-term outcomes, and its contribution to the Scottish Government's long-term aims (e.g. reduced child poverty). The policy outcomes of Scottish Child Payment relate to the benefit's impact on people who receive the payment (hereafter referred to as 'recipients'), but the evaluation also considers the experience of Scottish Child Payment applicants in general.

The interim evaluation of Scottish Child Payment is largely based on findings from qualitative research that was commissioned and undertaken by Ipsos MORI, attached in full at Annex B. The qualitative research involved interviews with Scottish Child Payment recipients and third sector representatives who support people on low incomes. However, it also draws on Official Statistics and a survey of benefits applicants which was undertaken by Social Security Scotland.

It should be noted that the data used for the interim evaluation covers the period from November 2020 to March 2022. During this time, Scottish Child Payment was a weekly sum of £10 per child aged under 6, paid every four weeks. However, the payment amount doubled to £20 per week in April 2022 and will further increase to £25 by the end of 2022 – by which time the benefit will also be rolled-out to all eligible children under the age of 16.

Promotion and take-up of Scottish Child Payment

People find out about Scottish Child Payment in a range of ways, including word of mouth, media advertising, and through various support organisations. However, while third sector representatives feel the benefit has been fairly well and widely publicised, there is also a belief that it could be publicised more effectively e.g. by using different forms of social media like Facebook Live, and by staging a promotional campaign every year to make new parents aware of the benefit.

¹ Scottish Government (2018) [Every child, every chance: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2018-2022](#); Scottish Government (2022) [Best start, bright futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-2026](#).

People across Scotland with a diverse range of demographic and equalities characteristics claim Scottish Child Payment. As of June 2021, take-up of Scottish Child Payment was estimated to be 77%. This means that a majority of eligible people had claimed the benefit, and indicates that early promotional efforts were largely effective. However, it also shows that almost 1 in 4 eligible people had not claimed Scottish Child Payment in June 2021, suggesting further steps may still be needed to maximise take-up of the benefit. The next take-up estimate of Scottish Child Payment is due to be published later this year.

Understanding Scottish Child Payment

People are generally clear about the purpose of Scottish Child Payment and how it is intended to work. However, there is some confusion over eligibility - e.g. whether it is based on existing benefit entitlement or income. Additionally, third sector representatives say that some parents do not realise that the payment will stop when their child turns 6. This was the case for a parent who took part in the qualitative research, and she found it to be a stressful and disappointing experience.

Applying for Scottish Child Payment

A large majority of Scottish Child Payment applicants feel that they are treated well by Social Security Scotland during the application process. The application form is also considered quick and straightforward to complete. This can give recipients a sense they are entitled to the payment, as opposed to feeling they have to prove themselves for it. People are also generally satisfied with the process of receiving payments.

Despite these positives, the evaluation highlights some issues with the application process:

- Application processing times have been increasing since September 2021. This includes time spent waiting to receive copies of documents or evidence requested from clients.
- A minority of applicants feel Social Security Scotland could have kept them better informed about the progress of their applications. This is particularly important for families who are struggling financially.
- Around 1 in 3 applicants who speak to Social Security Scotland staff would like to be informed about other benefits or additional forms of support (e.g. Citizens Advice Scotland) when making an application, but are not.
- Some individuals flagged specific issues with the application form e.g. a perception that telephone applications take too long, or that some of the questions in the Equality Monitoring and Feedback form seem intrusive or irrelevant (it should be noted that applicants can select a 'prefer not to say' option when answering questions in the form).

The impact of Scottish Child Payment

Progress towards short-term policy outcomes

Scottish Child Payment has had a number of positive impacts for children and families. It has led to more money being spent on children, including spend which enables them to participate in social and educational opportunities. Examples include:

- Essential items like food and nappies, and treat items such as small toys or ice cream
- Family day-trips to places such as the zoo, and regular activities like parent and toddler groups or dance classes
- For parents of disabled children, spend on essential medical items and items designed to support development or learning (e.g. sensory toys and books to help with a child's dyslexia).

Scottish Child Payment has also helped to reduce financial pressure on households. People who use payments for essential household items such as food or bills feel its impact keenly, and say they depend on the money to avoid getting into debt. There is also testimony from individual recipients that, before receiving the benefit, they had to rely on food parcels or would sometimes have skipped meals to ensure their child(ren) could eat. Some recipients also feel that without Scottish Child Payment they might be forced to use food banks.

Others recipients say they do not rely on Scottish Child Payment for essentials. However, they feel the payment helps to fund trips or treats their children would otherwise miss out on. Additionally, parents and carers say that Scottish Child Payment has helped to reduce their financial worries around everyday budgeting, and that this had a positive impact on their own mental health.

Despite the positive short-term impacts of Scottish Child Payment, the payment (at the £10 weekly rate) was not considered a large enough sum of money to completely transform peoples' financial situation. For recipients, household budgets remain very tight, and spending requires careful planning from week to week to ensure they have enough for everything that they and their children need. The findings also suggest that recent increases in the cost of living reduced the spending power of Scottish Child Payment.

Contribution to medium-term policy outcomes

A full assessment of progress towards Scottish Child Payment's medium-term outcomes would require: (a) more time to have passed since the benefit was implemented, and (b) access to more robust quantitative data. However, the findings indicate that the benefit has led to reduced debt and material deprivation. As mentioned above, some recipients rely on Scottish Child Payment to pay for household essentials, and feel strongly that it has stopped them having to borrow money.

In addition to reduced financial stress, there is also evidence that Scottish Child Payment has contributed to better health and wellbeing in other ways. Examples given by recipients include:

- Feeling less guilt or embarrassment at not being able to afford things for their children
- Improvements to their children's physical health as a result of being able to buy enough (or better) food for them, and being able to pay for them to take part in activities such as swimming or gymnastics
- Improvements to their children's emotional wellbeing by reducing the distress associated with hunger, and being able to buy them treats or pay for activities or trips
- For parents of disabled children, being more able to pay for medical care or support for their children, including transport to get to hospital quicker, or to pay for specific items for a medical condition (e.g. incontinence pads).

There is only a limited amount of evidence that Scottish Child Payment has reduced barriers to education and the labour market. However, examples given by recipients include using the money to pay for travel to interviews, a new job, or college.

There is also limited evidence the payment has had a positive impact on the Scottish economy. However, to assess this fully would require a full economic evaluation which is outside the scope of this work. Some of the improvements to children's health and wellbeing set out above might be expected to have long-term economic benefits for Scotland's economy including improved educational outcomes, reduced inequality and higher earnings potential for recipients.²

While the payment has allowed recipients to buy more or different things, it has not changed the shops they use – they tend to shop in large local supermarkets, online, or sometimes go to a mix of (generally bigger) shops to get the best deals. As such, there is only limited evidence of recipients increasingly shopping locally.

Conclusion and policy implications

The evaluation shows that Scottish Child Payment has largely achieved its immediate and short-term policy outcomes, and has made progress towards its medium-term policy outcomes. It is therefore likely to have contributed positively to the Scottish Government's long-term aims (e.g. reduced child poverty and inequalities of outcomes for children). However, the evaluation also highlights some issues with Scottish Child Payment. These issues and their implications are as following:

² [The long-term benefits of better school lunches | Microeconomic Insights](#)

1. Third sector representatives feel that the benefit could be promoted more effectively e.g. by using different forms of social media and putting on a yearly campaign to promote the benefit to new parents. Regarding take-up, the most recent estimate suggests that 23% of eligible people had not claimed Scottish Child Payment in June 2021. While this figure may have changed since then (a new estimate will be published later this year), steps may be needed to maximise take-up of Scottish Child Payment, including further promotional work.
2. There is some confusion over eligibility – e.g. whether it is based on existing benefit entitlement or income. There is also evidence that some recipients do not realise the payment will stop when their child reaches the upper age-limit for eligibility. As such, there may be a need to review information on Scottish Child Payment to (a) increase clarity around eligibility rules, and (b) communicate more clearly that payments will stop for eligible children when they reach the upper age-limit.
3. Regarding the application form, a small number of issues were flagged by individual recipients e.g. a perception that the telephone application took too long, or that some of the demographic questions (for which a ‘prefer not to say’ response can be chosen) in the Equality Monitoring and Feedback form seemed intrusive or irrelevant. Although it is not clear how widespread these perceptions or experiences are amongst applicants, it may be necessary to review the application process to see if changes are necessary or possible.
4. There has been a trend of increasing application processing times since September 2021. Additionally, a minority of applicants feel that Social Security Scotland could have given them more updates on the progress of their application. This is particularly important to families who are struggling financially. As such, there may be a need to (a) review the application decision-making process to see if it can be expedited, and (b) take steps to ensure that applicants are kept better informed about the progress of applications, especially in cases where processing takes a long time.
5. Around 1 in 3 applicants who speak to Social Security Scotland staff would like to be informed about other benefits or additional forms of support (e.g. Citizens Advice Scotland) when making an application, but are not. In general, applicants who are told about other benefits or support are more likely to rate their overall experience with Social Security Scotland staff positively. As such, steps could be taken to ensure that applicants are always informed about other benefits or support, where applicable.
6. While Scottish Child Payment has a positive impact on recipients’ finances, they are still faced with financial difficulties, and rises in the cost of living can limit the payment’s impact. As stated above, Scottish Child Payment doubled from £10 to £20 per week per eligible child in April 2022, and will increase again to £25 by the end of the 2022 – by which time eligibility will have been extended to children aged under 16. However, to ensure that Scottish Child

Payment continues to have a positive financial impact for families, recipients' perceptions of impact should continue to be monitored over time, and the rate of Scottish Child Payment kept under review.

7. While the interim evaluation indicates that progress has been made on the medium-term outcomes associated with Scottish Child Payment, it is not possible with the information available to provide a full assessment across these areas. As such, more data should be sought and made available for the future evaluations of Scottish Child Payment.

Introduction

This section introduces Scottish Child Payment and the rationale behind its implementation. It also summarises the eligibility criteria, aspects of the application process, and the overall evaluation aims relevant to this report.

Scottish Child Payment: description

Scottish Child Payment is a key strategic commitment in the Scottish Government's national mission to reduce child poverty. It was implemented using powers devolved through the [Scotland Act 2016](#), which gave the Scottish Parliament responsibility for £2.8 billion of social security expenditure. This includes the power to top-up reserved benefits for individuals who appear to require additional financial assistance. Scottish Child Payment is delivered through Social Security Scotland. Its role in reducing child poverty has been outlined in two tackling child poverty delivery plan publications:

- [Every child, every chance: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2018-2022](#)
- [Best start, bright futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-2026](#)

The tackling child poverty delivery plan recognises that, in isolation, no one action can make the change needed. As such, Scottish Child Payment is one of a range of Scottish Government policies intended to tackle child poverty. These include (a) other benefits administered by Social Security Scotland, such as the Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods, and (b) wider measures around work and earnings and the cost of living.

Scottish Child Payment is intended to deliver regular, additional financial help to low-income families. Its purpose is to assist with the costs of raising a family, but it is up to recipients to choose how they spend the money. The payment began as a weekly sum of £10 for each child in the family under 6, paid every four weeks. The payment amount doubled to £20 per week in April 2022 and will further increase to £25 by the end of 2022 – however, it should be noted that this evaluation is based on information gathered before the payment amount increased to £20 per week.

Scottish Child Payment opened for applications in November 2020, with payments beginning in February 2021. Its broad aims are to:

- Achieve a reduction in child poverty of 3 percentage points when the benefit is fully rolled out
- Reduce the depth of poverty by increasing incomes of people not just below the poverty line but those further below it
- Ensure a sustainable and lasting reduction in poverty for families with children.

To be eligible for Scottish Child Payment, clients must (a) live in Scotland, (b) receive a qualifying benefit, and (c) be able to demonstrate that they or their partner are responsible for a child under 6 (increasing to 16 by the end of 2022). It does not

affect other UK or Scottish Government benefits that they receive - although it may affect local council allowances or grants.

The families most at risk of poverty

As stated above, one of the key aims of Scottish Child Payment is to reduce the depth of poverty by increasing incomes of people not just below the poverty line, but those further below it. This is because, as set out in the tackling child poverty delivery plan¹, the Scottish Government is particularly focused on providing assistance to six groups at greatest risk of poverty. These groups are:

- Lone parents
- Families with a disabled adult or child
- Young mothers
- Minority ethnic families
- Families with a child under 1 year old
- Larger families (i.e. with three or more children)

Recent policy developments

Scottish Child Payment increased in value to £20 per week in April 2022. The Scottish Government has also pledged to increase Scottish Child Payment to £25 per week and extend eligibility to children aged 6-15 by the end of 2022. It is estimated that, as a result of extended eligibility, the number of children who will benefit from Scottish Child Payment will increase by over 200,000 to 304,000.³

Application process

Applications can be made online, by phone, by paper form, and in person using the local delivery service. 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.

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

³ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2022) [Scotland's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts – May 2022](#)

Scotland aims to make a decision as soon as possible with payments following soon thereafter.

To help manage the demand expected when Scottish Child Payment officially launched on 15 February 2021, Social Security Scotland enabled clients to apply in advance of the benefit being introduced, from 9 November 2020. 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.

Accessibility of Scottish Child Payment

Social Security Scotland is committed to accessibility. To maximise this, multiple application channels are available: digital, paper and telephone. The digital application process is compatible with assistive technologies and clients can request 3 phone calls and letters in a variety of formats e.g. in over 100 different languages, using BSL video calls, or in braille, easy read and large print.

Evaluation aims

The Scottish Government published its approach to evaluating the first wave of devolved social security benefits, including Scottish Child Payment, in November 2019.⁴

The purpose of the interim evaluation is to provide learning about the overall implementation of the benefit and the extent to which Scottish Child Payment's immediate and short-term outcomes have been met, now that the benefit has been in operation for over a year. In doing so, it can also assess progress towards Scottish Child Payment's medium-term outcomes, and its likely contribution to long-term government impacts for children, such as reduced child poverty. However, the latter, longer-term impacts will also be affected by Scottish Government interventions outwith social security, designed to support children and their families. As such, they will not only be attributable to Scottish Child Payment.

Specifically, the evaluation objectives are to:

1. Evaluate the extent to which Scottish Child Payment has met its policy outcomes.
2. Assess the likely contribution of Scottish Child Payment to wider long-term government outcomes for children and their families.
3. Discuss implications for future policy development.

The findings will provide groundwork for policy improvement, and feed into the development of future evaluations of Scottish Child Payment. Future evaluations will take place once the benefit has been live for at least three years - at which point Scottish Child Payment will have increased to £25 per week (per child), and will be

⁴ Scottish Government (2019) [Devolved benefits: evaluating the policy impact](#)

rolled-out to those responsible for eligible children aged under 16. However, it should be noted that the current evaluation is focused on the impact of Scottish Child Payment prior to April 2022, when the payment amount was £10 per week (per child).

Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the evaluation approach for Scottish Child Payment. It introduces the logic model and research questions driving the evaluation activities, and gives a summary of the different data sources used.

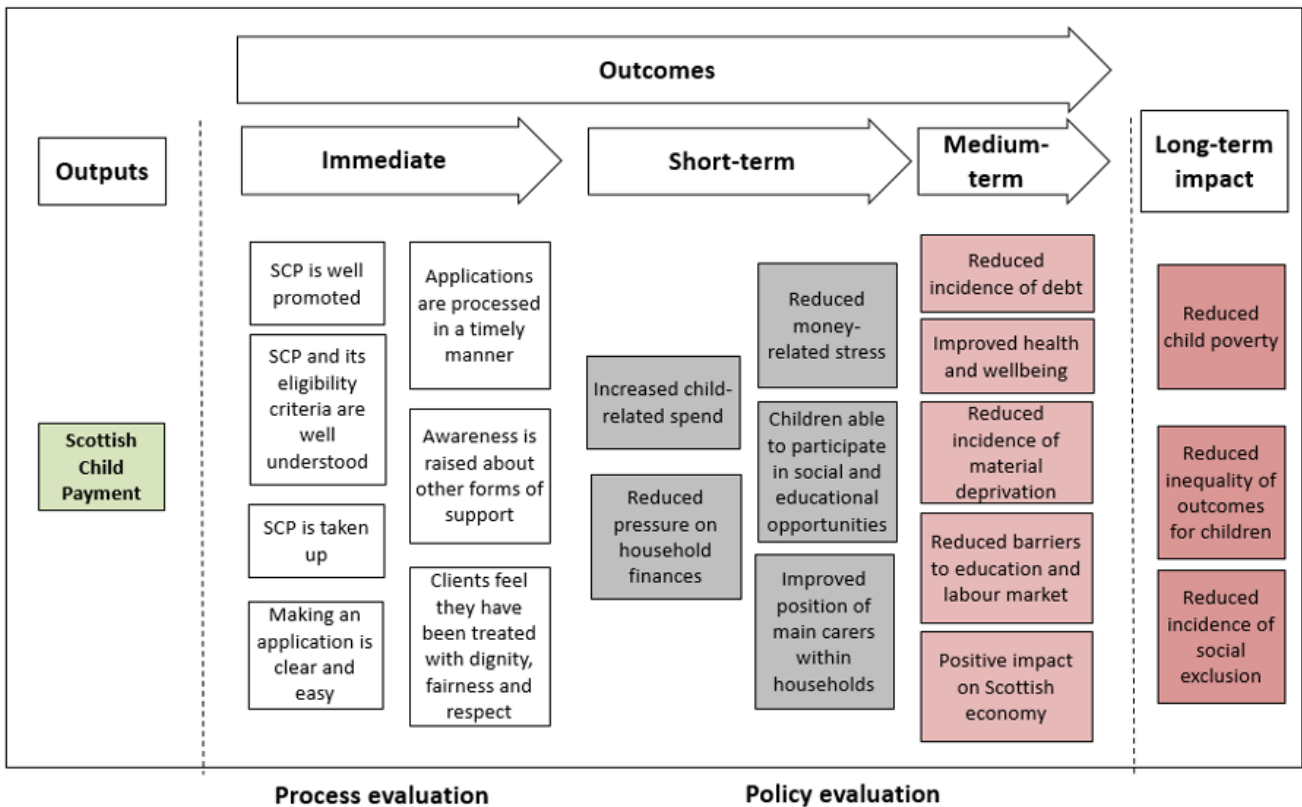
Overview of evaluation design and logic model

The Scottish Child Payment policy evaluation is based on a “theory of change” logic model. The model shows the mechanisms whereby interventions (such as Scottish Child Payment) have a chain of immediate, short-term, and medium-term outcomes. If these are met, they can generate longer-term outcomes and contribute to wider Scottish Government policy impacts.

Scottish Child Payment’s medium-term outcomes, and the Scottish Government’s long-term policy impacts (e.g. reduced child poverty), will take time to determine, and may require access to robust quantitative data that is not currently available. The long-term impacts in particular will be affected by a range of factors in addition to Scottish Child Payment, making it difficult to measure and attribute changes specifically to that payment. However, the achievement of shorter-term policy outcomes (e.g. increased child-related spend and reduced pressure on household finances) could reasonably be expected to contribute to these wider outcomes.

The logic model for Scottish Child Payment is below at Figure 1.

Figure 1 Scottish Child Payment (SCP) logic model



The immediate outcomes of Scottish Child Payment relate to the delivery process of the benefit – i.e. promoting and administering the benefit. The short-term and medium-term outcomes relate to policy outcomes, which are linked with the intended aims of Scottish Child Payment.

Immediate outcomes (Process Evaluation)

- Scottish Child Payment is well promoted
- Scottish Child Payment and its eligibility criteria are well understood
- Scottish Child Payment is taken up
- Making an application is clear and easy
- Applications are processed in a timely manner
- Awareness is raised about other forms of support
- Clients feel they have been treated with dignity, fairness and respect

Short-term outcomes (Policy Evaluation)

- Increased child-related spend
- Reduced pressure on household finances
- Reduced money-related stress
- Children able to participate in social and educational opportunities
- Improved position of main carers within households

Medium-term outcomes (Policy Evaluation)

- Reduced incidence of debt
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Reduced incidence of material deprivation
- Reduced barriers to education and labour market
- Positive impact on Scottish economy

Long-term outcomes and impacts

The long-term impacts in the logic model (reduced child poverty, reduced inequality of outcomes for children, and reduced incidence of social exclusion) relate not only to Scottish Child Payment but to the wider government outcomes for children and their families, and are influenced by all social security interventions, as well as other interventions designed to support families with children across the Scottish Government. As such, Scottish Child Payment will play an important, but not exclusive, role in contributing to these.

Evaluation questions

Below are the key questions that informed the evaluation design:

1. To what extent did Scottish Child Payment achieve its immediate, short-term, and medium-term policy outcomes?
2. Is there any evidence of Scottish Child Payment contributing to the long-term government policy impacts of (a) reduced child poverty, (b) reduced inequality of outcomes for children, and (c) reduced incidence of social exclusion?
3. What are the implications of the evaluation findings for future policy development?

Summary of data sources

In accordance with the evaluation strategy⁴, the evidence used in this report was drawn from multiple data sources, described below:

Bespoke commissioned research

Ipsos MORI Scotland was commissioned by the Scottish Government to conduct qualitative research with Scottish Child Payment recipients and third sector representatives who provide support to recipients. The research mainly focused on people's experience of receiving the benefit, and how this mapped on to Scottish Child Payment policy objectives (i.e. the immediate, short-term and medium-term outcomes outlined above). However, it also explored additional aims, such as potential barriers to applying for the benefit.

In-depth qualitative interviews, lasting around 30-45 minutes, were conducted with 39 Scottish Child Payment recipients across Scotland. Additionally, 9 interviews with 10 third sector representatives were held. Fieldwork took place via telephone or online video chat between August 2021 and December 2021.⁵ The recipients were recruited based on key priority groups outlined in the first tackling child poverty delivery plan¹ - i.e.

- Lone parents
- Families with a disabled adult or child
- Mothers aged under 25
- Minority ethnic families
- Families with a child under 1
- Larger families (with three or more children)

The main findings from the commissioned research are presented in this report to provide a fuller understanding of the implementation and impact of Scottish Child

⁵ The Scottish Government had a moratorium on face-to-face research at this time due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Payment at this early stage of delivery. The full report from Ipsos MORI Scotland is available at Annex B.

Official Statistics

Social Security Scotland collects information on applications, payments, and clients in the process of delivering the benefits. Some of this information is published online as Official Statistics. The following Official Statistics publications are used as sources of evidence in this report:

- [Scottish Child Payment – high level statistics to 31 March 2022](#)
- [Social Security Scotland client diversity and equalities analysis to May 2021](#)
- [Social Security Scotland feedback statistics to 30 September 2021](#)

Of these three publications, the high level statistics data is used most frequently, and is hereafter referred to as “Official Statistics”. The other publications are named in full when they are cited.

Please also note the following technical points about how Official Statistics are presented throughout this report:

- Figures are rounded for disclosure control and may not sum due to rounding
- Where stated, secondary analysis has been conducted on rounded figures from published Official Statistics
- Most results are presented to zero decimal places. ‘0%’ should therefore be interpreted to mean less than 0.5%. If no responses were given then this is denoted by ‘-’.

More detailed figures and information about the Official Statistics used in this report are provided at Annex A.

Social Security Scotland Client Survey

The Social Security Scotland Client Survey ran August/September 2020 (round 1) and May/June 2021 (round 2).⁶ It was open to everyone who at that time had received either (a) a Social Security Scotland benefit, or (b) a successful decision on a benefit application from Social Security Scotland’s inception in September 2018 to March 2021.

The Client Survey collected equalities and socio-economic information from respondents. It also asked about their experience of Social Security Scotland and

⁶ It should be noted that Scottish Child Payment opened for applications in November 2020, and launched in February 2021. As such, Scottish Child Payment respondents took part in round 2 of the Client Survey.

receiving benefits. In total, the survey received 10,575 responses (around 4% of the total number of invites sent), of whom:

1. 769 had applied for Scottish Child Payment only (i.e. as opposed to having applied for Scottish Child Payment and other Social Security Scotland benefits)
2. 1,188 had received Scottish Child Payment only (i.e. as opposed to having received Scottish Child Payment and other Social Security Scotland benefits)

Throughout this report, Client Survey findings are based on respondents who only applied for or received Scottish Child Payment. This is because their views and experiences specifically relate to applying for Scottish Child Payment, as opposed to potentially applying for numerous benefits.

Please also note the following technical points about how Client Survey findings are presented throughout this report:

- The number of respondents providing a valid answer to each individual question/statement varied slightly, within the ranges shown.
- Most results to the closed questions are rounded to whole numbers. As such, results (e.g. those presented in tables) may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
- Most results are presented to zero decimal places. '0%' should therefore be interpreted to mean less than 0.5%. If no responses were given then this is denoted by '-'.

Limitations

This section explains what can and cannot be determined from the available data sources, and how this influences the extent to which conclusions can be drawn about the early impact of Scottish Child Payment.

Role of qualitative research: The evaluation is largely dependent on findings from qualitative research commissioned by the Scottish Government. This provides a rich and detailed insight into the impact of Scottish Child Payment on recipients with a range of personal and demographic characteristics, and also the views of third sector stakeholders. However, the research also has the following limitations:

1. The findings are not representative of all Scottish Child Payment recipients, because (a) while diverse, the overall sample of participants was small, and (b) participants were self-selecting, meaning that they actively chose to take part, as opposed to being randomly selected.
2. Findings are based on the participants' perceptions of impact, rather than objective measures of impact.

These are standard limitations of qualitative work. More detail on limitations has been provided at Annex B.

Role of Social Security Scotland research: The Client Survey statistics contained in this report are based on up to 1,188 responses from clients who applied for Scottish Child Payment (and the number of respondents providing a valid answer to each individual question/statement varies within the ranges shown throughout the report).

Although the survey results provide insight into the views and experiences of a substantial number of Social Security Scotland clients, it should be cautioned that this represents a small fraction of the 157,755 Scottish Child Payment applicants up to 31 March 2022, and that views are drawn from a self-selecting sample of applicants. No weighting had been applied to counteract potential response bias. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the results represent the views of Scottish Child Payment clients as a whole.

It should also be noted that the Client Survey was designed for all Social Security Scotland clients, not just Scottish Child Payment applicants. This means that questions are worded in a general way to make them applicable to all benefits. Therefore, while it is a useful source of supplementary evidence, it is not specifically designed to gather the views and experiences of Scottish Child Payment recipients about the benefit.

Medium and long-term impacts will take time and additional data to determine: Understanding the true impact of Scottish Child Payment would involve measuring (a) progress towards medium-term policy outcomes, and (b) its lasting contribution to wider Scottish Government outcomes. Doing so requires suitable time to have passed, and for the latter in particular, it would involve isolating the influence of Scottish Child Payment from other contributing factors, such as wider social security benefits and other government interventions designed to support families with children. A step in this direction would be to gain access to data with appropriate outcome variables e.g. from population surveys, or further bespoke research. Note that, at the time of writing, the latest iterations of the Scottish Household Survey and Family Resources Survey do not contain sufficient samples of Scottish Child Payment recipients to conduct a meaningful analysis for this evaluation.

More detail on options for extended policy evaluation is provided in the evaluation strategy report⁴. This will inform the approach to future evaluations of Scottish Child Payment, once the payment is fully rolled out.

Findings

In this chapter of the report, the data sources outlined in the methodology chapter are used to evaluate progress towards Scottish Child Payment's immediate, short-term and medium-term policy outcomes. Based on this, likely progress towards the Scottish Government's longer term outcomes are assessed. The section ends with a discussion of the policy implications which emerge from the evaluation findings.

Achievement against immediate Scottish Child Payment policy outcomes

This section evaluates Scottish Child Payment against the following policy outcomes:

- Scottish Child Payment is well promoted
- Scottish Child Payment and its eligibility criteria are well understood
- Scottish Child Payment is taken up
- Making an application is clear and easy
- Applications are processed in a timely manner
- Awareness is raised about other forms of support
- Clients feel they have been treated with dignity, fairness and respect

Where applicable, it uses data from Official Statistics, Social Security Scotland research, and bespoke commissioned research.

Scottish Child Payment is well promoted

There are a number of ways to evaluate whether Scottish Child Payment is well promoted. An indirect method is to look at overall take-up of Scottish Child Payment, as this could be related to the effectiveness of promotional activity.⁷ Take-up refers to the extent to which people receive the benefits they are eligible for. This can be estimated by measuring the 'take-up' rate, which is the number of benefit recipients divided by the number of people eligible to receive the benefit.

A provisional take-up estimate is provided for Scottish Child Payment in the [Social security: benefit take-up strategy](#). It shows that, as of June 2021, take-up was estimated to be 77%. This means that:

1. Most people who were eligible for Scottish Child Payment claimed the benefit, indicating that promotions were largely effective.

⁷ As explained in the [Social security: benefit take-up strategy](#), lack of information (e.g. lack of awareness) is one of the key reasons for non-take-up of benefits. The other reasons are costly or complex access (e.g. complexity of application) and social barriers (e.g. stigma).

2. Almost 1 in 4 eligible people had not claimed the benefit, suggesting further steps may still be needed to maximise take-up of the benefit.

However, it should be noted that take-up of Scottish Child Payment was estimated shortly after the benefit was launched, so this take-up figure is now outdated. An updated estimate of take-up will be published later this year.

Another way to evaluate Scottish Child Payment promotion is to consider how people find out about the benefit. The commissioned research shows that the participants found out about Scottish Child Payment in a range of ways, including:

- Word of mouth (either through formal support services – health visitors, midwives, housing officers, support workers – or from friends and family)
- Media advertising (including TV news, TV adverts radio adverts, and social media promotion), and
- Advertising through existing services they already used (for example, seeing it mentioned on their council’s Facebook page, online benefits calculators, advice organisations, or communication from or posters at their child’s school or nursery).

Third sector participants expressed mixed views on the promotion of Scottish Child Payment. They felt it had been fairly well and widely publicised. However, there was also a belief that it could have been publicised more effectively e.g. by using different forms of social media, like Facebook Live, and by putting on a new campaign to promote take-up every year to make new parents aware of the benefit.

Scottish Child Payment and its eligibility criteria are well understood

The commissioned research participants, including Scottish Child Payment recipients, said they were clear about why the benefit had been introduced and how it was intended to work. They variously described the payment as intended to help families out of poverty, to make it easier for them to buy essentials for their families, and to help provide a better quality of life for their children.

However, there was some confusion over the eligibility criteria of Scottish Child Payment e.g. whether eligibility was defined by existing benefit entitlement or income. Additionally, a third sector participant said that some recipients do not realise the payment will stop when their child turns 6. This was reflected in the testimony of a parent, who said that her payment stopping (when her child turned 6) was unexpected. She found this to be a stressful and disappointing experience.

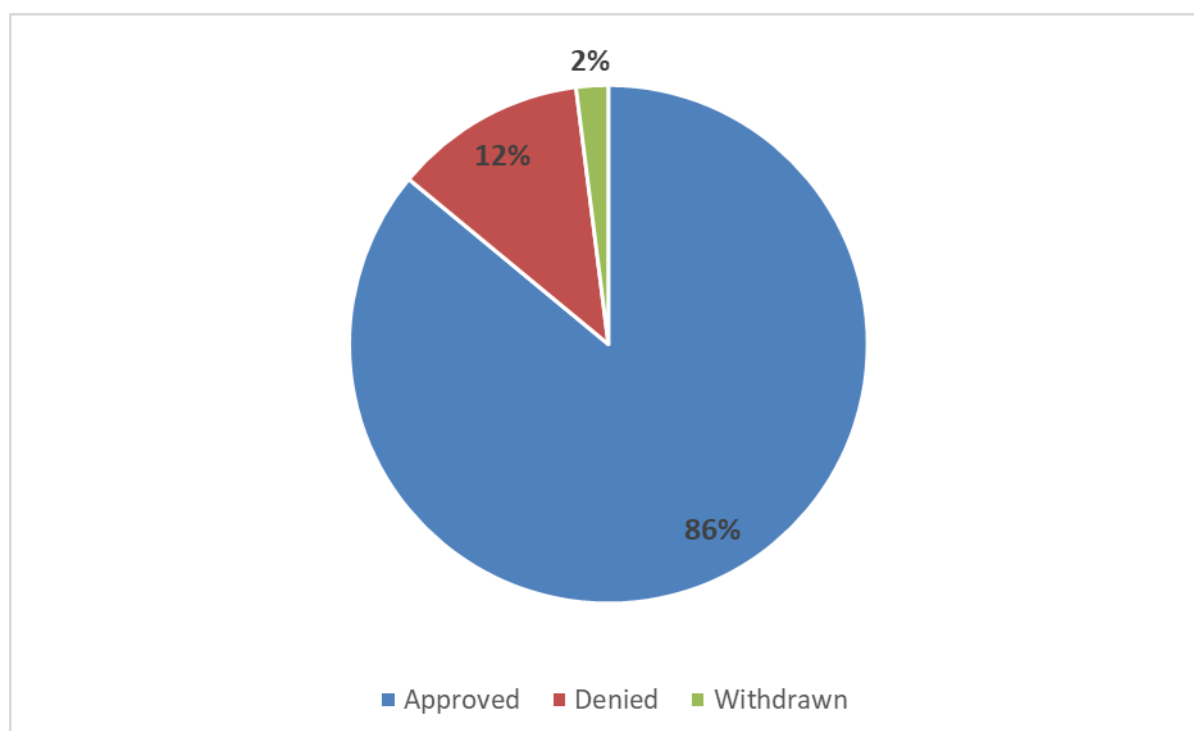
Scottish Child Payment is taken up

A direct way to assess progress on this outcome is to calculate the ‘take-up’ rate, which is the number of benefit recipients divided by the number of people eligible to receive the benefit. As mentioned above, take-up of Scottish Child Payment was estimated to be 77% as of June 2021. This figure is similar to other low-income benefits administered by Social Security Scotland. For example, take-up for Best

Start Foods was estimated to be 77%, and take-up for the Best Start Grants ranged from 79%-84%.

There are other ways to evaluate the overall reach of Scottish Child Payment. For example, Official Statistics show that for the period covering November 2020 to March 2022, 157,755 Scottish Child Payment applications were made, of which 148,170 had been processed. Of these, 86% were authorised, 12% were denied, and 2% were withdrawn (see Figure 2). Official Statistics also show that an estimated 103,000 children were in receipt of Scottish Child Payment as of 31 March 2022.

Figure 2 Scottish Child Payment application outcomes – November 2019 to March 2022 (n=148,170)



Investigation of Social Security Scotland management information shows the most common reasons why applications were denied:

- The applicant was not in receipt of a qualifying benefit
- The applicant was not looking after any child under 6 years old.

Official Statistics also show that 550 redeterminations⁸ were requested by Scottish Child Payment applicants up to March 2022 - representing 0.4% of all processed applications. 535 of these had been decided, of which:

- 245 were allowed or partially allowed

⁸ Redeterminations can be requested by applicants who have (a) had their application denied, but disagree with the decision, or (b) had their application authorised, but think the amount they are going to be paid is wrong.

- 155 were disallowed and
- 135 were withdrawn.

Another way to assess the take-up and overall reach of Scottish Child Payment is to consider the diversity of people applying for or receiving the benefit. This can be done by examining data on the demographics and individual characteristics of applicants.

Official Statistics show that Scottish Child Payment applications were submitted by people living in all 32 local authorities in Scotland. In terms of total approved applications to March 2022, the highest local authorities were Glasgow City (25,945), North Lanarkshire (12,550), and Fife (11,910). The lowest were Na h-Eileanan Siar (445), Shetland Islands (335), and Orkney Islands (320).

Both Official Statistics and Social Security Scotland client diversity and equalities analysis provides more information on the outcomes of applications by each of the equalities groups:

- Table 1 presents a secondary analysis of Official Statistics data on the age of clients who had their applications approved from up to March 2022
- Table 2 presents a secondary analysis of equalities data on clients who had their applications approved from December 2020 to May 2021.⁹

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, data is presented to zero decimal places. '0%' should therefore be interpreted to mean less than 0.5%. If no responses were given then this is denoted by '-'. A more detailed breakdown of the data in both of these tables, with additional notes, is provided at Annex A.

Table 1 Scottish Child Payment approved applicants by Age-group, February 2021 to March 2022 (n=127,095)

Age-group	%
Under 18	0%
18-24	16%
25-34	54%
35-44	26%
45-54	3%
55+	0%

⁹ The percentages in Table 2 were calculated by dividing the number of approved applications for each variable category by the total number of approved applications. For example, the percentage of approved applications for those who identified as women, as shown in Table 2 (90%), is calculated by dividing the number of approved applications for women (26,940) by the total approved applications (29,955).

Table 2 Scottish Child Payment equalities data for approved applications, December 2020 to May 2021 (n=29,955)

Category	%
Gender	
Woman	90%
Man	8%
In another way	0%
Preferred not to say	2%
Physical or mental health condition or illness	
Yes	16%
No	76%
Preferred not to say	8%
Ethnicity	
White	89%
Asian	4%
African	2%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1%
Other ethnic group	1%
Caribbean or black	0%
Preferred not to say	3%
Sexual orientation	
Heterosexual	90%
Gay & lesbian	0%
Bisexual	2%
In another way	0%
Prefer not to say	7%
Transgender	
Yes	0%
No	96%
Prefer not to say	3%
6-fold Urban Rural Classification¹⁰	
Large urban area	35%

¹⁰ Scottish Government (2018) [Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2016](#).

Other urban area	40%
Accessible small town	8%
Remote small town	4%
Accessible rural area	9%
Remote rural area	4%
SIMD Quintile¹¹	
1 (most deprived)	40%
2	26%
3	17%
4	12%
5 (least deprived)	5%
Residence on mainland or island communities	
Scottish Mainland	98%
Scottish Island	1%

As outlined in the introduction to this report, Scottish Child Payment is a key strategic commitment in the Scottish Government's plan to address child poverty. The tackling child poverty delivery plan¹ identifies six groups who are especially vulnerable of poverty. Although data is not routinely collected and/or published on these groups, it is possible to report the following about them based on the data that is currently available:

1. **Lone parents** - Secondary analysis of the most recently published Scottish Child Payment Official Statistics shows that, up to March 2022, 58% of those who had their applications approved were assumed to be lone parents. However, since it is possible for applicants to not fill in information about their partners, overestimation of lone parents can occur and thus caution is needed when interpreting this figure. Further detail on this secondary analysis is provided at Annex A.
2. **Families with a disabled or adult child** – As shown in Table 2 above, 16% of those who had their applications approved between December 2020 and May 2021 reported having a physical or mental health condition or illness. However this may be an underestimation of the true figure, as 8% preferred not to say. Additionally, no data is routinely collected about the physical or mental health condition or illness of applicants' other family members.
3. **Mothers aged under 25** – It is not possible to calculate exactly how many mothers aged under 25 have applied for Scottish Child Payment. However:

¹¹ Scottish Government (2020) [Scottish Index Multiple Deprivation 2020](#).

- As shown in Table 1 above, 14% of those who had their applications approved between November 2020 and March 2022 were aged under 25.
 - As shown in Table 2 above, 90% of those who had their applications approved between December 2020 and May 2021 identified as being female (2% preferred not to say).
4. **Minority ethnic families** – As shown in Table 2 above, 8% of those who had their applications approved between December 2020 and May 2021 identified as being non-White. However this may be an underestimation of the true figure, as 3% preferred not to say. Additionally, no data is routinely collected about the ethnicity of applicants' other family members.
 5. **Families with a child under 1** – Secondary analysis of the most recently published Scottish Child Payment Official Statistics shows that, up to March 2022, 23% of those who had their applications approved were applicants who reported having a child aged under 1. Further detail on this secondary analysis is provided at Annex A.
 6. **Larger families (with three or more children)** – Client survey data shows that 32% of respondents who had applied for Scottish Child Payment (n=4,553) reported having 3 or more children in their households. However, as outlined earlier in this report, Client Survey data is drawn from a self-selecting sample of applicants. Therefore it cannot be assumed that this figure is representative of Scottish Child Payment applicants as a whole.

Making an application is clear and easy

Official Statistics show that for all applications to March 2022, 145,505 (92%) were made online, 9,365 (6%) were made on the telephone, and 2,600 (2%) were paper-based.

The Client Survey asks respondents about their experience of the application process. Amongst Scottish Child Payment applicants (n=757-764):

- 62% said their experience of the application process overall was 'very good', and 32% said it was 'good' (i.e. 94% positive)
- 55% 'strongly agreed' that the application process was clear, and 41% 'agreed' (i.e. 96% positive).

In the commissioned research, Scottish Child Payment recipients were very positive about their experience of applying for the benefit. Interviewees, including some who identified as being dyslexic, reported that the application form was easy and quick to complete. They compared it favourably with previous experiences of applying for benefits, and, because the application form was viewed to be easy, there was a sense that families were entitled to apply for Scottish Child Payment.

It was actually quite easy. Compared to a lot of forms that I've filled out, that was the most easiest form ever. I didn't have any difficulty with that – it was just a matter of your name, your date of birth, address, everything like that.

(Parent 6, age 35+, single parent)

I liked that you didn't have to prove yourself to get SCP, you were already entitled to it. It was less daunting because it wasn't evidence-heavy and you don't have to justify taking the money, which is something I have found off-putting about applying for support.

(Parent 38, age 25-34, single parent, 3+ children)

Despite generally positive comments the Scottish Child Payment application form, participants identified a small number of issues that they encountered e.g. a perception that telephone applications took too long, or that some of the demographic questions (included in the Equality Monitoring and Feedback form) seemed intrusive or irrelevant.¹²

Applications and payments are well administered

According to Official Statistics, a total of 147,605 Scottish Child Payment applications were processed between November 2020 and March 2022 (not including cases where a re-determination was requested - i.e. approximately 0.4% of applications). Processing times are calculated from the point of initial benefit application until a decision on the application is made, and includes time spent waiting to receive copies of documents or evidence requested from applicants.

On the basis described above, a monthly breakdown of Scottish Child Payment application processing times is shown in Table 3.¹³ The table begins in February 2021 - the month from which payments were first administered after the initial application window. The data highlights three distinct periods:

1. From February to April 2021, 1% to 3% of applications were processed within 10 working days, and average processing times ranged from 36-55 working days.
2. In the months from May to August 2021, 44% to 57% of applications were processed within 10 working days, and average processing times ranged from 8 to 16 working days. This was the most efficient period of application processing since February 2021.

¹² All clients are asked to complete an Equality Monitoring and Feedback form when applying for benefits. The data collected is used to identify who is using the service and to investigate how Social Security Scotland processes work for different groups of people. However, each question has a "prefer not to say" option, meaning that clients can choose not to disclose information about themselves if they do not want to.

¹³ More information on the figures in Table 3 is provided at Annex A.

3. In the months from September 2021 to March 2022, 1% to 8% of applications were processed within 10 working days, and average processing times ranged from 15 to 31 working days.

Please note that the period of 10 working days is used in Table 3 to illustrate how processing times have changed each month since the benefit was launched. While Social Security Scotland aim to process applications as quickly as possible, there is no set target for providing Scottish Child Payment applicants with a decision on their claim.

Table 3 Scottish Child Payment application processing times per month

Month	Number of processed applications (excluding redeterminations)	Percentage of applications processed within 10 working days	Average (median) processing time in working days
Feb-21	21,920	1%	55
Mar-21	26,325	1%	36
Apr-21	17,895	3%	36
May-21	6,920	44%	16
Jun-21	9,000	55%	10
Jul-21	5,450	57%	8
Aug-21	4,670	53%	9
Sep-21	3,750	8%	15
Oct-21	2,875	2%	20
Nov-21	3,795	2%	20
Dec-21	2,415	1%	26
Jan-22	3,155	1%	29
Feb-22	3,220	2%	25
Mar-22	2,970	2%	31

The Client Survey asked respondents their opinion on (a) whether their application was handled within a reasonable time frame, and (b) whether they got enough updates on the progress of their application. The answers are provided in Table 4. They show that most felt that their applications were handled in a reasonable time (88% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'), and that they got enough progress updates on

their applications (80% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed').¹⁴ However, it is worth noting that:

- While only 4% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that the time spent handling their application was reasonable,
- 9% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' that they got enough progress updates on their applications.

These findings suggest that applicants were more likely to feel negatively about communications while waiting for a decision, compared to overall time spent waiting for a decision. The Client Survey also found that 18% of Scottish Child Payment respondents (n=765) contacted Social Security Scotland to find out about the progress of their application, and 24% had done so to find out their application result.

Table 4 Scottish Child Payment applicants' thoughts on application processing times and updates

	Number of respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My application was handled in a reasonable timeframe	744	2%	2%	8%	42%	46%
I got enough updates on the progress of my application	742	3%	6%	11%	37%	43%

In the commissioned research, participants discussed communications from Social Security Scotland once they had submitted their applications. Most said they were clear and prompt, notifying them when their first payment would arrive. However, there were exceptions to these positive experiences, where parents reported having wanted more communication to keep them updated on the progress of their application and payment. Being kept fully informed was important to families who were struggling financially.

The majority of the time I think it was me phoning them – to see what was going on, and if I was eligible, and what was going on. I phoned them a couple of times. So on their behalf, I feel like the communication was a wee bit poor. Because I did call them a couple of times, because I was struggling when she was born, money-wise.

(Parent 36, age 18-24, rural area)

¹⁴ It should be noted that the Client Survey was administered to people who had received a decision on an application for benefits up to or before March 2021. As stated in the introduction to this report, early applicants were informed that they would not receive a decision until after 15 February 2021, and therefore may have expected a longer wait. As such, it is possible that applicants from April 2021 onwards would respond differently to these questions.

According to Official Statistics, 1,156,525 payments were administered to Scottish Child Payment recipients between February 2021 and March 2022, with a total payment value of £58,628,360. The Client Survey asked respondents questions about their experience of receiving payment(s). Amongst Scottish Child Payment recipients (n=1,142-1,184):

- 90% received their payment when Social Security Scotland said they would
- 92% received the right amount first time
- 92% received the right amount every time

Awareness is raised about other forms of support

The Client Survey asked respondents who had been in contact with a member of Social Security Scotland staff whether they had been told about (a) other benefits they might have been entitled to, and/or (b) other sources of additional help (e.g. Citizens Advice Scotland). As shown in Table 5:

- 28% of respondents who had only applied for Scottish Child Payment and had spoken to a member of staff (n=225) said they were told about other benefits, compared to 33% who were not told about other benefits (but would have liked to have been told).¹⁵
- 22% of respondents who had applied for Scottish Child Payment said they were told about other sources of additional help, compared to 29% who were not told about other forms of additional help (but would have liked to have been told).

Notably, Client Survey findings also show that respondents who were told about other benefits or sources of additional help were much more likely to rate their overall experience with Social Security Scotland staff positively.

Table 5 Scottish Child Payment applicants being informed by Social Security Scotland staff about other forms of support

	Number of respondents	Yes	No, but I would have liked them to	Not applicable	Can't remember/don't know
Did staff tell you about other benefits you might be entitled to?	225	28%	33%	26%	13%
Did staff tell you about other sources of additional help	224	22%	29%	35%	14%

Participants in the commissioned research were asked whether they had been told about other benefits or support when applying for Scottish Child Payment. In practice, this was often very difficult to establish. Participants generally either did

¹⁵ It should be noted that these results do not tell us whether staff considered likely eligibility or other factors when choosing whether to provide further advice.

not remember being advised about other support at the point of application, or were already in receipt of the other benefits that were mentioned to them (such as Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods). However, there were exceptions to this, where parents said they had found out about other benefits from Scottish Child Payment letters or through the application process, and had applied for those benefits as a result.

Yes - they told me about Best Start Foods - I didn't think I was entitled to that. That was the lady over the phone - she was absolutely fantastic. I do receive that now - that gets paid onto a card.

(Parent 5, age 35+, single parent)

There was no evidence from the parents and carers interviewed that applying for Scottish Child Payment had led to referrals to advice services or other non-financial support.

Clients are treated with dignity and respect

The Client Survey asked applicants directly about their experiences with Social Security Scotland, including how they felt they had been treated by the organisation. The responses from Scottish Child Payment applicants (see Table 6) show that a large majority 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they had been treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

Table 6 Scottish Child Payment applicants' treatment by Social Security Scotland

	Number of respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I was treated with dignity	763	0%	1%	7%	34%	54%
I was treated with fairness	759	-	2%	6%	35%	54%
I was treated with respect	762	-	1%	6%	35%	55%

The Client Survey also shows that 29% (n=225) of respondents who had applied for Scottish Child Payment had been in contact with Social Security Scotland staff. Of these respondents:

- 66% rated their experience with staff as very good
- 28% rated their experience as good
- 2% rated their experience with staff as poor or very poor.

Survey respondents were asked more questions about their interactions with staff. As shown in Table 7, large majorities of Scottish Child Payment recipients felt that (a) they had been treated with kindness by staff, (b) staff were able to help them, and (c) staff were knowledgeable about benefits.

Table 7 Scottish Child Payment applicants' thoughts on interactions with Social Security Scotland staff

	Number of respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I was treated with kindness	224	-	1%	3%	28%	67%
Staff were able to help me	222	2%	2%	5%	28%	62%
Staff were knowledgeable about benefits	224	0%	2%	7%	30%	59%

The Client Survey also asked whether respondents felt that they had been discriminated against at any point during their experience with Social Security Scotland. Amongst Scottish Child Payment applicants (n=760), 2% said they had been discriminated against, whilst 3% preferred not to say.

[Feedback statistics](#) collated by Social Security Scotland show that, between September 2019 and September 2021, 65 complaints were received for Scottish Child Payment out of the 134,080 applications which had been received at that time. Of these:

- 35 related to 'Client Expectations not met – Quality of Service'
- 20 related to 'Client Expectations not met – Timescales'
- 5 related to 'Client expectations not met – Accessing services'
- 5 related to 'Client expectations not met – Information provided'
- 5 were for 'Disagreement with a decision'.

For the same period, Social Security Scotland received 10 compliments for Scottish Child Payment.

Achievement against short-term policy outcomes

This section evaluates Scottish Child Payment against the following policy outcomes:

- Increased child-related spend
- Reduced pressure on household finances
- Reduced money-related stress
- Children able to participate in social and educational opportunities
- Improved position of main carers within households

It is based mostly on findings from bespoke commissioned research, but also draws on findings from the Client Survey where possible.

Increased child-related spend

The parents and carers who participated in the commissioned research discussed how they spent Scottish Child Payment. Some used the payment for whatever was needed for the whole family, and others 'ringfenced' the money to be spent only on their child or children (sometimes including older children who were not currently eligible for Scottish Child Payment). The range of examples provided by participants indicate that Scottish Child Payment has led to increased child-related spend. They included:

- Essential items specifically for the eligible child, such as nappies, clothing, or food.
- Small treat items for their children, which they would otherwise often be unable to afford (e.g. children's magazines, toys, ice cream and craft materials)
- Activities and day trips, including family days out with their children (e.g. taking their child to the zoo) and activity groups for children (e.g. play group or dance classes)
- Less commonly (because most spent the money every month on essentials they otherwise could not afford), parents said they tried to save some of it, in a savings account specifically for their child.

Parents of disabled children interviewed for the research said they had used Scottish Child Payment to buy things to help their child with their disability. These included both essential medical items (such as incontinence pads) and items specifically designed to support their child's development or learning (such as sensory toys and books to help with a child's dyslexia). Parents also mentioned using the payment towards taxi journeys with, or for, their disabled child.

I get sensory toys, fidget stuff as well, things for the bath that light up. Sometimes if he's having a breakdown, he can break them, and they need replaced.

(Parent 23, age 25-34, single parent)

I can take the kids out more because I don't have to say no all the time, and I know we can afford a taxi home if [my child] gets upset.

(Parent 38, age 25-34, single parent, 3+ children, has a disabled child)

Reduced pressure on household finances

Client Survey respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of 0-10 ('not at all' to 'a lot'), how much their benefit payment (a) helped them to control their finances, (b) helped to make a difference to their life, and (c) helped them to pay for what they needed. The average scores for Scottish Child Payment respondents who had received the benefit (n=1,188) were:

- 7.1 out of 10 for “help you to control your finances”
- 7.9 out of 10 for “help make a difference to your life”
- 7.7 out of 10 for “help you to pay for what you needed”.

The scores indicate that Scottish Child Payment has had a generally positive impact on people who receive the benefit. However, it is notable that, of the three measures, respondents (on average) felt the payment was least impactful for controlling finances.

The commissioned research findings broadly reflect these impact scores. Those who said they used Scottish Child Payment for basic expenses such as food or bills felt its impact keenly, with one describing the payment as a ‘lifesaver’. There was a strong sense amongst these participants that they depended on it to buy these things or avoid getting into debt in order to do so.

I completely rely on them [the payments]. I don’t know how the bills would end up, how the food would be on the table, how we’d survive with the child. It makes me stressed to think about these things.

(Parent 26, age 35+, Male)

The findings also suggest that Scottish Child Payment has contributed to reducing food poverty. One parent said they had previously relied on food parcels, while another described having to skip meals in the past when they were struggling financially. Other participants thought that without Scottish Child Payment they might be forced to cut back on their food budget or make use of food banks.

Others said that they did not rely on the payment for household essentials. However, even among these parents there was a recognition that they relied on the payment to fund trips or treats that they felt improved their children’s quality of life, and which they would otherwise miss out on.

Yeah [I do rely on Scottish Child Payment] [...] I don’t rely on it in terms of it would cause an issue food-wise or housing-wise, but it would have an impact on [my son]’s happiness.

(Parent 38, age 25-34, single parent, 3+ children)

Despite these positives, the commissioned research participants also felt that Scottish Child Payment was not a large enough sum of money to completely transform their financial situation. For some families, Scottish Child Payment was seen as just a ‘wee bit extra’ which helped to alleviate some of the financial pressure they were under. This did not change the fact that their household budgets remained very tight, and that spending required very careful planning from week to week to ensure they had enough for everything they and their children needed.

Parents also reported that the sharp increases in the costs of living experienced in 2021 and continuing into 2022 had already reduced the spending power of Scottish Child Payment. Third sector representatives echoed these views.

Ten pounds a week isn't a high enough level of benefit to take somebody out of poverty. The clients that I've seen – many of them are in poverty and experience material deprivation. While it's improved their wellbeing it certainly hasn't taken them out of poverty. [...] It would take a significant amount of money to take people out of poverty because the gap's getting wider between income and expenditure.

(Third sector organisation 1)

Reduced money-related stress

Parents and carers who took part in the commissioned research said that Scottish Child Payment has helped to reduce their financial worries around everyday budgeting, and that this had a positive impact on their mental health. The payment was also described as providing general 'peace of mind' for families, particularly knowing that they would have money to use in the event of unexpected costs or an emergency.

[Scottish Child Payment] did lessen my worries quite a lot to be honest. Money's the one thing I'm always stressing about, always thinking about, always worrying about. It was a relief to have that extra boost.

(Parent 22, age 18-24, care-experienced, 3+ children)

[Scottish Child Payment helps with] not having to stress out because you know it's coming. When I get stressed, I don't sleep. I don't deal well with stress. I don't want the kids to see me stressed.

(Parent 18, age 25-34, single parent)

Children able to participate in social and educational opportunities

The commissioned research shows that Scottish Child Payment does enable children to participate in social and educational opportunities. Parents and carers said they used Scottish Child Payment specifically for days out to places they would not otherwise be able to afford to attend (such as a zoo), as well as for more regular activities (like parent and toddler groups). They felt that they would not be able to participate in these activities without Scottish Child Payment, or could only do so infrequently.

Even if parents did not use Scottish Child Payment for day trips, the payment still helped them to take their children out more. This was particularly the case for families with a disabled child, for whom having the extra money made trips out seem less risky.

[Scottish Child Payment has] encouraged me to take [my son] out a lot more often. He was the hardest, he had zero concept of money. Obviously saying no can trigger a meltdown.

(Parent 38, age 25-34, single parent, 3+ children, has a disabled child)

Improved position of main carers within households

In the Client Survey, 81% of respondents who had claimed Scottish Child Payment (n=4,862) reported that they had the main caring responsibility for children in their household. However, as outlined earlier in this report, Client Survey data is drawn from a self-selecting sample of applicants. Therefore it cannot be assumed that this figure is representative of Scottish Child Payment applicants as a whole.

The commissioned research provides only limited evidence to suggest that Scottish Child Payment improves the position of main carers within households.¹⁶ For example, one mother felt that receiving the payment gave her a level of independence, as it was the only source of household income that came directly to her. Another described having had to ask her husband for money for nappies prior to receiving Scottish Child Payment. Most participants, however, did not feel like Scottish Child Payment had necessarily improved their position within the household. Some also said that their partner (who was not the main carer) received the payment, but they did not feel that it made a difference to how the money was spent.

Achievement against medium-term policy outcomes

This section evaluates Scottish Child Payment against the following policy outcomes:

- Reduced incidence of debt
- Reduced incidence of material deprivation
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Reduced barriers to education and the labour market
- Positive impact on the Scottish economy

It uses data from bespoke commissioned research, Official Statistics and Social Security Scotland research. However, a full evaluation against these outcomes would require: (a) more time to have passed since the benefit was implemented, and (b) access to more robust quantitative data.

Reduced incidence of debt

As discussed earlier in the findings section, the commissioned research shows that some parents did not feel they needed Scottish Child Payment for household essentials. However, those who did need the money for household essentials

¹⁶ Main carers are parents or carers who do the majority of childcare within households. However, this will not always be applicable (e.g. if childcare is distributed equally between parents), and eligibility for Scottish Child Payment is based on being responsible for a child/children.

strongly felt that receiving Scottish Child Payment had reduced their risk of falling into debt. Parents credited the benefit with reducing their need to borrow, either formally (for example, using their bank overdraft) or informally (from family or friends). For example, one participant explained how they would have used money for bills to buy milk and snacks for their children if they did not have Scottish Child Payment.

I would take money out of my bill money, so they had everything they needed before paying anything else...I would be behind on bills and would have to ask my mum to borrow money to be able to pay the bills.

(Parent 34, age 18-24, single parent, care-experienced)

Reduced incidence of material deprivation

As mentioned earlier in the findings section, Client Survey respondents who received Scottish Child Payment gave the benefit an average score of 7.7 out of 10 when asked if it helped them to pay for what they needed (where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'a lot'). This could be viewed as an indirect way to assess whether Scottish Child Payment has reduced material deprivation. The score indicates that Scottish Child Payment, at the £10 rate, has generally helped people to pay for what they need, but that this is not necessarily the case for everyone all of the time.

The Client Survey findings are broadly reflected in the commissioned research. As discussed above, some participants said they relied on Scottish Child Payment to pay for essential household items that they could not otherwise afford, including food and bills. However, they also said that their financial situation was still difficult, and that rising costs had limited the impact of Scottish Child Payment. Third sector representatives agreed that the payment had helped, but said that material deprivation is still an issue amongst their clients.

Improved health and wellbeing

The commissioned research shows that Scottish Child Payment has led to a wide range of positive health and wellbeing impacts for parents and their children. As mentioned above, the payment helps to alleviate parents' financial worries and gives them general peace of mind. However, participants also said it helped their wellbeing due to:

- Increased happiness as a result of seeing benefits for their children
- A decreased sense of guilt or embarrassment at not being able to afford things for their children
- Boosts to their own health and wellbeing as a result of being able to use the payment towards items for the whole family (such as healthy food) or for family trips out, helping reduce parental isolation
- A sense of recognition and care from the Scottish Government.

Parents also described various ways they believed Scottish Child Payment had supported their child's physical health. This included being able to buy enough (or

better quality) food for them, and spending the payment on activities such as swimming, gymnastics, or dance classes.

He likes swimming and gymnastics and they're the two most expensive groups, it helps his balance, coordination, how to move his body, we probably would have done them a bit less without [Scottish Child Payment].

(Parent 32, age 18-24)

Parents with disabled children said the payment had improved their ability to access the medical care or support their child needed, including by paying for transport to get to hospital quicker, or paying for specific items their child needs because of their disability or medical condition (such as incontinence pads).

The research also uncovered various ways in which Scottish Child Payment was believed to have helped support children's emotional wellbeing, including:

- By enabling parents to meet their children's basic needs, SCP reduced emotional distress associated with hunger or other deprivation
- By enabling parents to provide occasional 'treats'
- By enabling parents to buy their children items directly aimed at improving their emotional and mental wellbeing (such as sensory toys or resources to support home learning)
- By enabling parents to take their children on activities or trips, Scottish Child Payment benefited their emotional wellbeing both directly (in terms of enjoyment, improved social skills and confidence) and through supporting them to spend additional quality time together as a family, and
- By reducing parents' own stress levels, which in turn had a positive impact on their children's wellbeing.

However, others were keen to emphasise that they did everything they could to avoid their own financial stresses impacting on their children, either emotionally or materially. Similarly, parents often stressed that they always put their child's emotional wellbeing first; as a result, some did not necessarily feel that receiving Scottish Child Payment had a significant impact in this regard, although it may have made things easier for them as parents financially.

Reduced barriers to education and the labour market

The commissioned research provides a limited amount of evidence to suggest that Scottish Child Payment can reduce barriers to education and the labour market. One interviewee said the payment helped her to stay in university by providing additional income security so that she did not have to worry about not being able to take on a full-time job while studying. Others said they used the money to pay for travel to interviews, a new job, or college. However, there was not a great deal of discussion on this topic, partly because many participants were full-time carers for their young children and therefore were not seeking employment or access to education.

Positive impact on the Scottish economy

It has been demonstrated throughout the findings section that Scottish Child Payment has generally allowed parents and carers to spend money they otherwise would not have spent on essential items and items such as toys, treats, or trips out for children. Additionally, recipients in the commissioned research tended to spend the whole payment, with only a small number saying they tried to save some of the money. This suggests a substantial portion of the money paid out for Scottish Child Payment remained in Scotland's economy. Given that, according to Official Statistics, payments totalling £58,628,360 were issued to March 2022, it is reasonable to assume that this spending will have had a positive impact on the Scottish economy. However, some of the potential economic benefits associated with Scottish Child Payment would be expected to accrue in the long-term (e.g. potential for improved educational outcomes for children). It would require a full economic evaluation¹⁷ to measure the extent of this impact and this would be outside the scope of this work.

Participants in the commissioned research were also asked where they spent Scottish Child Payment, to see if it allowed them to shop locally. In a small number of cases participants said Scottish Child Payment had allowed them to buy from local shops, or to buy local produce that would otherwise be outwith their budget. However, most said that while the payment allowed them to buy more or different things, it did not change the shops they used. Parents discussed going to large local supermarkets, shopping online, or sometimes going to a mix of (generally bigger) shops to get the best deals.

Evidence of progress towards long-term outcomes for children and their families

As set out in the tackling child poverty delivery plan¹, the Scottish Government has been delivering support for families and children across a range of policy areas, including social security. These actions are intended to contribute to the following long-term government outcomes:

- Reduced child poverty
- Reduced inequality of outcomes for children
- Reduced incidence of social exclusion

Scottish Child Payment will make an important contribution towards these targets. However, it will not play an exclusive role. For example, Scottish Child Payment is part of a package of Scottish Government policies which are expected to have a cumulative impact on child poverty.¹⁸ Measuring the impact of Scottish Child Payment would also require (a) suitable time to have passed since the payment was introduced, and (b) access to more robust and suitable quantitative data than

¹⁷ [The Green Book: appraisal and evaluation in central government - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-green-book)

¹⁸ Scottish Government (2022) [Supporting documents - Tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-2026 - annex 4: cumulative impact assessment](#)

is currently available. It should also be noted, however, that isolating the specific role of Scottish Child Payment would be challenging even with additional data.

Nevertheless, the Scottish Government does publish [child poverty statistics](#), which can be used to monitor general progress towards its stated targets. Child poverty targets and the most recent child poverty statistics are shown in Table 8.

Table 8 Child poverty in Scotland: latest statistics and future government targets

	2019/20	2023/24 target	2030/31 target
<u>Relative poverty</u> Children living in low income households, compared to the UK average household	26%	18%	10%
<u>Absolute poverty</u> Children living in low income households where living standards are not increasing.	23%	14%	5%
<u>Combined low income and material deprivation</u> Children living in low income households who can't afford basic essential goods and services	12%	8%	5%
<u>Persistent poverty</u> Children living in households in poverty for three years out of four.	10%	8%	5%

In addition, it can be reasonably expected that success against Scottish Child Payment's immediate, short-term, and medium-term policy outcomes could contribute to the Scottish Government achieving its long-term outcomes. Based on the evidence presented in this report, the following summary of progress can be made.

Progress towards immediate outcomes

- The purpose of Scottish Child Payment is generally well-understood by recipients, albeit there is some confusion over eligibility criteria.
- Overall, there is a perception that Scottish Child Payment has been well promoted. People find out about it through a range of sources, including paid advertising, social media, and word of mouth (e.g. family and friends, support organisations). However, third sector representatives feel that promotions could be improved by more targeted use of social media and by conducting yearly promotional campaigns.
- People from across Scotland with a wide range of personal and demographic characteristics have applied for Scottish Child Payment.
- The most recent estimates suggest that, as of June 2021, the majority of people who were eligible for Scottish Child Payment had taken the benefit up. However, almost 1 in 4 eligible people had not taken it up.

- Most people find the Scottish Child Payment application form easy and quick to complete, and generally find applying for Scottish Child Payment to be a positive experience.
- A large majority of Scottish Child Payment applicants feel well treated by Social Security Scotland, and report positive interactions with staff. However, of those who come into contact with staff, around 1 in 3 would like to be informed about other benefits or additional forms of support when making an application, but are not.
- Most people feel that their Scottish Child Payment application is processed in a reasonable amount of time, and recipients feel that payments are made efficiently. However, since September 2021, application processing times have been increasing, and a minority of clients feel that communications from Social Security Scotland could be better when waiting for an application decision.

Progress towards short-term outcomes

- Scottish Child Payment is used by parents and carers to buy a range of items for children (e.g. essential goods, treats, and toys) that they otherwise could not have afforded. This suggests the payment has led to an overall increase in child-related spend.
- Scottish Child Payment has helped to reduce pressure on household finances. Some rely on it for essential items such as bills and food. Others do not rely on it for essentials, but could not afford day trips or certain treats for their children without the payment. However, while Scottish Child Payment is helpful, finances are still challenging for recipients, and they feel its impact has been limited by rises in the cost of living.
- Having Scottish Child Payment has reduced financial stress for families, and provided some with a general peace of mind.
- Scottish Child Payment has enabled children to participate in days out and regular activities such as parent and toddler groups, which parents otherwise would have struggled to afford.
- A limited amount of evidence suggests that Scottish Child Payment has given the main carers of children more financial independence than they had previously.

Progress towards medium-term outcomes

Medium-term outcomes cannot be fully evaluated until (a) more time has passed since Scottish Child Payment was implemented and (b) more robust quantitative data has been obtained. However, the following summary can be made based on existing evidence:

- Parents and carers who rely on the payment for essential household costs feel strongly they would get into debt without the money. This suggests Scottish Child Payment has contributed to reduced incidence of debt.

- Some recipients rely on Scottish Child Payment for essential costs such as food and bills. This suggests that the benefit may have contributed to reduced incidence of material deprivation for children and families.
- Parents and carers report a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits for themselves and their children as a result of having Scottish Child Payment. This testimony indicates that the benefit has contributed to improved health and wellbeing outcomes.
- A limited amount of evidence indicates that Scottish Child Payment reduces parents' barriers to education and the labour market e.g. by funding transport to job interviews or work.
- Evidence of increased spend amongst recipients would suggest that Scottish Child Payment has had positive impacts on the Scottish economy. However, there is little evidence to suggest it has encouraged people to shop locally.

This summary shows that positive progress has been made against immediate and short-term Scottish Child Payment outcomes. There are also indications that positive steps have been made towards its medium-term outcomes. In combination, it can be reasonably assumed that Scottish Child Payment is making some contribution towards the Scottish Government's long-term aims for children and families.

However, the evaluation has also highlighted that there are some outstanding issues with the benefit. Implications are discussed in the conclusion chapter below.

Conclusion

The purpose of the interim evaluation was to:

1. Evaluate the extent to which Scottish Child Payment has met its policy outcomes.
2. Assess the likely contribution of Scottish Child Payment to wider long-term government outcomes for children and their families.
3. Discuss implications for future policy development.

The first two of these has been achieved by reviewing the available evidence on Scottish Child Payment, drawn from different sources (primarily bespoke commissioned research carried out by Ipsos MORI, Official Statistics, and Social Security Scotland research). As discussed above, Scottish Child Payment has made good progress towards some of its immediate and short-term, and medium-term outcomes. Based on this progress, it is reasonable to assume that the policy is also contributing towards the government's long-term aims, such as reduced child poverty.

Despite these positive developments, the interim evaluation has also highlighted some areas where Scottish Child Payment could be improved to achieve better outcomes for recipients. These are outlined below.

Policy implications for Scottish Child Payment

Please note that these implications have been drawn from the commissioned research report by Ipsos MORI, which is available in the full in Annex B. However, they also take into account the wider evidence from Official Statistics and Social Security Scotland research which has been presented throughout this report. They are as follows:

1. There could be a need to (a) undertake further promotional work for Scottish Child Payment, and (b) maximise take-up of the benefit amongst eligible people.

This evaluation indicates that the majority of people who are eligible for Scottish Child Payment apply for the benefit, and that payments are made to people with a wide range of demographic and equalities characteristics from all areas of Scotland. However, third sector representatives have also said that - while they feel the benefit has generally been well promoted so far - further efforts could be made to raise awareness such as (a) more targeted promotions on social media, and (b) yearly promotional campaigns. Additionally, the most recent estimate indicates around 1 in 4 eligible people did not apply for Scottish Child Payment as of June 2021. Therefore, steps may be needed for further promotions of Scottish Child Payment, in order to maximise take-up of the benefit. However, it should be noted that other factors in addition to awareness can impact take-up of benefits.⁷ As such,

it may also be necessary to explore whether other factors impact take-up of Scottish Child Payment.

2. There could be a need to (a) clarify eligibility rules for Scottish Child Payment, and (b) make it clearer to recipients when their benefit will end.

While the evaluation shows that the purpose of Scottish Child Payment is clear to recipients, there is some confusion around its eligibility rules. Additionally, there is evidence that some recipients do not realise that the payment will stop when their child reaches the upper age-limit for the benefit. As such, it may be necessary to provide more clarity around the Scottish Child Payment eligibility criteria, and communicate more clearly to clients that Scottish Child Payment will stop when their child reaches the upper age-limit for the benefit.

3. There could be a need to review specific aspects of the application process to make it easier for applicants.

In general, the Scottish Child Payment application form is praised for being easy and quick to complete. However, the interim evaluation has highlighted some very specific issues that were raised by recipients e.g. a perception that telephone applications took too long, or that some of the demographic questions in the Equality Monitoring and Feedback form seemed intrusive or irrelevant (it should be noted that applicants can select a 'prefer not to say' option when answering questions in the form). More issues are highlighted in the commissioned research report at Annex B. It should be noted that it is not clear how widespread these perceptions or experiences are amongst applicants. However, the application process could be reviewed to see if changes are necessary or possible.

4. Where possible, steps could be taken to (a) review application processing times, and (b) improve communications after applications are submitted.

The evaluation has shown that Scottish Child Payment application processing times have increased since September 2021. Additionally, some applicants feel that communications from Social Security Scotland could be better after applications are submitted – which is particularly the case where applicants are struggling financially. As such, it may be necessary to (a) review the application decision-making process to see if it can be expedited, and (b) take steps to ensure that applicants are kept better informed about the progress of applications, especially in cases where processing takes a long time.

5. Further awareness could be raised with applicants about (a) other benefits they may be entitled to, and (b) additional forms of support.

The interim evaluation has shown that Scottish Child Payment applicants who come into contact with Social Security Scotland staff are not always told about other benefits they may be entitled to, or other forms of support that are available (e.g. via Citizens Advice Scotland). Therefore, more could be done to ensure that

applicants who come into contact with Social Security Scotland staff are always informed about other benefits or support, where applicable.

6. The impact of Scottish Child Payment on recipients' financial situation should continue to be monitored, and the rate of payment kept under review.

Scottish Child Payment helps to reduce the financial pressure on households, and generally makes a positive difference to peoples' lives. However, recipients still face financial difficulties and are worried about rises in the cost of living. As stated at the beginning of this report, Scottish Child Payment recently doubled to £20 per week (per child), and will increase again to £25 by the end of the 2022, with eligibility extended to children aged 6-15. These policy changes will make it more likely that Scottish Child Payment continues to have a positive impact for families. However, this will also be contingent on external factors (e.g. further rises in the cost of living, or possible changes to UK welfare policy). Therefore, recipients' perceptions of impact should continue to be monitored over time, and the rate of Scottish Child Payment kept under review.

7. More data is required to fully evaluate progress towards Scottish Child Payment outcomes.

It has been touched on throughout this report that there is currently a lack of data to fully evaluate the medium-term outcomes of Scottish Child Payment, and assess its contribution to longer-term government aims (e.g. reduced child poverty). For example, the evaluation indicates that Scottish Child Payment minimises borrowing and the risk of debt. However, the true impact of Scottish Child Payment on debt levels amongst people on low incomes cannot be assessed with the available evidence. This is similar for other policy outcomes, such as the benefit's impact on health and wellbeing, material deprivation, and labour market or educational participation. Continued efforts should therefore be made to obtain data to fully evaluate the progress of Scottish Child Payment towards its stated outcomes, once the payment is fully rolled out.

Annex A: Additional statistical information

Notes which apply to more than one statistical table are presented at the beginning of Annex A, as can be seen below. Notes which apply to only one statistical table are presented underneath the relevant table.

Notes – all tables

- Figures are rounded for disclosure control and may not sum due to rounding.
- Figures have been rounded to the nearest one percent – figures may not sum due to rounding.

Notes – table 1, tables 10-11

- This secondary analysis was carried out using the same data used in the production of the [Scottish Child Payment Official Statistics](#) publication.

Notes – table 1-11

- The total percentage of approved applications has been calculated by dividing the number of approved applications for each variable category by the total number of approved applications. For example, in Table 2, to calculate the percentage of approved applications for those identifying as a 'man', 2,300 (i.e. the number of approved applications for those identifying as a 'man') is divided by 29,955 (i.e. the total number of approved applications).

Notes – tables 2-9

- This secondary analysis was carried out using the same data used in the production of the [Social Security Scotland client diversity and equalities analysis to May 2021](#).

1. Number of approved applications by Age-group, February 2021 to March 2022

Age-group	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
Under 18	345	0%
18-24	20,840	16%
25-34	68,525	54%
35-44	33,655	26%
45-54	3,250	3%
55 and over	480	0%
Unknown	[c]	[c]
Total	127,095	100%

Notes – table 1

- This secondary analysis was carried out using rounded the data in the Scottish Child Payment Official Statistics publication

- [c] Figures suppressed for disclosure control
- Age is unknown where date of birth is missing or incorrect (e.g. child date of birth has been input instead of applicant date of birth).

2. Number of approved applications by Gender, December 2020 to May 2021

Gender	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
Man	2,300	8%
Woman	26,940	90%
In another way	15	0%
Prefer not to say	700	2%
Unknown	-	-
Total	29,955	100%

3. Number of approved applications by Physical or Mental Health Condition, December 2020 to May 2021

Physical or Mental Health Condition	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
Yes	4,755	16%
No	22,845	76%
Prefer not to say	2,350	8%
Unknown	-	-
Total	29,955	100%

4. Number of approved applications by Ethnicity, December 2020 to May 2021

Ethnicity	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
White	26,725	89%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	215	1%
Asian	1,185	4%
African	525	2%
Caribbean or Black	30	0%
Other ethnic group	255	1%
Prefer not to say	1,020	3%
Unknown	-	-
Total	29,955	100%

5. Number of approved applications by Sexual orientation, December 2020 to May 2021

Sexual orientation	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
Heterosexual	27,010	90%
Gay & Lesbian	105	0%
Bisexual	595	2%
In another way	115	0%
Prefer not to say	2,130	7%
Unknown	5	0%
Total	29,955	100%

6. Number of approved applications by Transgender, December 2020 to May 2021

Transgender	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
Yes	105	0%
No	28,825	96%
Prefer not to say	1,025	3%
Unknown	-	-
Total	29,955	100%

7. Number of approved applications by Urban Rural, December 2020 to May 2021

Urban Rural	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
1 -Large Urban Areas	10,550	35%
2 -Other Urban Area	12,020	40%
3 -Accessible Small Town	2,305	8%
4 -Remote Small Town	1,060	4%
5 -Accessible Rural Area	2,775	9%
6 -Remote Rural Area	1,195	4%
Unknown - Scottish	30	0%
Unknown - Other	20	0%
Total	29,955	100%

Notes – table 7

- In Social Security Scotland client diversity and equalities analysis Urban Rural data is presented based on the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, 8-fold. In Table 7 it is based on the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, 6-fold. The 6-fold data in Table 6 has been calculated by aggregating the following items from the 8-fold data:
 - '4 - Remote Small Town', and '5 - Very Remote Small Town'
 - '7 - Remote Rural Area', and '8 - Very Remote Rural Area'

8. Number of approved applications by SIMD Quintile, December 2020 to May 2021

SIMD quintile	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
1	11,960	40%
2	7,840	26%
3	5,015	17%
4	3,460	12%
5	1,630	5%
Unknown – Scottish	30	0%
Unknown – Other	20	0%
Total	29,955	100%

Notes – table 8

- In Social Security Scotland client diversity and equalities analysis SIMD data is presented based on SIMD Deciles. In Table 8 it is based on SIMD Quintiles. SIMD Quintiles data in Table 8 has been calculated by aggregating the following from the SIMD Deciles data:
 - Deciles 1 and 2 data, for Quintile 1
 - Deciles 3 and 4 data, for Quintile 2
 - Deciles 5 and 6 data, for Quintile 3
 - Deciles 7 and 8 data, for Quintile 4
 - Deciles 9 and 10 data, for Quintile 5.

9. Number of approved applications by Islands, December 2020 to May 2021

Islands	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
Scotland – Island	410	1%
Scotland – Mainland	29,495	98%
Scotland – Unknown	30	0%
Other	20	0%
Total	29,955	100%

10. Number of approved applications by whether an applicant is a lone parent or not, all time – up to 31 March 2022

Lone parent status	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
Assumed lone parent	73,490	58%
Assumed partnership	53,600	42%
Total	127,095	100%

Notes – table 10

- Whether an applicant is assumed to be lone parent or not is based on the presence (or absence) of a data field called "Partner Flag". Since it is possible for applicants to not fill in information about their partners, overestimation of lone parents can occur and thus caution is needed when interpreting these figures.

11. Number of approved applications by whether applicant has a child aged under 1 or not, all time – up to 31 March 2022

Age of child/children	Total number of approved applications	Total percentage of approved applications
Applicants with any child aged under 1	28,800	23%
Applicants with no children aged under 1	98,240	77%
Unknown	55	0%
Total	127,095	100%

Notes – table 11

- Whether an applicant has any child aged zero at the time of application submission or not is based on the child information within the application form.
- The age of any child per application form is unknown when clients incorrectly or did not record information about their children.

12. Scottish Child Payment application processing times per month, February 2021 to March 2022

Month	Number of processed applications	Percentage of applications processed within 10 working days	Average (median) processing time in working days
Feb-21	21,920	1%	55
Mar-21	26,325	1%	36
Apr-21	17,895	3%	36
May-21	6,920	44%	16
Jun-21	9,000	55%	10
Jul-21	5,450	57%	8
Aug-21	4,670	53%	9
Sep-21	3,750	8%	15
Oct-21	2,875	2%	20
Nov-21	3,795	2%	20
Dec-21	2,415	1%	26
Jan-22	3,155	1%	29
Feb-22	3,220	2%	25
Mar-22	2,970	2%	31

Notes – table 12

- This data is taken from the [Scottish Child Payment Official Statistics](#) publication.
- Processed applications exclude cases where a re-determination was requested i.e. approximately 0.4% of processed applications.
- Data is presented by the month of decision rather than month the application was received.
- Median average has been used. The median 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.

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- are available via an alternative route
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact social_research@gov.scot for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



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