



## Social Security Scotland Statistics

# Scottish Child Payment: high level statistics on applications to 31 December 2020

### Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering up to 31 March 2021, will be released in May 2021.

Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics<sup>1</sup> we publish a timetable of statistical releases for the twelve months ahead<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Code of Practice is found online at: <https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> The forthcoming publication timetable is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/official-statistics-forthcoming-publications/>

# Introduction

Scottish Child Payment has been introduced for low-income families with children aged under 6. It is intended to provide regular, additional financial support for families already in receipt of qualifying benefits to assist with the costs of caring for a child.

This publication provides information on applications for Scottish Child Payment from 9 November to 31 December 2020. It therefore includes figures for approximately seven weeks of applications.

Social Security Scotland invited clients to apply in advance of the benefit being launched on 15 February 2021 to help manage the expected demand. Applicants will receive a decision from 15 February onwards, with the first payments due to be made to clients from the end of February 2021.

The [Background](#) section has further detail about the payment.

As this publication reports on applications to the end of December 2020, it spans the period when the Covid-19 pandemic was present in Scotland. Social Security Scotland implemented some service changes in response to the Covid-19 pandemic but has continued to process applications and make payments.

All tables and charts relating to this publication can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/collections/social-security-scotland-stats-publications/>

These statistics are being published as experimental statistics. Experimental statistics are defined in the Code of Practice for Statistics as "*new official statistics undergoing evaluation. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.*" The UK Statistics Authority has not yet assessed these statistics. They have not been designated as National Statistics<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on experimental statistics please see:

<https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system/types-of-official-statistics/>

# Main findings

## Key figures

- From 9 November 2020 to 31 December 2020, 54,815 applications were received for Scottish Child Payment **[Table 1]**.

## Applications by month

- In November, 44,665 applications for Scottish Child Payment were received, representing 81% of the total applications received to 31 December 2020 **[Table 1]**.
- In December, 10,150 applications were received **[Table 1]**.

## Application channel (method of application)

- Around 96% of applications received by 31 December were made online and 4% were made through a telephone application. A small number of applications were made through paper application **[Table 2]**.

## Applications by age of applicant

- Around 96% of applications were made by people aged 18 to 44 by end of December 2020. Less than 1% of applications were made by people under 18 and 2% by people aged 45 or over **[Table 3]**.
- Around 2% of applications received were made by applicants who had not provided information relating to their age. Further detail can be found in the [Age of applicant](#) section **[Table 3]**.

## Applications by local authority

- Applications were received from people living in all 32 local authorities in Scotland. The highest number of applications were 9,385 from Glasgow City, 4,350 from North Lanarkshire, and 4,170 from Fife **[Table 4]**.
- More information on deriving the local authorities for applications can be found in the [Geography](#) section.

# Background to Scottish Child Payment

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

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

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

On 3 November 2020 the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People announced that Scottish Child Payment would open for applications from 9 November and the benefit would start from 15 February 2021.

Further details about the benefit can be found at <https://www.mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment/>.

## Scottish Child Payment

Scottish Child Payment is a new benefit which has been introduced to tackle child poverty in Scotland. It is intended to help low-income families with the costs of raising a child.

Initially the payment will be available to parents or carers with one or more children under the age of six. There are no limits on the number of eligible children supported by Scottish Child Payment and families will be able to apply for £10 per child, per week.

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

Social Security Scotland remain committed to rolling out the benefit to families with children under 16, planned for the end of 2022. This is subject to data on qualifying benefits being received from the Department for Work and Pensions to allow us to make top-up payments.

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

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

## Eligibility

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

- They live in Scotland
- They or their partner are getting certain benefits or payments
- They or their partner are the main person looking after a child who's under 6 years old

The main person looking after the child (if any) might want to complete the application form, and use their bank details for payment.

The qualifying benefits are:

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

## Application and decision making process

Applications can be made online, by phone, and by paper form ('application channel').

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

In terms of processing and the subsequent reporting of Official Statistics, the joint application can be thought of as two separate applications; one for Scottish Child Payment and one for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods. For this reason, only Scottish Child Payment applications are reported on in this publication. Official Statistics on Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods applications can be found at: <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications>.

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

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

To help manage the demand expected when Scottish Child Payment officially launches on 15 February 2021, Social Security Scotland invited clients to apply in advance of the benefit being introduced from 9 November 2020. Anyone applying for Scottish Child Payment will not get a decision until after 15 February 2021, and the first payments will be made to clients from the end of February 2021 onwards.

## **Redeterminations and appeals**

Scottish Child Payment applicants can ask Social Security Scotland to look again at what they have decided if their application is denied, or if they think the amount they are going to be paid is wrong. This is known as a redetermination. A request for a redetermination should be made within 31 calendar days of being notified of the determination. This is extended to up to 1 year under extenuating circumstances. Social Security Scotland then has 16 working days to make the new determination. Scottish Child Payment applicants also have the right to appeal to a Tribunal if they do not agree with Social Security Scotland's redetermination, or if Social Security Scotland is not able to make a redetermination within 16 working days.

Social Security Scotland has a working agreement that allows it to offer an extension of 5 days to clients should they be waiting on documentation/evidence being sent in. This is to allow Social Security Scotland to process a client application rather than make a decision without any evidence.

Redeterminations will be included in future releases of this publication once data are available.

## **Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020**

On 1 April 2020, the Scottish Parliament approved emergency legislation to help businesses, public services and people through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Measures include helping to ensure that Social Security Scotland clients are not disadvantaged as a result of the coronavirus outbreak and are able to claim assistance to which they are entitled and which they may have missed out on if late applications were not allowed.

Changes, which came into force on 7 April 2020, include temporarily relaxing certain time limits. Where original time limits have not been met directly as a result of Covid-19, the measures temporarily relax time limits in relation to:

- Making an application for assistance
- A request by a client for a redetermination
- A decision on a redetermination
- Appealing to the First tier Tribunal

Additionally, the Coronavirus (Scotland) 2020 Act provides Social Security Scotland extra time to complete a re-determination. Social Security Scotland will continue to make all re-determinations as quickly as is possible under the circumstances, as the Act requires Social Security Scotland to make the re-determination as soon as reasonably practicable within a new extended timescale of an additional 9 weeks on top of the current 16 working days.

## **About the data**

### **How the data is collected**

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

The information is held across multiple tables within the system. 100% extracts of administrative data are taken from this system every day for internal reporting purposes. Data cuts combine information from the different tables in the system into one daily extract which includes details of all Scottish Child Payment applications made since 9 November 2020. An additional child extract containing details about children listed in the application forms is also available for internal reporting purposes. A payments extract will be used for calculations in this publication once payments data is available. It will contain information on financial aspects of applications.

To take into account backdating and delays between applications being authorised and payments being made, a data cut from 20 January 2021 has been used to produce statistics on applications received up to 11.59 pm on 31 December 2020. Later data cuts may include retrospective changes to application details, including corrections to details in the case management system, and changes that have resulted from redeterminations and appeals.

### **Quality assurance**

The data used to produce official statistics are the same as the data extracted from the case management system on a daily basis that is used for internal

reporting within Social Security Scotland. As such, the data is checked daily for consistency with previous extracts (i.e. do applications figures increase as expected over time, and are they in proportion to each other) and compared to other sources of information such as the number of payment instructions reported by the finance team.

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

- Check for duplicate and missing application references
- Check application dates are within the expected ranges
- Check applicant dates of birth are within the expected range – see [Age of applicant](#) section
- Check postcodes that do not match to local authorities – see [Geography](#) section
- removal of a small number of test applications which were used to test the case management system.

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

## Revisions

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

## Data Quality

### *Rounding and disclosure control*

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

### *Missing and duplicate applications*

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

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

### *Unverified information from application form*

Information about the client and their children is taken from the application form completed by the client or by a client advisor over the telephone. This information may contain errors because it has not been verified by comparison to other sources of information such as records held by the Department for Work and Pensions.

### *Application channel*

Application channel is automatically entered into the case management system for online applications, and manually entered for applications taken by phone or paper. If ever an application channel has been manually entered incorrectly, the application channel will be classed as 'unknown'.

### *Age of applicant*

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

### *Geography*

Applications are assigned to local authority by postcode using a Scottish Government lookup file. For some applications, the postcode will not match to the lookup file. This can be because the postcode is not in a Scottish local authority, or because the postcode has been introduced too recently to appear on the lookup file, for example if a property is in a new development. For postcodes that could not be matched to a Scottish local authority, the postcode area was used to check whether the postcode was in Scotland or elsewhere. Non-matching postcodes from Scottish border postcode areas (postcodes starting 'DG' and 'TD') were also checked individually and assigned to Scottish local authorities as 'non-Scottish postcodes' manually.

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

## Future Developments

Future editions of this publication will include information on decisions, payments issued, processing times and redeterminations when the data becomes available.

We will also be seeking users' views on the content of this publication to ensure it best meets their requirements. If you have any comments or suggestions that you would like to provide us please email [MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot](mailto:MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot).

## Related Social Security Scotland Publications

Future research and statistics publications will be available through the Social Security Scotland 'publications' webpage at: <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications>.

Social Security Scotland currently publish weekly management information on the total number of Scottish Child Payment applications received at: <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications>. The weekly management information extends beyond the time period included in this publication but has not been quality assured to the same standard as Official Statistics and is subject to change. Future releases of Official Statistics for Scottish Child Payment will continue to present more detailed breakdowns which have undergone more thorough quality assurance.

Statistics on Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are published by Social Security Scotland at: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/social-security-scotland-stats-publications/#beststartgrantandbeststartfoodsstatistics>.

Statistics on Scottish Child Payment feedback (complaints, compliments and suggestions) are due to be published in the March release of the Social Security Scotland feedback statistics published at: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/social-security-scotland-stats-publications/#socialsecurityscotlandfeedbackstatistics>.

Information on client diversity and equality of application outcomes for clients applying to Social Security Scotland is published at: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/social-security-scotland-stats-publications/#clientdiversityandequalitiesanalysis>.

## **An Official Statistics publication for Scotland**

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

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### **How to access background or source data**

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

are available in more detail through [statistics.gov.scot](http://statistics.gov.scot)

are available via an alternative route. Summary tables are available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/>.

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact [SocialSecurityStats@gov.scot](mailto:SocialSecurityStats@gov.scot) for further information.

cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

### **Complaints and suggestions**

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, 3WR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail [statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk).

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