



Social Security Scotland  
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Social Security Scotland  
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21 August 2023

Dear Committee,

Thank you for inviting my colleagues and I to meet with the Social Justice and Social Security Committee on Thursday 29 June. I look forward to welcoming you to our head office at Agnes Husband House in Dundee on Monday 18 September.

In response to your email of 6 July 2023 and issues raised at the Committee appearance, please find further information as requested. I apologise for the delay in responding.

### **Delay between receiving supporting information and making a decision on an individual's case**

As Ally MacPhail said during the Committee appearance, we can confirm we are currently unable to measure or report on the time taken between the receipt of all supporting information and a decision being made in a case.

Work is ongoing to improve how our data is managed and accessed in order to strengthen the range and detail of data available to inform performance and reporting.

We are determined, to get to the right outcome, first time, for the client. To help this, further supporting information can be requested at any time prior to the decision being made, and following receipt of supporting information, we may still need to refer to health and social care practitioners for advice, or to hold a consultation.

We can gather supporting information on the client's behalf, however this can take time to collect. This is not an option in England and Wales – and illustrates our commitment to taking a fairer and more compassionate approach, and is one of the ways in which we have deliberately built our system in conjunction with the people using it. This is also a marked departure from the Department for Work and Pensions' approach.

We are drawing more on the expertise of our in-house health and social care practitioners to support case discussions earlier, allowing staff to reach decisions more quickly.

As highlighted during the Committee meeting, we are continuing to build the capability within Social Security Scotland, but there are no specific obstacles other than working through applications as quickly as possible.

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I am confident the improvements discussed at the Committee appearance, alongside a range of other actions being progressed, will reduce processing times.

### **Processing times for child disability payment and adult disability payment**

The next round of statistics for Child Disability Payment were published 15 August 2023 (covering to the end of June 2023) and can be accessed [here](#). This publication shows we processed more applications in the last quarter than ever before, and the number of applications processed hit its highest number yet in June.

Adult Disability Payment statistics will be released on 19 September (covering to the end of July 2023).

As I highlighted at the Committee session, there will always be a lag between performance we see within the agency and improvements, but I can give assurances that the operational improvements put in place are making a difference. Our confidence and productivity are growing, and greater levels of expertise are being demonstrated which will lead to fewer outstanding cases.

### **End-to-end review**

As discussed at the Committee, improvement work remains a joint activity with Scottish Government Social Security Directorate and Programme colleagues, while we work jointly in an agile way, developing, improving and running benefits on the same core case management system. Working with the Social Security programme, teams started to review the end-to-end process in June 2023, and this will be part of the continuous programme of work to identify improvements.

### **Call wait times**

I would reiterate the point made in the Committee exchange that we have already implemented changes to the way we handle calls. This includes better real-time monitoring of call volumes to enable more efficient management of clients in queues and a simplified options menu which makes it easier and quicker for clients to connect with the correct agent to support or deal with their enquiry.

I am satisfied this is having a direct and immediate impact, resulting in a significant decrease in current call waiting times. This is reflected in some of the anecdotal feedback provided by stakeholders and can also be seen in recent management information released under Freedom of Information on 14 August 2023. These are not official statistics but show call waiting times in May to July have significantly improved as a result of the actions above. We will continue to closely monitor this performance.

Call wait times are published on an annual basis as part of the Insights Research Findings series. Within that, there are monthly breakdowns of calls handled, call wait times and call length times by benefit. The next release in autumn will cover the 2022/23 reporting year.

### **Offer made to recirculate a list of contacts for local delivery teams**

Please find attached a list of Local Delivery Managers for each Local Authority. Members, and all MSPs can continue to highlight any constituency cases directly to me at

[REDACTED]

I trust this information will be helpful to the Committee members. I am looking forward to welcoming members to Dundee and please do let me know if there is any further information that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**David Wallace**

Chief Executive  
Social Security Scotland

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