

## **Social Security Experience Panels: Case Transfer Survey and Interview Findings**

**Department  
for Work and  
Pensions**



**Scottish  
Government**



### **Background**

The Scottish Government are becoming responsible for some of the benefits previously delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). As part of work to prepare for this change, Scottish Government set up the Social Security Experience Panels.

---

The Experience Panels are made up of over 2,400 people from across Scotland who have recent experience of at least one of the benefits that are coming to Scotland.

The Scottish Government is working with Experience Panel members to create Scotland's new social security system.



**2,400+**  
**Experience Panel  
members**

## About the research

Social Security Scotland will be taking over paying some benefits for people already receiving payments from DWP. This will involve receiving information from DWP about clients and taking over their payments. This process is called 'case transfer.'

This report gives the findings of the case transfer research with Experience Panels members.



**2,456**  
invites



**559**  
survey  
responses

The research took place in



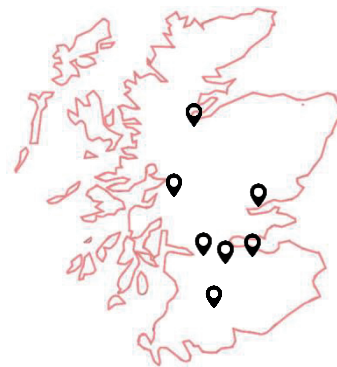
**2019**



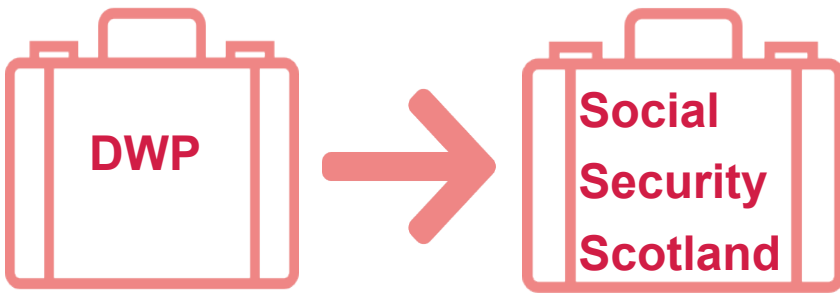
**10**  
Individual and  
group interviews



**7**  
locations



The research asked:



Panel members ideas about the best way to transfer cases



Panel members thoughts on who should transfer first



Panel members thoughts on how clients should be told about their transfer

Survey respondents were between

**16 – 79**



**39%**

Man or boy



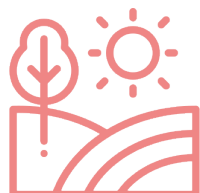
**61%**

Woman or girl



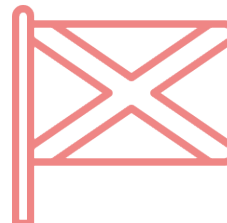
**84%**

lived in an urban location



**16%**

lived in an rural location



Respondents took part in

**31**

out of

**32**

local authority areas

**Almost 9 in 10** survey respondents had a **disability** or **long term health condition**, including:



chronic pain



severe hearing  
impairments



severe visual  
impairments



other kinds of long  
term health  
condition

---

## Notifying clients of their case transfer

We gave panel members a list of possible points of the case transfer process that Social Security Scotland could contact them. We asked whether or not they would be happy being contacted at each of these points. A large majority were happy to be contacted at all four points.



The **most popular** option was one month before case transfer with **over 8 in 10** (85 per cent) of survey respondents said they would be happy being contacted at this point.



Interviewees told us that it would be helpful if clients were told at this stage **how much money** they will get and **the exact payment date** when their case transfers over.



Also popular with panel members was **being contacted after their case had transferred**, to let them know it had transferred successfully.

**Over 8 in 10** (84 per cent) of survey respondents said they would be happy being contacted at this point.



**However, 1 in 10** (10 per cent) of respondents said they would not be happy being contacted at this point.

In interviews, some said it would be **reassuring** to receive the letter and let them know there were no problems. However, some interviewees said if they had been paid on time, there would **be no need for this final contact**.

---



**6 in 10** (60 per cent) of survey respondents said they would be happy being contacted **three or four months before their own case transfers**.

Around a quarter (26 per cent) said 'I don't mind either way'.



Just over **1 in 10** (14 per cent) said they would **not be happy** being contacted at this point.



Interviewees told us that a national campaign with more **information in newspapers, on television and radio** would be welcome alongside the letters.



Almost 6 in 10 (58 per cent) of survey respondents said they would be happy being contacted when Social Security Scotland takes over a benefit for **new claims only**.

Around **3 in 10** (29 per cent) said 'I don't mind either way.'



Just over **1 in 10** (14 per cent) said they would not be happy being contacted at this point.



Participants told us that many people are still unaware of Social Security Scotland as an agency. They told us it is important to tell clients more about Social Security Scotland and **list the benefits that it will take over**.

---

Throughout, panel members told us about other things they would like to know before their case transfers. These included:



Whether or not clients would have **to do anything as part of their transfer**. For example, filling in forms or resubmitting evidence.



If clients would have to be **reassessed** as part of their transfer.

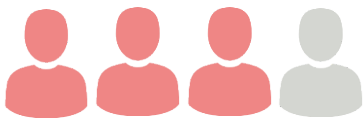


**Clear contact details** and how clients can get in touch if they have a question about their case transfer.

---

## Contact throughout the case transfer

We asked participants **who should contact clients** to let them know about their transfer.



Almost three quarters (73 per cent) of survey respondents said **Social Security Scotland**

Only 5 per cent said **DWP**.

Just over 2 in 10 ( 22 per cent) said ‘Sometimes Social Security Scotland, sometimes DWP’.

We asked respondents who had selected ‘Sometimes Social Security Scotland, sometimes DWP’ **why they had selected this option**.

Panel members told us that because Social Security Scotland is **unfamiliar to many**, the first letter should come from DWP so clients are introduced to Social Security Scotland.

The DWP initially so we know it's genuine. Some people won't know about Scotland taking over certain benefits and may ignore the letters from you or think they're a scam."

Survey respondent/Interviewee

Panel members also told us that letters should come from both DWP and Social Security Scotland because **they are both responsible for the case transfer** and should be working together:

"I'd like to hear from both so I know the case transfer process is working from both sides"

Survey respondent/Interviewee



We then asked panel members if they thought they would **need to contact anyone** when they received the letters about their case transfer.

**Just over half** of survey respondents (57 per cent) said **yes**.

**Just under half** (43 per cent) said **no**.



Social Security Scotland  
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

We asked who they would want to contact. The **most common** response was **Social Security Scotland**.



Other suggestions included:



- **Whoever the letter came from.** Many said they would contact whoever the letter came from, either DWP or Social Security Scotland



- A client's advocate
- DWP



- Citizen's Advice Bureau



Many panel members told us about their past experiences of **struggling to find the right person to speak to** and answer their questions.



Some suggested that they would want **a person allocated** to their case. This person would help them with any questions they might have.

## Looking for information



We asked panel members **where they would go to find out information** or answer a question about their case transfer.

The **most popular** answer was contacting **Social Security Scotland** direct with almost **9 in 10** (89 per cent) survey respondents saying they would do this.



**Around half** (55 per cent) of respondents said they would **look online** for more information.



**Around 3 in 10** (32 per cent) said they would contact **an advice centre** such as Citizens Advice Scotland.

**Just over a quarter** (27 per cent) said they would contact **DWP direct**.

Other suggestions included welfare rights organisations, MP's and MSP's, carer's organisations, advocates and family and friends.



Interviewees told us it was important to have **information displayed** about the case transfer process in **public places** like community centres, doctors surgeries and libraries.

## Other ways of contact

We asked panel members if they would like to be contacted about their case transfer **in another way** alongside a letter.



**Around half** of respondents (52 per cent) said they would like to be contacted by **text**.



**Just over 8 in 10** (83 per cent) said they would like to be contacted by **email**.

Interviewees liked the idea of being contacted through email but told us that it is **important to still have the main information through post** because some people **do not have access to the internet**.



Some panel members told us about their **fears about technology** and the transfer of their personal information. Many also told us how **testing the system** is important to make sure cases transfer smoothly.

---

## Who should transfer first

In interviews we looked at what cases should transfer first and who should have priority.

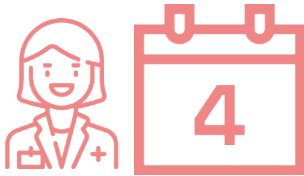
### Benefit by benefit transfer



One of the ideas discussed was that cases should transfer benefit by benefit, once Social Security Scotland take them over.

Participants thought this idea would be **easier for staff and clients**. They said it was important to know what order benefits were transferring so clients were **kept up to date**.

### Transfer by reassessment date.



Another idea discussed was that cases should transfer by **reassessment date**. This would mean that those with upcoming assessments are assessed by Social Security rather than DWP.



Participants were **strongly in favour of this idea**. Many said that they would rather have their assessment carried out by Social Security Scotland, rather than DWP.

Panel members told us about their **previous negative experiences being assessed by DWP** and that being assessed can be stressful. They told us being assessed by Social Security Scotland would help minimise this stress.

## Transfer by geographical location



We discussed the idea of transferring cases **based on where a client lives**. Participants had **mixed thoughts** about this idea.

Some participants liked this idea and thought it would help if you were transferring at the same time as your neighbour. Some also thought it would **help prepare local services**.



However, some participants thought transfer based on geography would be **unfair** and could **make it difficult for local services** if there were any problems.

## Transfer by health conditions



We also discussed the idea of transferring cases based on health conditions. **Participants generally did not like this idea**.



Participants thought it would be **hard to choose what health conditions** should mean people transfer first.

Participants also thought it would be **unfair** to transfer this way because health conditions affect people in many different ways.

However, participants **recognised terminal illnesses** as a condition that should take priority. Most participants thought people with terminal illnesses should transfer first to **minimise stress** and limit contact with DWP.

## Random transfer



We talked about transferring cases **completely randomly**.

Some participants thought this would be **the fairest way** to transfer cases and that it wouldn't single anyone out.



However, many participants did not like this idea. They said that it would be unhelpful and would mean people would have no idea when to expect their case to transfer.



Some participants also said it would be **confusing**, especially when people in the same household would transfer at different times.

## Other ideas for how to transfer cases

We asked participants if they had any other ideas of how to transfer cases.

Ideas included doing it by age and doing it alphabetically.

Many participants said that it should be **made clear who will transfer first and why**. They thought that this would make it easy for clients to know when to expect to transfer.



## Information to transfer alongside your case

As part of the case transfer process, Social Security Scotland will take over some information from DWP as part of your case.



We asked participants in interviews how they felt about Social Security Scotland taking over different information types from DWP.

### Application information



Application information includes **the information given along with your application** for a benefit.

For example, details about a health condition, doctors letters and hospital details.



**Nearly all** of the participants asked said they would be happy for Social Security Scotland to take over this information.

Participants thought it would **be easier for staff and clients** if there were no more forms to fill in.

### Assessment information



We asked participants how they would feel about Social Security Scotland taking over information from previous assessments. Participants had **mixed feelings** on this.

Some said they would be happy for this information to be taking over and had no problems with it.



However, some participants said that **information from assessments was often incorrect or not accurate**. Some participants also said they would like a **fresh start** with Social Security Scotland and that this information should not be taken over.

## Contact information with DWP



We also asked participants if they would be happy for Social Security Scotland to take **over previous contact information clients had with DWP**. This includes the **letters DWP have sent clients** and the **phonecalls** made to DWP.



Again, participants had **mixed feelings**. Some thought it would be good for Social Security Scotland to take over this information to **have a full record**.

However, some participants thought this information was **unnecessary** and again called for a **fresh start** with Social Security Scotland.

## Information sent to DWP for evidence



Finally, we asked participants if they would be happy for Social Security Scotland to take over the **information clients sent DWP for evidence**. For example, letters from doctors **and documents that prove who you** are like birth certificates and passport.



Almost all participants said they would be happy for Social Security Scotland to take over this information. The most common reason for saying this was that it would save a client having to send the information again.



Participants told us that it is **expensive** to send documents and some said that in the past, **information they sent had been lost**.



## What's Next?

We will carry out further work with Experience Panel members to better understand the views expressed on case transfer.

The feedback from this research is helping the Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland make decisions about how cases should be transferred from DWP to the Scottish Government.

### How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact [SocialSecurityExperience@gov.scot](mailto:SocialSecurityExperience@gov.scot) for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



© Crown copyright 2019

You may re-use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

The views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and do not necessarily represent those of the Scottish Government or Scottish Ministers.

This report is available on the Scottish Government Publications Website (<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/Recent>)

The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-83960-045-6 (web only)

Published by the Scottish Government, August 2019