

## Social Security Scotland statistics

# Social Security Scotland feedback statistics to 30 September 2022

### Key Figures

From 4 September 2018 to 30 September 2022, Social Security Scotland received 1,470 complaints, 300 compliments and 150 suggestions.

To date, in 2022/23:

- 570 Stage 1 complaints were received.
- 75 Stage 2 complaints were received.
- 60 compliments were received.
- 45 suggestions were received.

### Frequency of publications

The next publication will cover up to the end of March 2023 and will be released in June 2023.

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>.

<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

This report covers feedback (complaints, compliments, and suggestions) received by Social Security Scotland since it was introduced on 4 September 2018, until 30 September 2022. It includes statistics for specific benefits as well as feedback that was not benefit specific. In this publication, information relating to the latest reporting year, 2022/23, relates to information covering 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

The benefits included within the time period covered by the report are: Carer's Allowance Supplement, Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, Funeral Support Payment, Young Carer Grant, Job Start Payment, Child Winter Heating Assistance, Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment.

All tables and charts relating to this publication can be found at:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/about/statistics/social-security-scotland-statistics-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.*" These statistics have not yet been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority. 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:

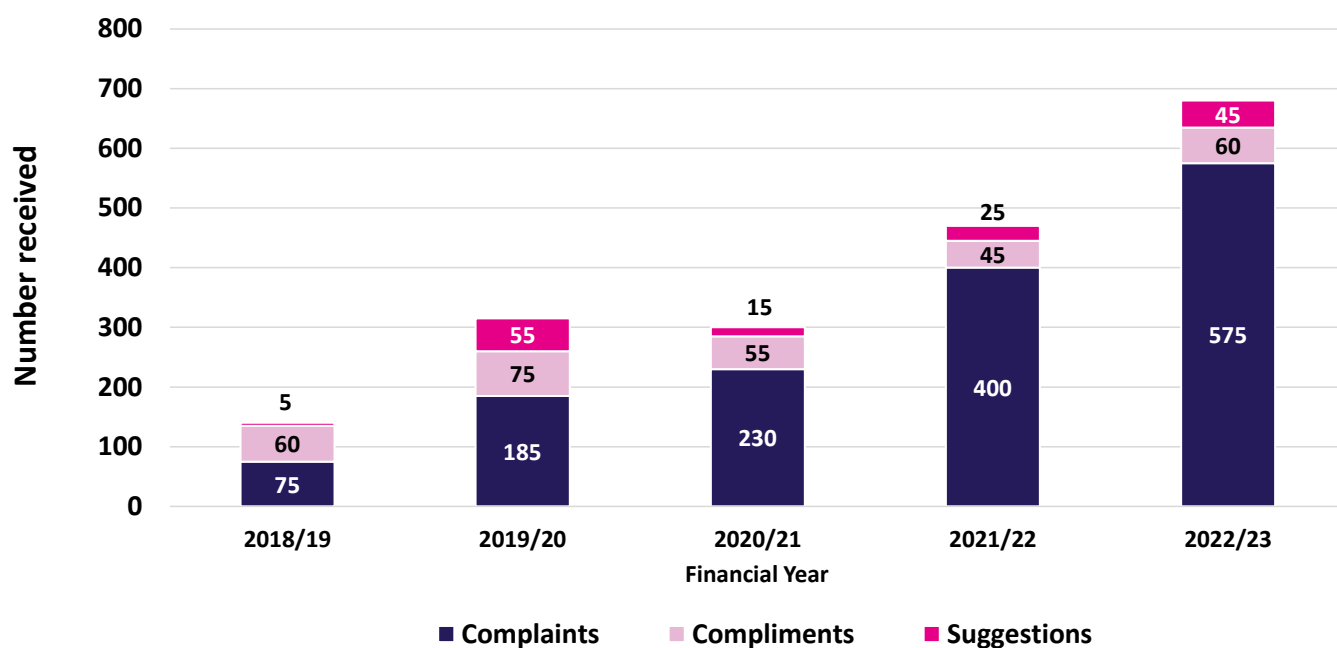
<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/experimental-statistics-official-statistics-in-development/>

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# Main findings

Chart 1: Feedback by financial year



Complaints include all Stage 1 complaints, plus complaints received at Stage 2. Figures for individual years may not sum to all time figures in other tables/charts due to rounding. The year 2022/23 includes complaints received between 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

In 2022/23, a total of 575 complaints, 60 compliments and 45 suggestions were received by 30 September 2022. The most common type of feedback received has been complaints, in line with previous years **[Chart 1]**.

In the first half of 2022/23, more feedback was received than in the whole of 2021/22. The increase in feedback in the first half of 2022/23 coincides with expanding services provided by Social Security Scotland as Child Disability Payment was operating nationally through the reporting period and Adult Disability Payment was delivered through a phased pilot before national launch in August 2022.

# Complaints

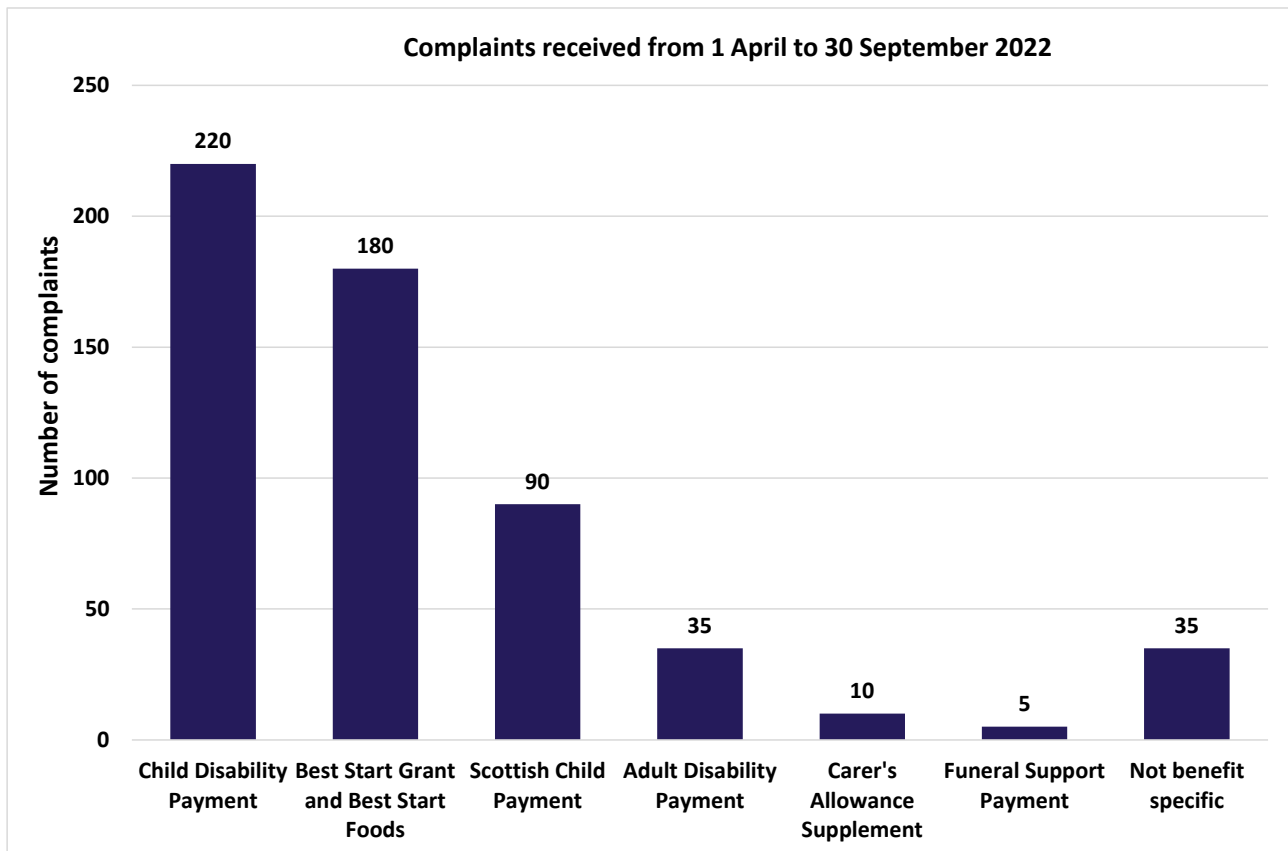
## Complaints received in the first half of 2022/23

Social Security Scotland received 575 complaints in the first half of 2022/23. The complaints received in the period include **[Table 1, Chart 2]**:

- 220 for Child Disability Payment
- 180 for Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods
- 90 for Scottish Child Payment
- 35 for Adult Disability Payment
- 10 for Carer’s Allowance Supplement
- five for Funeral Support Payment
- 35 that were not benefit specific

There were a small number of complaints for Young Carer Grant received in the first half of 2022/23, which are not reported due to disclosure control. In this period, there were no complaints received for Job Start Payment or Child Winter Heating Assistance. The [background section](#) gives the launch dates for each benefit.

**Chart 2: Complaints received by benefit from 1 April to 30 September 2022**



Complaint numbers remain low compared to the number of people receiving payments or making applications. For example, while Social Security Scotland

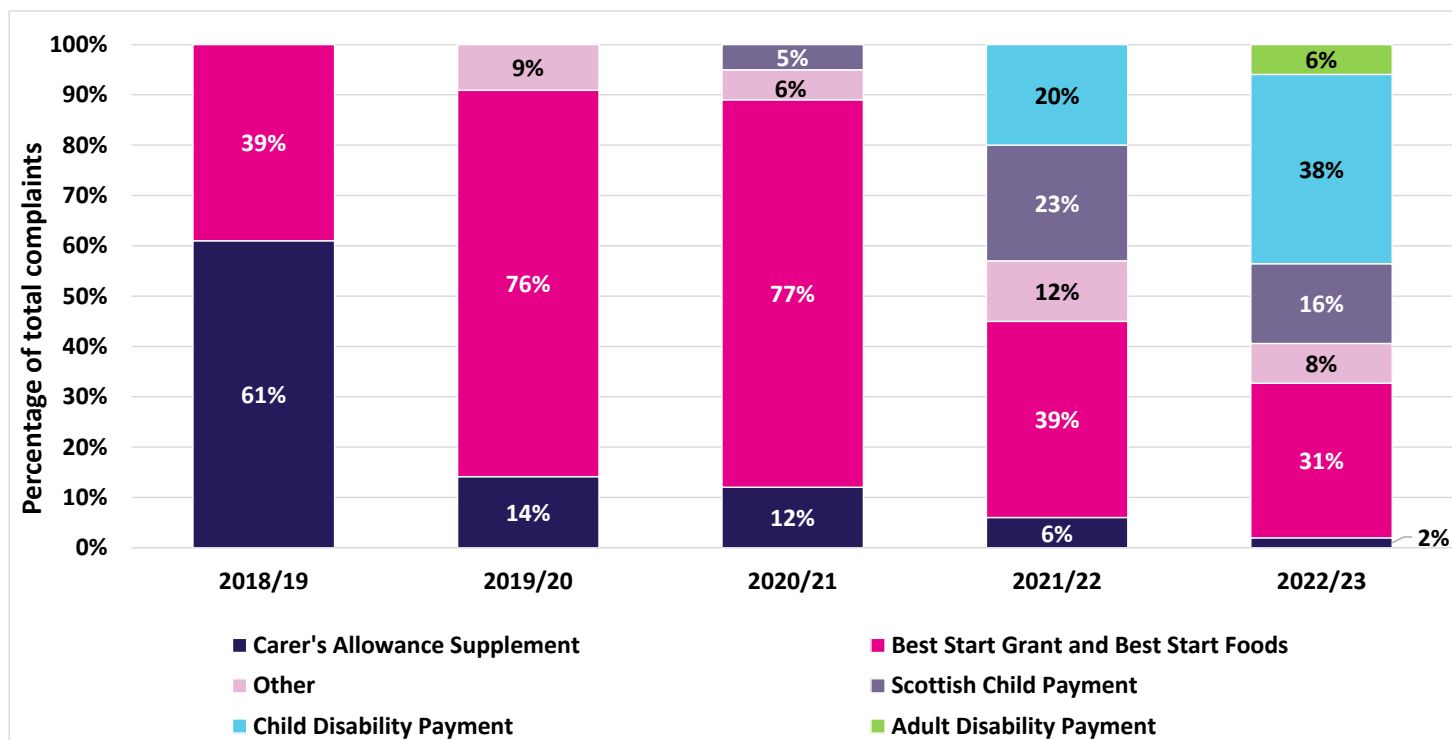
received 220 complaints about Child Disability Payment in the first half of 2022/23, there have been 10,485 applications received between 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2022. While there were 180 complaints received about Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods in the first half of 2022/23, there had been 42,115 applications received between 1 April and 31 August 2022. The [background section](#) gives a full list of benefit launches since 2018 with application or payment numbers and sources.

Complaints can come from people that did not make an application for a benefit, or did not receive a payment (for example, for Carer’s Allowance Supplement where there is no application process), therefore it is not possible to calculate a rate of complaints per applications or payments.

Of the complaints received in 2022/23 to date [Table 1, Chart 3]:

- Child Disability Payment accounted for 38% compared to 20% in 2021/22,
- Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods accounted for 31% compared to 39% in 2021/22,
- Scottish Child Payment accounted for 16%, compared to 23% in 2021/22.

**Chart 3: Percentage of complaints by benefit and financial year**

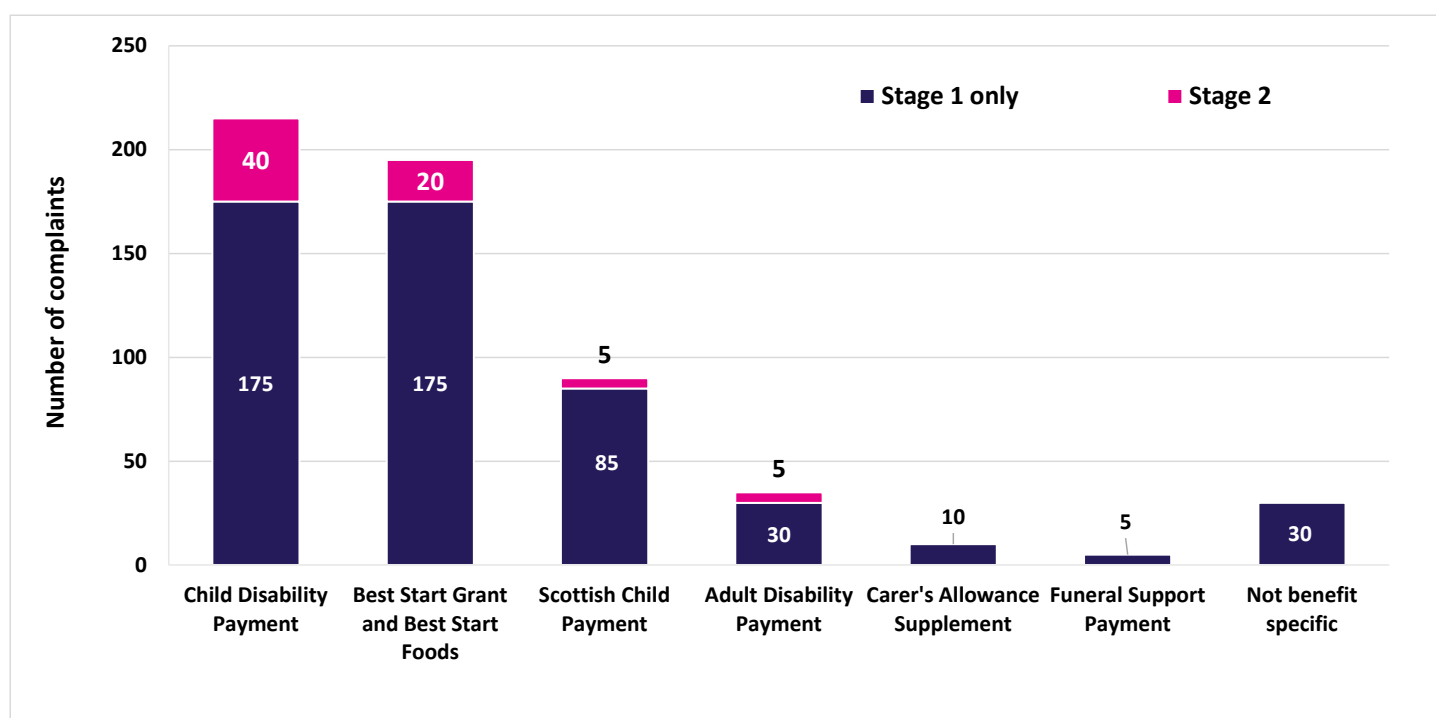


‘Other’ includes Funeral Support Payment, Child Winter Heating Assistance, Job Start Payment, Young Carer Grant and not benefit specific complaints.

## Complaints reaching Stage 2

- In the first half of 2022/23, 13% of complaints have reached Stage 2 [Table 1]. This means either progressing from Stage 1 to Stage 2, or being received at Stage 2. This is lower than in 2021/22 when 16% of complaints reached Stage 2. The [background section](#) explains the difference between Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints.
- In the first half of 2022/23, 40 Child Disability Payment complaints have reached Stage 2, followed by 20 Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods complaints and five each of Scottish Child Payment and Adult Disability Payment [Table 1, Chart 4]. This may relate to both Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment being more complex benefits in terms of both processing and decision making.
- No cases have been referred to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) [Table 1].

Chart 4: Complaints by benefit and stage\* from 1 April to 30 September 2022

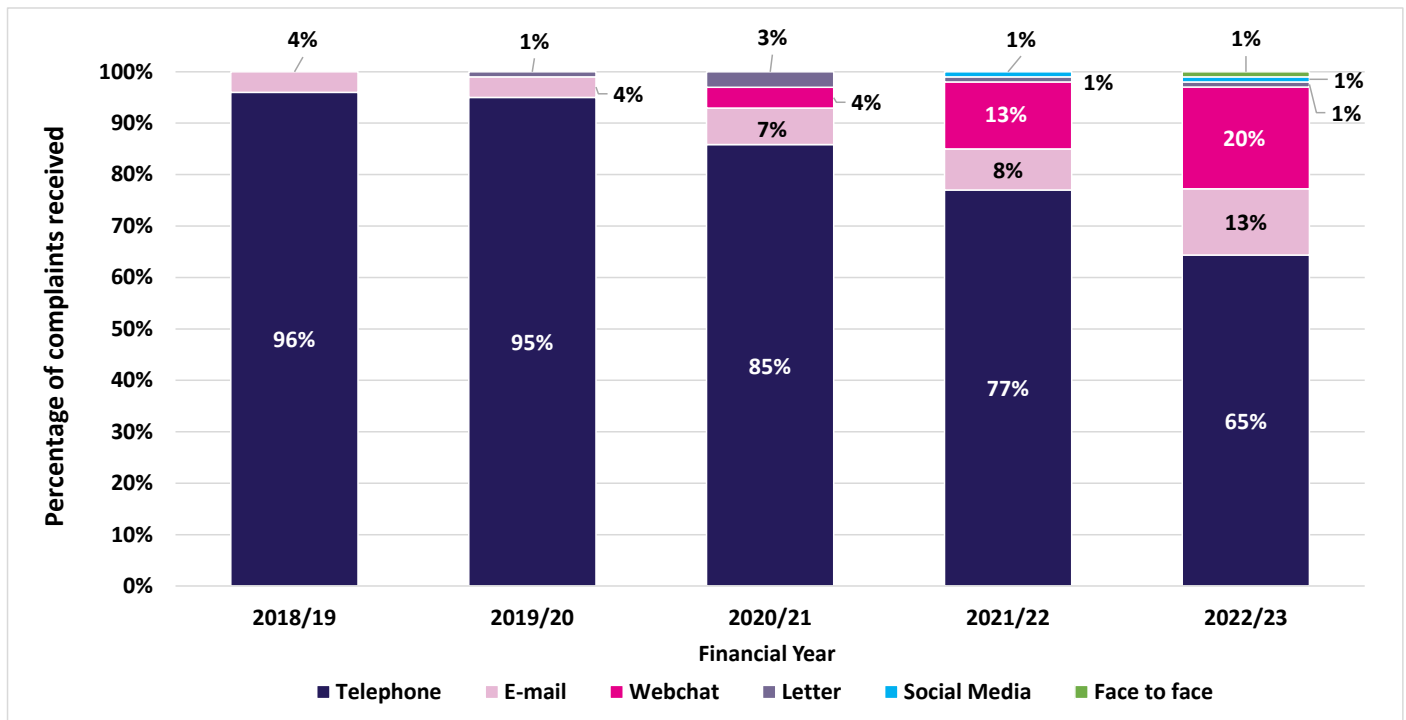


\*Stage 2 figures include a small number of complaints that went straight to Stage 2, as well as complaints progressing from Stage 1 to Stage 2. Figures may not sum to those in Table 1 due to rounding. Complaint numbers for Young Carer Grant are too small to display.

## Complaints channels

- In the first half of 2022/23, telephone remained the most common channel for complaints, although the percentage of complaints received this way decreased from 77% in 2021/22 to 65% in 2022/23 [Table 2, Chart 5].
- The proportion of complaints received by web chat increased from 13% in 2021/22 to 20% in 2022/23 [Table 2, Chart 5].
- A small number of complaints were recorded via social media. A small number were recorded face to face for the first time in 2022/23 [Table 2, Chart 5].
- The [background section](#) gives further details on communication channels and when they have been introduced.

Chart 5: Complaints by channel and financial year

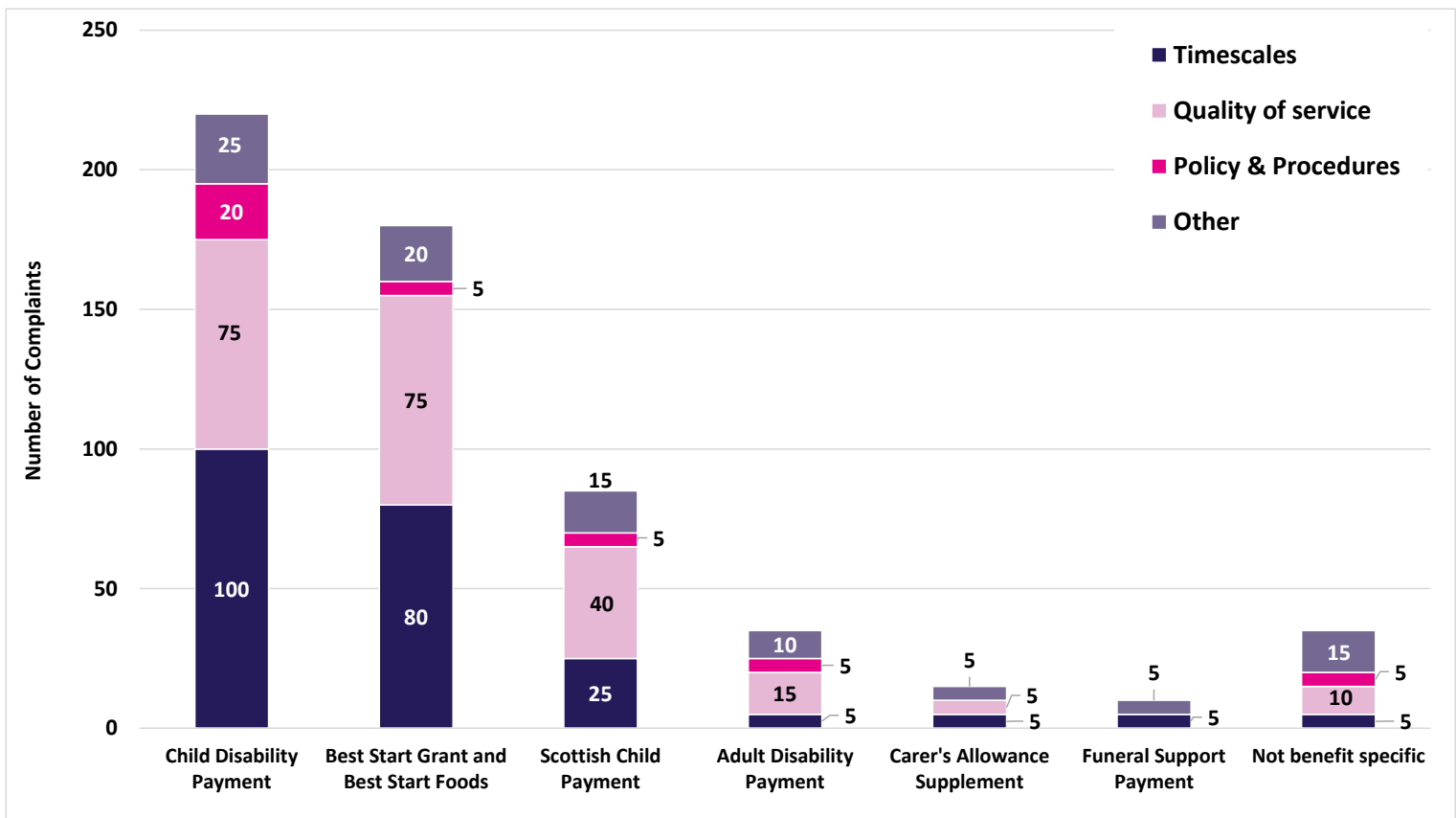




## Reasons for complaints

- In the first half of 2022/23, the most common reasons for complaints were 'Quality of service' and 'Timescales' which each accounted for 39% of complaints received. These were followed by 'Policy and Procedures' which accounted for 6%. Each other reason accounted for 5% or less [Table 3]. More information about complaint reasons is found in the [background section](#).
- For Child Disability Payment and Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, the most common reason for complaints was 'Timescales'. For Scottish Child Payment, Adult Disability Payment and complaints which are not benefit specific, the most common reason for complaints was 'Quality of service'. [Table 3, Chart 6].
- Overall, the proportion of complaints relating to 'Quality of service' decreased from 45% in 2021/22 to 39% in 2022/23. The proportion of complaints relating to 'Timescales' increased from 30% in 2021/22 to 39% in 2022/23 to date [Table 3].

Chart 6: Complaint reasons by benefit from 1 April to 30 September 2022



'Other' includes 'Accessing services', 'Disagreement with a Decision', 'Treatment by Member of Staff', and 'Information not Provided'. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

## Complaints processing times

- In the first half of 2022/23, 560 Stage 1 and 85 Stage 2 complaints had been closed, leaving 20 outstanding Stage 1 complaints and five outstanding Stage 2 complaints at the end of the reporting period **[Table 4]**.
- In the first half of 2022/23, the median processing time has been three working days for Stage 1 complaints, and 17 days for Stage 2 complaints. In total, 84% of Stage 1 complaints were closed within the initial five working day timescale, and 95% of Stage 2 complaints were closed within the initial 20 working day timescale **[Table 4]**. An extension of five working days can be added to these initial timescales by Social Security Scotland if it will benefit the client. More information can be found in the [background section](#).
- The proportion of Stage 1 complaints closed within the initial five working day timescale decreased from 88% in 2021/22 to 84% in 2022/23. The proportion closed within an agreed extended timescale decreased from 98% in 2021/22 to 89% in 2022/23 **[Table 4]**.
- The proportion of Stage 2 complaints closed within the initial 20 working day timescale increased slightly from 94% in 2021/22 to 95% in 2022/23. A small number were not closed within the extended timescale, but this number is not reported due to disclosure control **[Table 4]**.

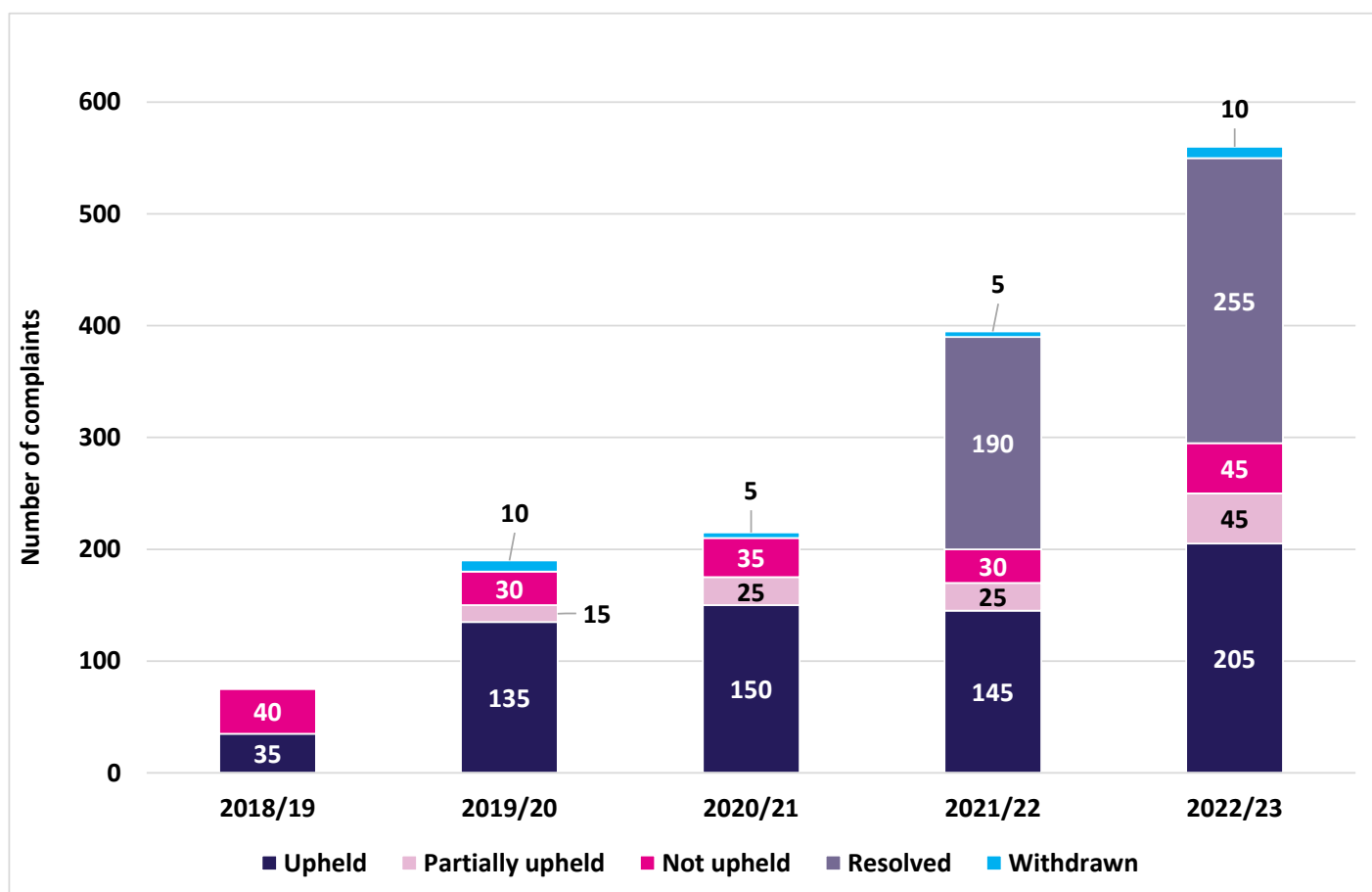
## Complaint outcomes

### Stage 1 complaint outcomes by year

Complaint outcomes are counted separately for Stage 1 and 2 – a complaint that progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 will have two outcomes. In the first half of 2022/23, of the 560 Stage 1 complaints that had an outcome [Table 5, Chart 7]:

- 255 were resolved
- 205 were upheld
- 45 were not upheld
- 45 were partially upheld
- 10 were withdrawn

Chart 7(i): Stage 1 complaints by outcome and financial year



Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. A small number of complaints were outstanding at 30 September 2022 and are not included. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

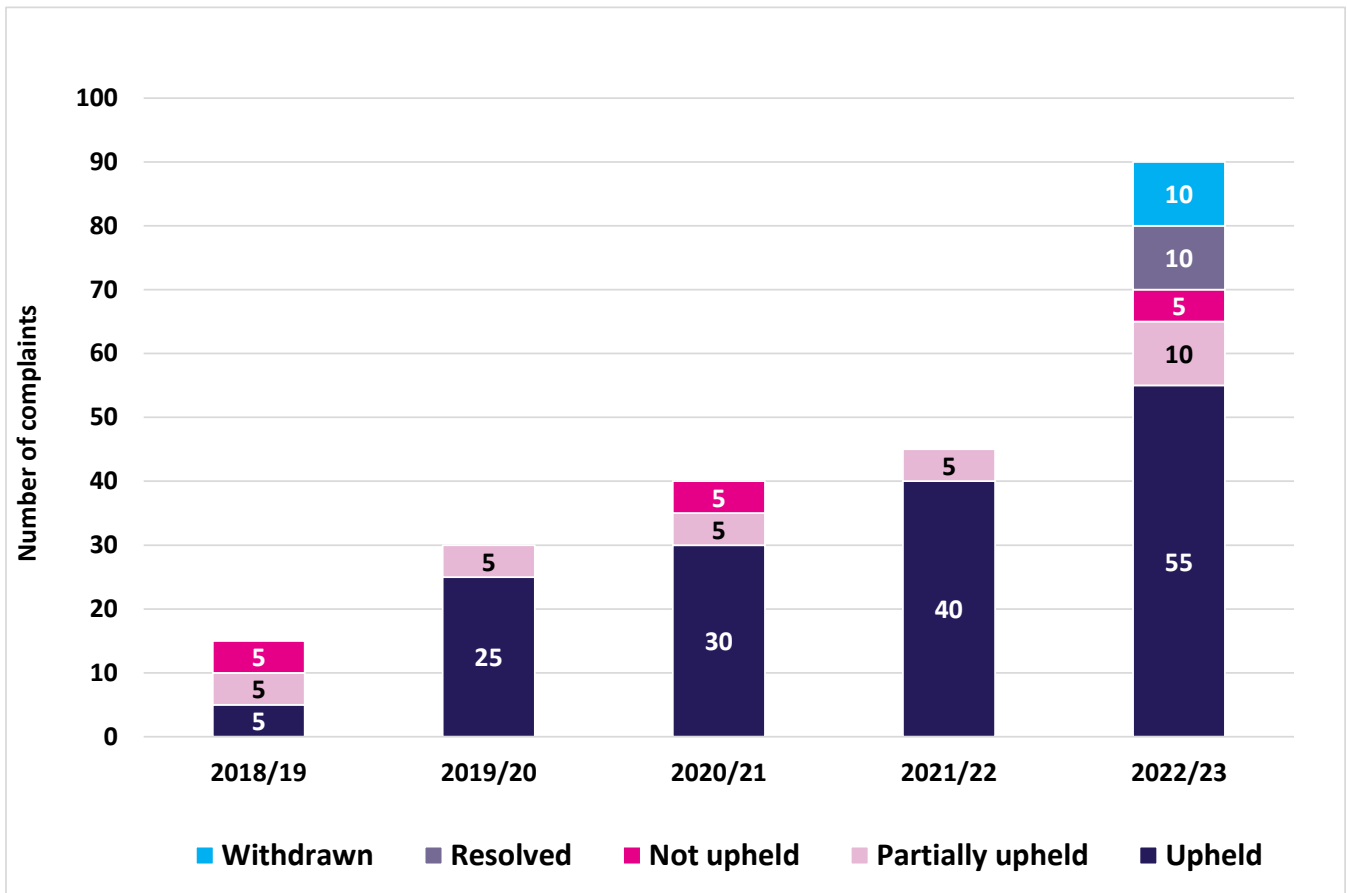
The outcome 'resolved' was introduced from 12 April 2021, in result of which the proportion of other outcomes decreased compared to previous reporting years. [Table 5, Chart 7(i)].

## Stage 2 complaint outcomes by year

In the first half of 2022/23, of the 85 Stage 2 complaints that had an outcome [Table 5, Chart 7]:

- 55 were upheld
- 10 were partially upheld
- 10 were resolved
- 10 were withdrawn
- five were not upheld

Chart 7(ii): Stage 2 complaints outcomes by financial year



Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. A small number of complaints were outstanding at 30 September 2022 and are not included. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

## Stage 1 complaint outcomes by benefit in the first half of 2022/23

- Of Stage 1 complaints made for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment, the most common outcome was 'upheld'. **[Table 5, Chart 8(i)]**.
- Of Stage 1 complaints made for Child Disability Payment, Adult Disability Payment and complaints that were not benefit specific, the most common outcome was 'resolved'. **[Table 5, Chart 8(i)]**.
- The excerpt below from Table 5(i) summarises the outcomes of Stage 1 complaints completed in the first half of 2022/23 by benefit.

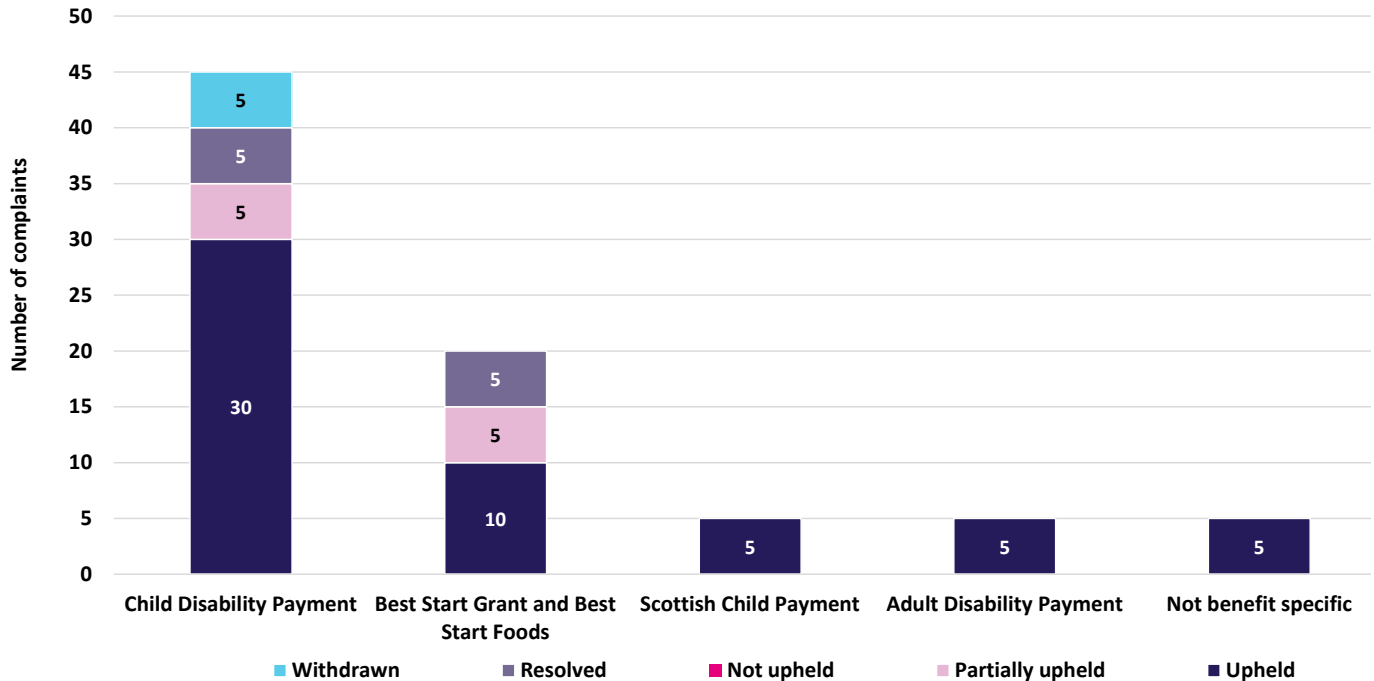
Stage 1 complaint outcome	Benefit					
	Best Start Grant or Best Start Foods	Carer's Allowance Supplement	Scottish Child Payment	Child Disability Payment	Adult Disability Payment	Not benefit specific
Upheld	80	5	45	60	5	10
Partially upheld	5	0	10	15	5	5
Not upheld	15	0	5	20	0	0
Resolved	75	5	30	110	20	15
Withdrawn	5	0	0	5	5	0

Complaint numbers for Young Carer Grant and Funeral Support Payment are too small to display. Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. A small number of complaints were outstanding at 30 September 2022 and are not included. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

## Stage 2 complaint outcomes by benefit in the first half of 2022/23

The majority of Stage 2 complaints have been upheld for all benefits overall, with 64% having this outcome. For Child Disability Payment, 65% of Stage 2 complaints have been upheld and for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, 58% of Stage 2 complaints have been upheld. [Table 5, Chart 8(ii)].

Chart 8(ii): Stage 2 complaints by outcome and benefit to from 1 April to 30 September 2022

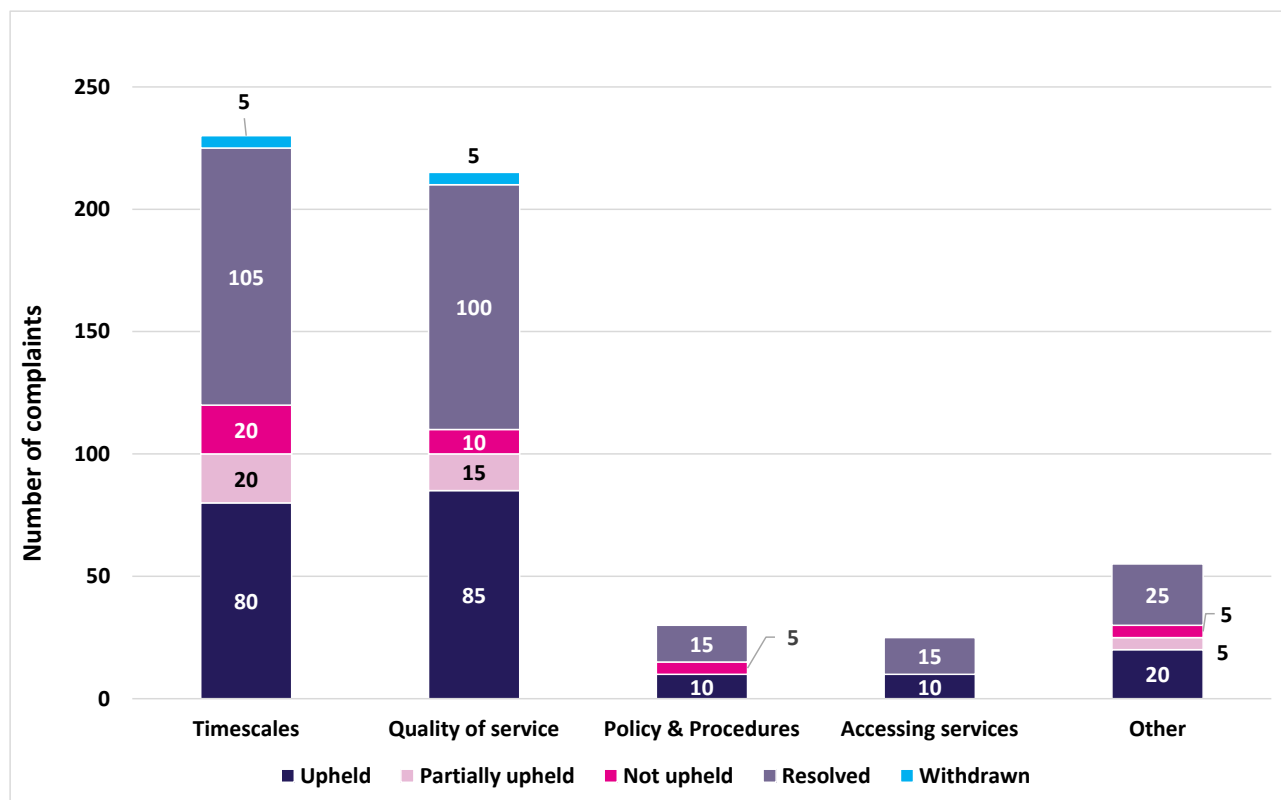


Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. A small number of complaints were outstanding at 30 September 2022 and are not included. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

## Stage 1 complaint outcomes by complaint reason in the first half of 2022/23

- For Stage 1 complaints, the highest proportion which were upheld has been for those about 'Quality of service' with 39%, followed by 'Other' with 38% upheld and 'Accessing Services' and 'Timescales' each with 35% upheld [Chart 9(i)].
- For Stage 1 complaints, the highest proportion which were not upheld has been for those about 'Policy & Procedures' with 15% [Chart 9(i)].
- For Stage 1 complaints, the highest proportion which were resolved were for those about 'Accessing Services' with 58% and 'Quality of Service' and 'Timescales' each with 46% [Chart 9(i)].

Chart 9(i): Stage 1 complaint outcomes by complaint reason from 1 April to 30 September 2022

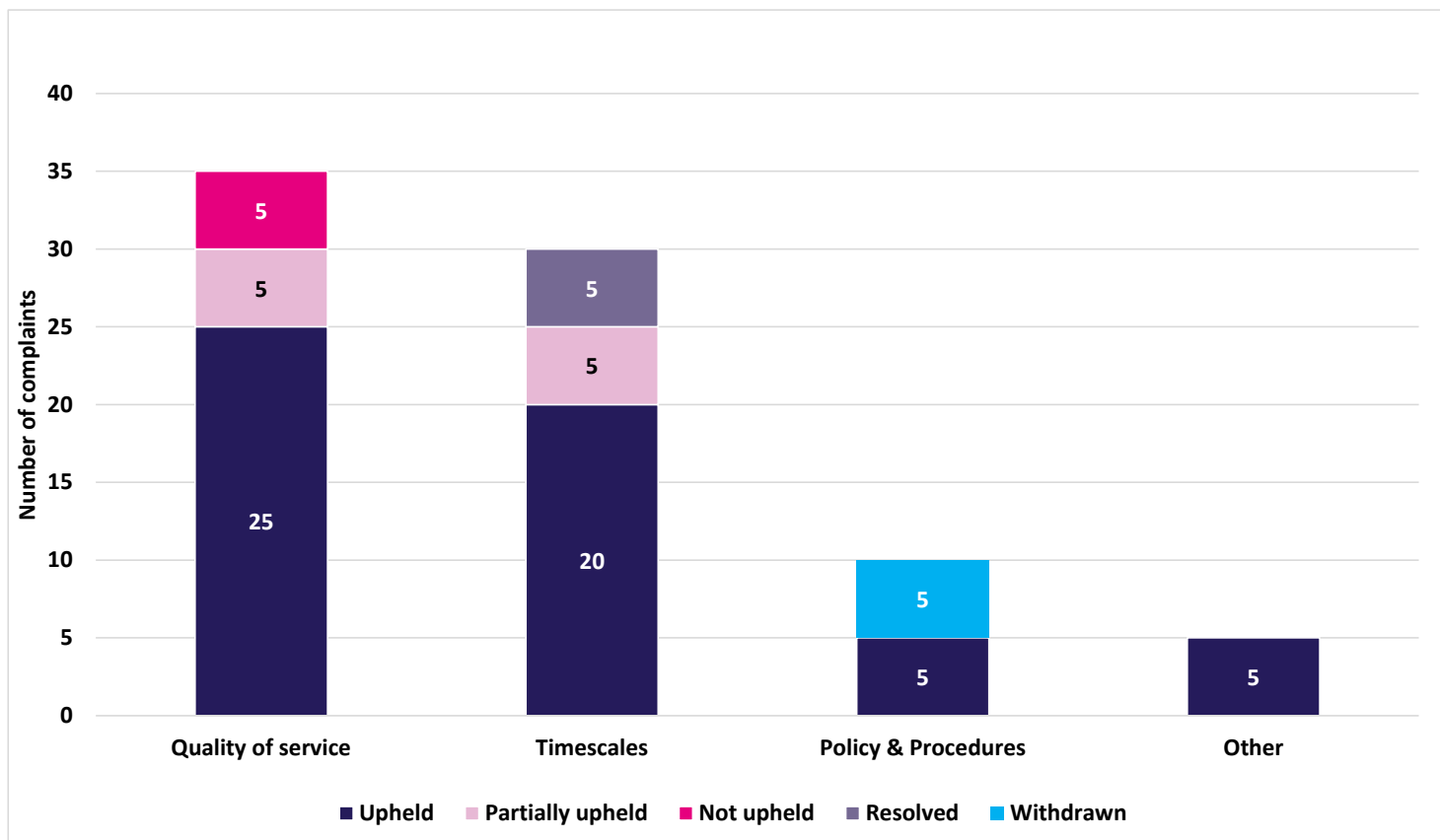


'Other' includes 'Disagreement with a Decision', 'Treatment by Member of Staff', and 'Information Provided'. Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. A small number of complaints were outstanding at 30 September 2022 and are not included. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

## Stage 2 complaint outcomes by complaint reason in the first half of 2022/23

- For Stage 2 complaints about 'Quality of service', 74% have been upheld, while 68% of those about 'Timescales' have been upheld [Chart 9(ii)].

Chart 9(ii) Stage 2 complaint outcomes by complaint reason from 1 April to 30 September 2022



'Other' includes 'Disagreement with a Decision', 'Treatment by Member of Staff', and 'Information Provided'. Outcomes for Stage 1 and Stage 2 are counted separately, therefore the number of outcomes exceeds the number of complaints received. A small number of complaints were outstanding at 30 September 2022 and are not included. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

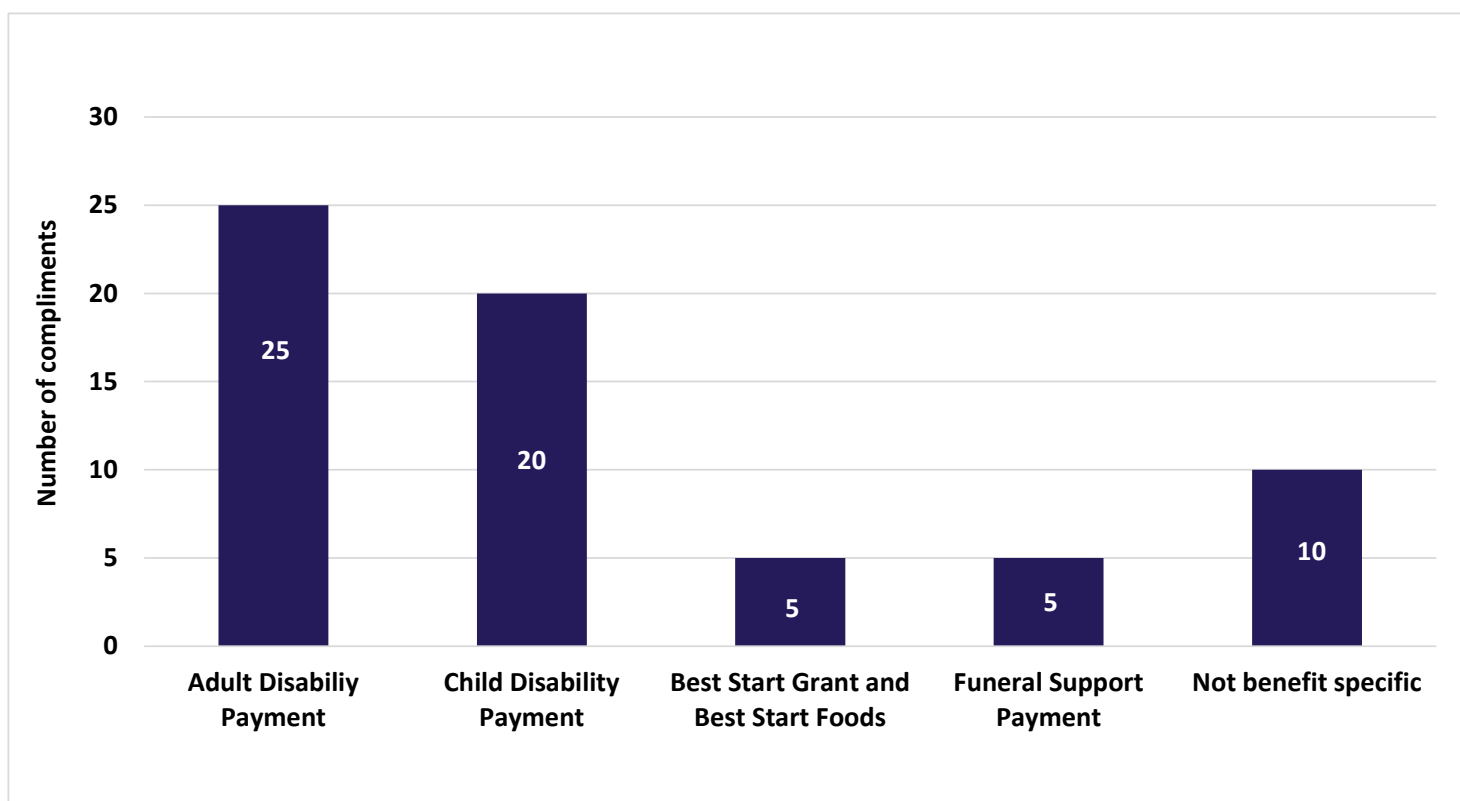


# Compliments

From 1 April to 30 September 2022, a total of 65 compliments were received including:

- 25 for Adult Disability Payment
- 20 for Child Disability Payment
- five for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods
- five for Funeral Support Payment
- 10 not benefit specific compliments [Table 6, Chart 10].

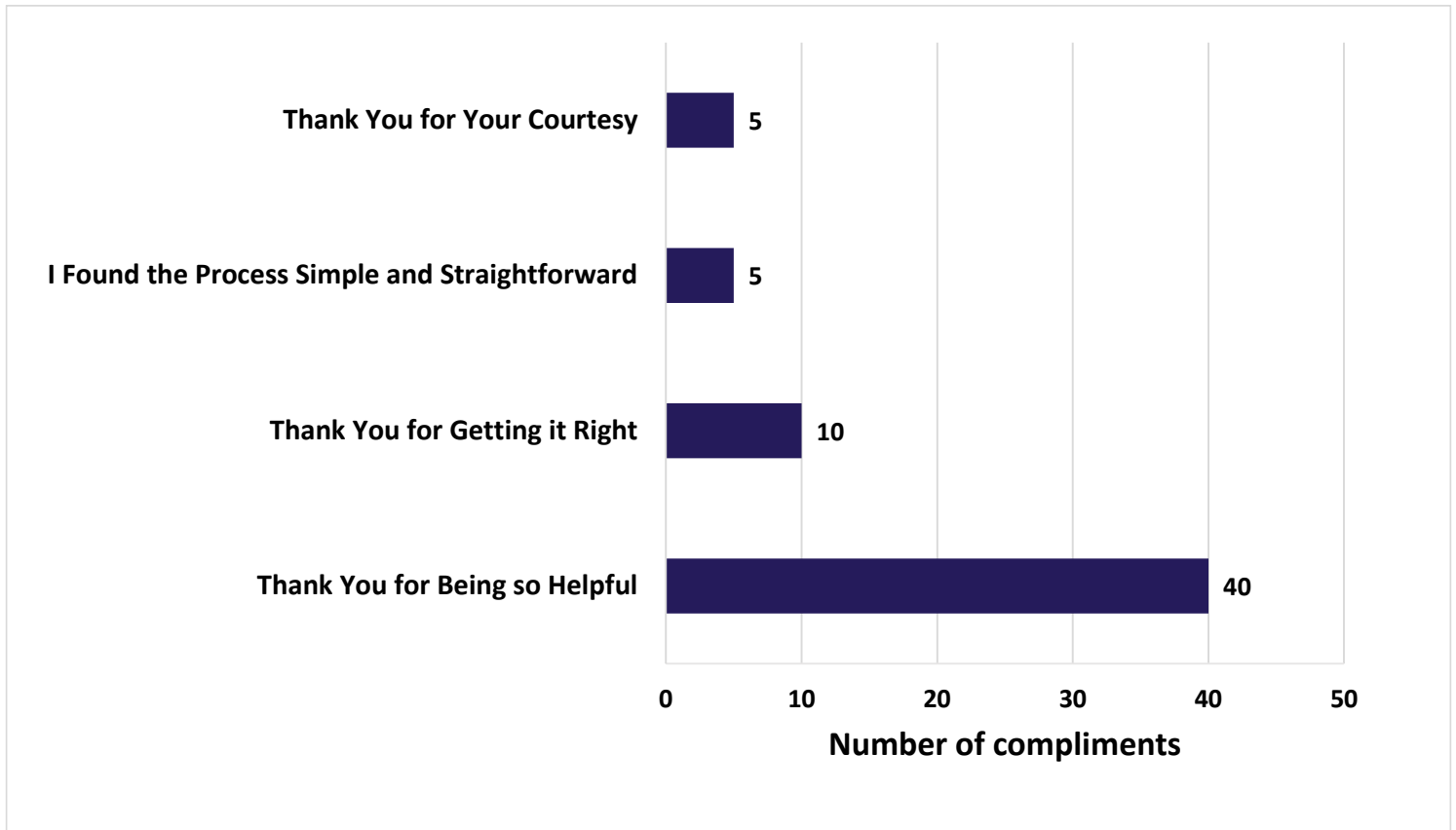
Chart 10: Total compliments received by benefit From 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022



This is more than the whole of 2021/22 where 45 compliments were received overall [Table 6].

In the first half of 2022/23, the most common reason for compliments has been 'Thank you for being so helpful', accounting for 66% of compliments, with 19% of compliments being 'Thank you for getting it right'. The proportion of compliments relating to these reasons has been broadly in line with the previous three years [Table 7, Chart 11].

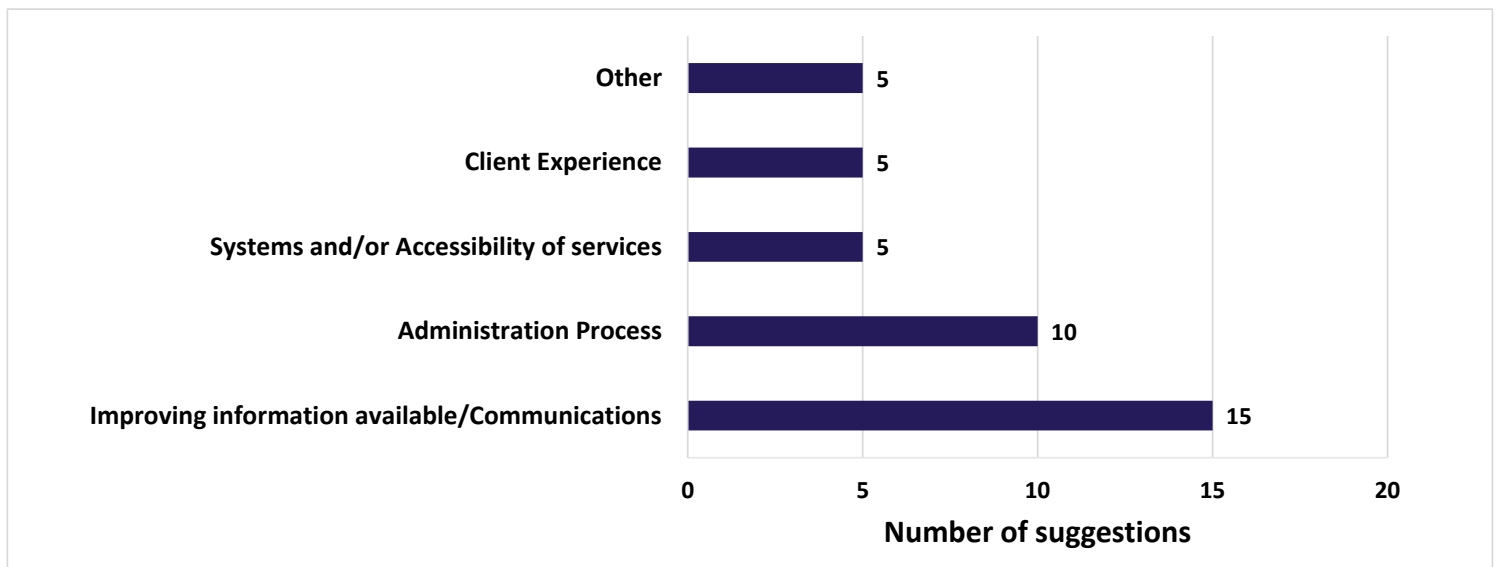
Chart 11: Compliments by reason from 1 April to 30 September 2022



# Suggestions

- In the first half of 2022/23, a total of 45 suggestions were received. This is 20 more suggestions than were received in the whole of 2021/22 **[Table 8]**.
- Around 37% of suggestions have been about Child Disability Payment, followed by 33% about Adult Disability Payment, 13% about Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods and 11% not specific to a benefit **[Table 8]**.
- Most suggestions were about 'Improving information available/Communications', which accounted for 30% of all suggestions received, followed by 26% of suggestions about 'Administrative Process' **[Table 9, Chart 12]**.

**Chart 12: Suggestions by reason from 1 April to 30 September 2022**



# Background to Feedback

Social Security Scotland is the executive agency of Scottish Government which is responsible for delivering social security benefits for Scotland. Social Security Scotland was introduced on 4 September 2018. Feedback (complaints, compliments, and suggestions) has been received by Social Security Scotland since it was introduced in September 2018. Feedback can be about a particular benefit or not specific to a benefit.

Initially feedback was received by telephone, email or letter. Webchat was introduced as a communication channel to Social Security Scotland from 1 May 2020. Social media was added to the feedback recording system from April 2021, and includes complaints received through telephone, email, letter or webchat that were originally signposted via social media. In 2022/23, feedback was also received face to face.

The volume of feedback received will be related to the number of live benefits and clients. New benefits have launched over time, potentially bringing more people in touch with Social Security Scotland. Benefit launch dates and application/payment volumes are summarised on the next page.

## Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints

Complaints fall under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and their complaints handling procedure. This sets out a two Stage internal complaints process. Frontline resolution – Stage 1, allows 5 working days to respond to the client's complaint. From January 2020, an extension of five working days can be added to this initial timescale by Social Security Scotland where it will be beneficial to the client. Prior to this, extensions had to be agreed with the client. For Stage 1 complaints it may be more appropriate to escalate the complaint to Stage 2 rather than applying an extension. Where a client remains unhappy with the response to a Stage 1 complaint, they can proceed to investigation – Stage 2, which allows 20 working days to investigate and provide a response. Again, since January 2020 an extension of five working days can be added to this timescale by Social Security Scotland if required, whereas prior to this extensions were agreed with the client. If the client still remains unhappy then they can choose to take their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

A small number of complaints went straight to investigation – Stage 2. Not all complaints are suitable for frontline resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints handled at the investigation stage of the complaints handling procedure are typically complex or require a detailed examination. Examples of this include:

- the client/appointee refuses to take part in frontline resolution
- the issues raised are complex and require detailed investigation
- the complaint relates to serious, high-risk, or high-profile issues

The following table gives the launch dates and application numbers for each benefit.

Benefit	Start date	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	All time	Complaints to September 2022
<a href="#">Carer's Allowance Supplement</a>	3 Sep 18	86,570 carers in receipt	89,265 carers in receipt	91,595 carers in receipt	93,325 carers in receipt	81,680 carers in receipt at Apr-22 eligibility date	133,110 carers in receipt	135
<a href="#">Best Start Grant/Best Start Foods</a> - Pregnancy and Baby Payment - Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment - Best Start Grant School Age Payment - Best Start Foods	10 Dec 18 29 Apr 19 3 Jun 19 12 Aug 19	19,480 applications	128,075 applications	118,605 applications	84,215 applications	42,115 applications to Aug-22	392,485 applications	685
<a href="#">Funeral Support Payment</a>	16 Sep 19	n/a	3,975 applications	8,685 applications	8,715 applications	3,985 applications to Sep-22	25,360 applications	45
<a href="#">Young Carer Grant</a>	21 Oct 19	n/a	1,750 applications	3,375 applications	3,935 applications	2,430 applications to Sep-22	11,490 applications	5
<a href="#">Job Start Payment</a>	17 Aug 20	n/a	n/a	3,190 applications	6,915 applications	1,215 applications to Sep-22	11,320 applications	5
<a href="#">Scottish Child Payment</a>	9 Nov 20 (applications) 15 Feb 21 (payments)	n/a	n/a	104,575 applications	53,355 applications	31,685 applications to Sep-22	189,615 applications	195
<a href="#">Child Winter Heating Assistance</a>	27 Nov 20	n/a	n/a	18,315 payments	19,865 payments	No published data	38,180 payments	10

<a href="#">Child Disability Payment</a>	16 Jul 21 (pilot) 22 Nov 21 (national)	n/a	n/a	n/a	9,570 applications	10,485 applications to Sep-22	20,060 applications	300
<a href="#">Adult Disability Payment</a>	21 Mar 22(pilot) 29 Aug 2022 (national)	n/a	n/a	n/a	525 applications	28,095 applications to Sep-22	28,620 applications	35

Note: Annual figures are based on the latest Official Statistics publications, but may be revised when the statistics are updated.

## Complaint reasons

Complaint reasons are categorised by Social Security Scotland staff based on the information received from clients. Complaint reasons were amended from 12 March 2021 to better reflect types of complaints received and provide more focussed data to inform improvement activity. In the table below, complaints received prior to 12 March 2021 have been mapped to new categories as set out below. 'Client expectation not met - Information provided' is a new category that does not map onto previous complaint reasons.

Previous categories	New categories	Description
Inadequate standard of service	Client expectations not met – Quality of service	Should be used where we have provided the client with a service which is below the expected standard.
Failure to provide a service	Client expectations not met – Accessing services	Should be used where we have not delivered a service e.g. online application form unavailable
Dissatisfaction with Scottish Government policy	Client expectations not met - Policy and procedures	Should be used when client is unhappy with Social Security Scotland's policy or procedures.
Disagreement with a decision	Disagreement with a decision	Use only for benefits with no right of appeal
Failure to follow the appropriate process	Client expectations not met – Timescales	Should be used where we did not meet published timescales.
Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff	Client expectations not met - Treatment by member of staff	Should be used where the service provided by a staff member was not at the expected standard.
N/a	Client expectations not met - Information provided	Should be used where the client is unhappy about information provided on Social Security Scotland websites, social media, advertising or letters.

For the purposes of this publication we have removed the prefix 'Client expectations not met' from these categories.

## **Complaint outcomes**

Possible outcomes for complaints are:

- Upheld – the client’s complaint has been upheld, as it meets the terms in the definition of a complaint.
- Not upheld – the client’s complaint was not upheld because it did not meet the terms in the definition of a complaint.
- Partially upheld – if the client makes a complaint raising more than one issue, one part (or parts) of the complaint may meet the terms in the definition of a complaint, and other(s) do not. In this case the complaint would be partially upheld.
- Resolved - if a client has made a complaint and their complaint is resolved without the need to look further into why something went wrong or to mark it as upheld or not upheld. This outcome was introduced on 12 April 2021.

In this publication complaint outcomes are counted separately for Stage 1 and Stage 2. A complaint that progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 will have two outcomes.

## **Compliments and suggestions**

Compliments and suggestions should be recorded within five working days. Suggestions are investigated and the outcome is provided directly to the client.



# About the data

## How the data is collected

The data in this publication is primarily sourced from Social Security Scotland's case management system. The system holds information on all feedback received, including:

- type of feedback (complaint, compliment, suggestion)
- date received
- channel by which feedback was received (e-mail, telephone, letter, webchat, face to face)
- benefit (or no specific benefit)
- reason for feedback, chosen from defined lists of possible categories
- where applicable, the date that feedback was actioned
- outcome of any decisions, selected from a defined list of possible outcomes

The information is held across multiple tables within the system. 100% extracts of administrative data are taken from this system every month for internal reporting purposes. Data cuts combine information from the different tables in the system into one monthly extract which includes details of all feedback made since September 2018. The data cut used to produce statistics for this publication was taken on 01 November 2022.

## Quality assurance

The data used to produce the figures has been checked on a case by case basis with clerical records used for internal reporting within Social Security Scotland, and discrepancies investigated.

Additional quality assurance and cleaning has been carried out on specific variables:

The dataset has been checked for duplicate records based on Case ID number.

Variables have been checked for missing information.

Feedback received dates and decisions dates have been checked to see whether they fall within expected ranges (e.g. after September 2018) and are consistent with those produced by clerical records.

Feedback channels, reasons, benefits and outcomes have been checked for consistency with those produced by clerical records.

For complaints, the benefit that a complaint refers to and reason for the complaint have been checked for consistency between Stage 1 and Stage 2.

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.

## **Data Quality**

### *Comparison to clerical data*

Data from the case management system has been compared to clerical records. Discrepancies have been investigated with the Client Experience team, and errors in case management system data have been manually fixed to match the clerical record where necessary. Discrepancies included:

- A small number of items of feedback received had a date before September 2018, or had the date of feedback being recorded rather than date received. There were also errors in date feedback was received and decisions were made on the case management system due to migration of feedback information onto the case management system during the first months following the launch of Carer's Allowance Supplement. Dates have been amended back to the original dates received and decided with reference to the clerical records.
- Some feedback had discrepancies in channel, reason or outcome between the case management system and clerical records. Each of these cases have been investigated with the Client Experience team and corrected.
- Some feedback on the case management system is recorded as being not benefit specific. While this is true in some cases, in others this occurs where benefit information is missing. Missing benefit information has been completed with reference to clerical records.
- In a small number of cases the Stage 1 and Stage 2 of one complaint have been recorded as two separate complaints on the case management system. These have been merged back into one complaint where necessary.
- The case management system includes a number of complaints where the outcome is recorded as 'Deleted'. In some cases these are complaints that have been created in error, and these have been removed from the dataset used to produce the figures in this publication. In others cases the outcome of the complaint has been amended from 'Deleted' to the correct outcome of the complaint.
- For the 2022/23 financial year, records that were missing from either the case management system or clerical records were investigated with the Client Experience Team. A small number of duplicate cases were also identified and checked with the Client Experience Team.

### *Rounding and disclosure control*

Feedback numbers have been rounded to the nearest five for disclosure control. Figures may not sum due to rounding. Percentages are based on actual figures and rounded to the nearest percent. Some percentages have been suppressed to prevent back-calculation of small numbers.

### *Channel*

Complaint channel is based on the first channel given for a complaint when it was received at either Stage 1 or 2.

Telephone, email and letter have been available for clients to use to complain since 2018. Telephone was unavailable from mid-March to mid-April 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. Following the launch of Child Disability Payment, we have seen face to face complaints recorded through local delivery interaction with clients.

Webchat was introduced as a communication channel from 1 May 2020. However, webchat was only added to the feedback recording system in February 2021. Where a complaint was received before February 2021, but the complaint notes indicate the complaint was received through webchat, we have counted this complaint as being received by webchat. It is possible that there were further complaints by webchat that have not been identified – these will be counted under ‘telephone’.

Social media complaints have been recorded since 12 April 2021. Complaints are classed as ‘social media’ when a client complains through a social media platform and is signposted by Social Security Scotland communications to make a complaint through one of the other channels, and the client does so. If a client is signposted but does not make a complaint through one of the other channels, their complaint is not recorded. Prior to 12 April 2021, social media was monitored but this type of complaint could not be recorded, and will have been counted as telephone, email, letter or webchat.

### *Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints*

For complaint benefit and reason, we have used the first recorded benefit or reason with a complaint. In general, benefit and reason are not expected to change between Stage 1 and Stage 2, although this may be possible in some cases.

For complaint outcomes, if an application had both a Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint outcome, we have counted this as two separate outcomes – a complaint that progressed from Stage 1 to Stage 2 will have two outcomes.

Complaints that went straight to Stage 2 are included in total complaints and Stage 2 complaints figures, and used to calculate the percentage of complaints reaching Stage 2.

### *Processing time*

Processing time is the number of days from the complaint being received to a decision being made. It is calculated in working days. Weekends and public holidays are excluded. The time of day that a complaint was received or processed is not taken into account. The day the complaint was received is counted as ‘day one’ of processing, regardless of the time of day a complaint was received. For example, a complaint received and processed on the same day would have a processing time of one working day. A complaint received on one day and processed on the next working day would have a processing time of two working days.

Withdrawn complaints have not been included in median processing times statistics. Numbers of withdrawn complaints are relatively small [Table 5], therefore this has had little impact on average processing times.

Processing times are calculated separately for each complaint stage. Where an extension has been agreed on a Stage 1 or Stage 2 complaint, complaints will be classed as having been processed 'within agreed timescales' if they were processed within these extensions [Table 4]. Complaints classed as not being closed within an extension include those that were completed after the extension end date, or completed after the initial timescale without an extension being applied.

#### *Compliments and suggestions recording*

Compliments and suggestions are passed on to the Client Experience team to be recorded. When Social Security Scotland staff have high work volumes it is possible that fewer compliments and suggestions will be passed on. This may be the reason for lower volumes of compliments and suggestions received during 2020/21, as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

### **Comparisons with DWP complaints statistics**

The Department for Work and Pensions has a different feedback process to Social Security Scotland, and as such, the Department for Work and Pensions complaints, compliments and suggestions statistics are not directly comparable to these statistics.

Further information about complaints at the Department for Work and Pensions and links to their latest statistics are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/complaints-about-the-department-for-work-and-pensions>.

### **Related Social Security Scotland publications**

Statistics about individual benefits are published at:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/about/statistics/social-security-scotland-statistics-publications>

All research and statistics publications will be available through the Social Security Scotland 'Publications' webpage at:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications>. This includes qualitative analysis of feedback comments made by clients during the application process for benefits.

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

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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/collections/social-security-scotland-stats-publications/#socialsecurityscotlandfeedbackstatistics>

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

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at [www.gov.scot/scotstat](http://www.gov.scot/scotstat)

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