

**EQUALITY, POVERTY AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

# **Scottish Welfare Fund Statistics: Annual Update: 2019/20**

# Introduction

This publication provides information on the Scottish Welfare Fund for the period 2019/20 (1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020). It also contains information from previous financial years dating back to 1 April 2013, when the scheme commenced its operation. The publication therefore covers the period when COVID-19 first appeared in Scotland in March 2020, and around one week of the lockdown period that began on 23 March 2020.

The publication also includes monthly management information for January to May 2020, broken down by local authority level. This is included for comparison with the Official Statistics and to provide more recent figures that show the impacts of COVID-19 on the Scottish Welfare Fund.

A supplementary spreadsheet containing 73 tables and 15 charts has also been published. Electronic versions of this document and accompanying tables and charts are available at: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/sg-social-security-scotland-stats-publications/#scottishwelfarefundstatistics>

These statistics are being published as experimental statistics. Experimental statistics are defined in the Code of Practice for Official 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>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on experimental statistics please see:

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

## Summary of main points

- The Scottish Welfare Fund is comprised of Community Care Grants – which help people to live independently – and Crisis Grants, which provide a safety net in a disaster or emergency.
- Previously published [monthly management information](#) has already shown that crisis grant applications, awards and expenditure increased in March 2020 due to the impacts of COVID-19, while applications, awards and expenditure for Community Care Grants decreased. The official statistics also show this trend, however, comparison to the monthly management information and investigation with local authorities has indicated that the total applications, awards and expenditure figures have been affected by various data quality issues in March 2020, some related to COVID-19 and others due to different unrelated causes. These issues are described in the [data quality section](#). The commentary in the publication indicates where management information suggests that official statistics are over- or underestimated, and management information to May 2020 has been provided in **Tables 72 and 73** for comparison to the official statistics. The official statistics provide much more detailed information and breakdowns that are not available from the monthly management information and remain the recommended primary source for analysis and commentary.
- From when the Scottish Welfare Fund scheme began on 1 April 2013 until 31 March 2020, 378,190 individual households have received awards totalling £237.8 million. A third of households receiving an award were families with children, while just over half were single person households with no children.
- In 2019/20 Local Authorities received 76,715 applications for Community Care Grants (8% more than the previous year), made 42,360 awards (5% more than the previous year), and the acceptance rate was 55% (three percentage points lower than last year). Expenditure on Community Care Grant awards totalled £24.7 million, less than 1% different to 2018/19. The average award was £584.
- In 2019/20 Local Authorities received 220,150 applications for Crisis Grants (14% more than the previous year), made 139,295 awards (11% more than the previous year), and the acceptance rate was 64% (one percentage point lower than last year). Expenditure on Crisis Grant awards totalled £12.9 million, 24% more than in 2018/19. The average award was £93.
- In 2019/20 82% of Community Care Grant applications and 95% of Crisis Grant applications were processed within the target time limits.
- The annual budget for Scottish Welfare Fund awards in 2019/20 (including underspend from previous years but excluding any additional funds provided by Local Authorities) was £34.9 million. By 31 March 2020, 108% of this budget had been spent across Scotland as a whole. The data suggests that this overspend was not entirely due to COVID-19 in March, as collectively local authorities were on track to overspend the budget throughout 2019/20. This may

partly relate to some local authorities committing additional funds at the start of the year. The proportion of the budget spent varied among Local Authorities, from 34% in Eilean Siar to 139% in Glasgow City.

- Since April 2013, there have been 23,090 Tier 1 reviews for Community Care Grants, and 20,855 for Crisis Grants. Just under half of decisions have been revised at this stage for both Community Care Grants (47%) and Crisis Grants (45%).

**Users should be aware that there are specific data quality issues with data from City of Edinburgh, Glasgow City and North Lanarkshire, which also affect Scotland level official statistics. These are described in the [data quality](#) section. There may also be additional data quality issues due to the impacts of COVID-19, for example, details of applications/awards may not have been received due to processing delays and/or cases being ‘pending’ or ‘awarded in principle’ on local authority systems. We are working with specific local authorities to identify and resolve these errors. We have provisionally included figures as supplied by local authorities’ quarterly extracts in this publication, however these figures may be subsequently revised when we receive further data extracts.**

**Management information collected separately up to May 2020 has been included for comparison to the Official Statistics, and to provide more recent information. The management information provides a better estimate of overall levels of applications, awards and expenditure for March 2020 than the official statistics due to the data quality issues described above.** Overall at Scotland level, comparison to management information indicates that Community Care Grant applications, awards and expenditure for January to March 2020 may be overestimated by around 2-3% and for 2019/20 as a whole by 1% each in this publication. Crisis grant applications, awards and expenditure may be underestimated by around 7-9% and for 2019/20 as a whole by 2-3%. The official statistics provide much more detailed information and breakdowns that are not available from the monthly management information and remain the recommended primary source for analysis and commentary

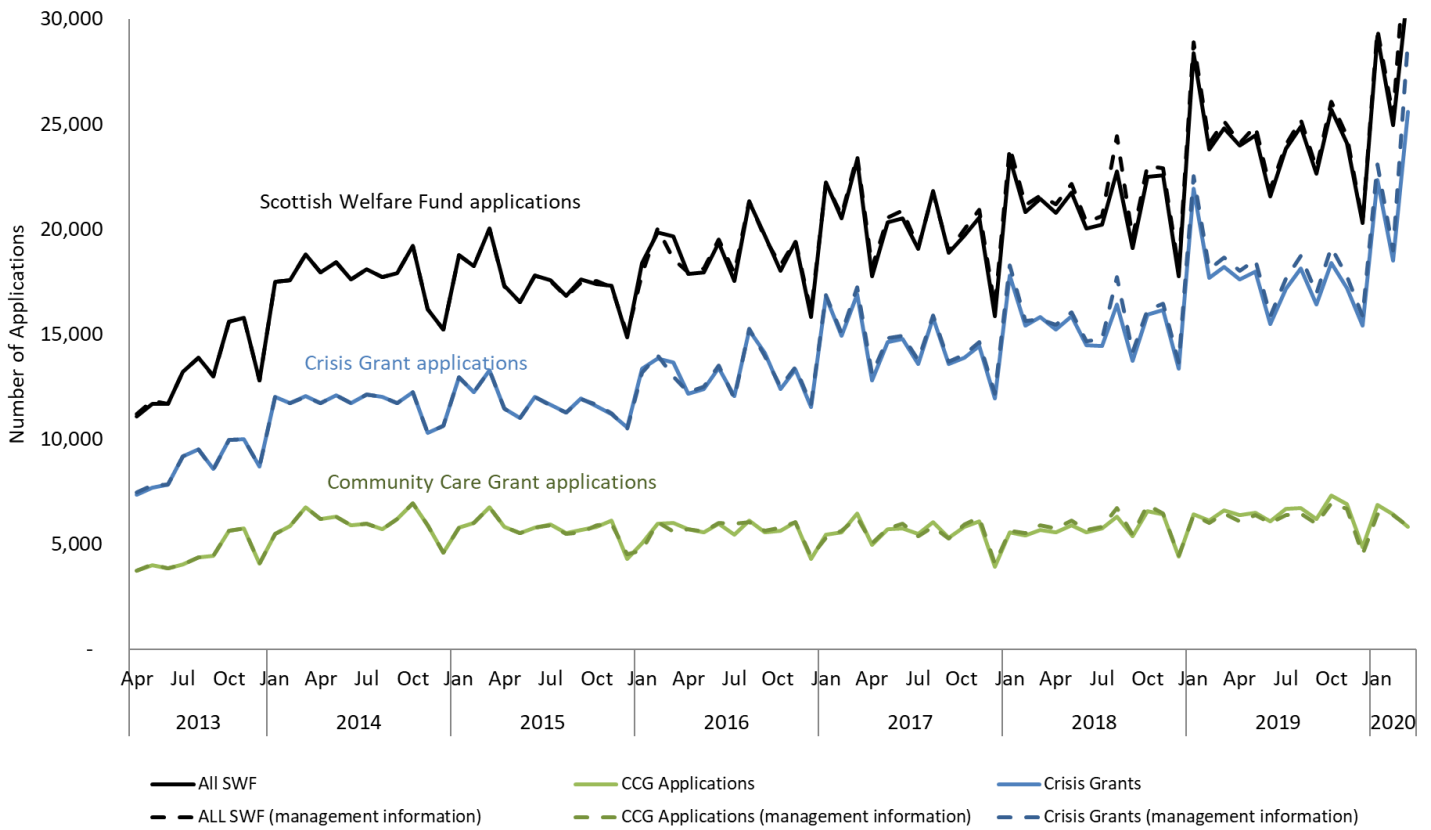
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# Applications

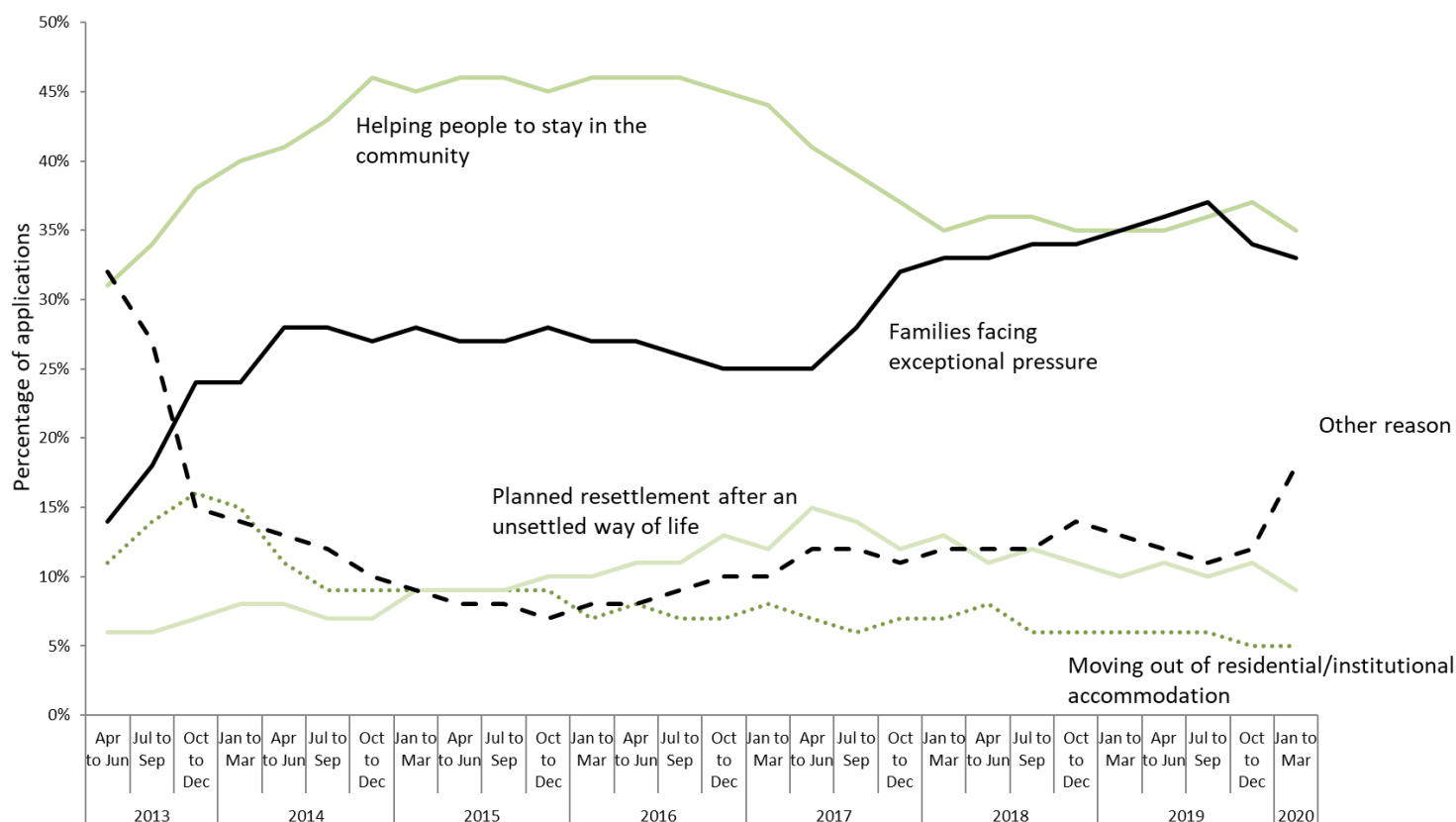
- A total of 296,870 applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund were received in 2019/20 (**Table 2**), the majority were for Crisis Grants (220,150, **Table 6**), and a smaller proportion were for Community Care Grants (76,715, **Table 4**).
- Compared to 2018/19, the number of Community Care Grant applications increased by 8% (5,690) (**Table 4, Chart 1**). At Local Authority level this varied from a 13% decrease in applications in Orkney to a 31% increase in applications in Fife (**Table 4**).
- Compared to 2018/19, the number of Crisis Grant applications increased by 14% (26,845) (**Table 6, Chart 1**), continuing the upward trend since 2015/16. At Local Authority level this varied from an 9% decrease in Falkirk to a 48% increase in Clackmannanshire (**Table 6**).
- As in previous years, there was a decrease in both Community Care Grant and Crisis Grant applications in December 2019 followed by a peak in January 2020 (**Chart 1**).
- In March 2020, there were 27% more applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund than in March 2019 according to the Official Statistics (**Chart 1**). This was due to an increase in Crisis Grant applications (+41%), while there was a drop in the number of Community Care Grant applications (-12%). This appears to have been due to the impacts of COVID-19.
- Local Authorities also submit monthly management information returns to the Scottish Government and this serves as a valuable way of checking data quality. **Chart 1** shows how the quarterly data submitted to the Scottish Government compares with these monthly returns. For Scotland as a whole there is broad agreement between the two data sources for 2019/20. However, the monthly data suggests that the increase in crisis grant demand may have been even sharper than suggested by the Official Statistics (+55%), and that cases are missing from the Official Statistics as described in the [data quality section](#) (Chart 1, Table 72, Table 73). Future updates to the Official Statistics may show that total applications in March (and therefore the quarter January to March 2020, and 2019/20) were higher than currently suggested.

**Chart 1: Applications to the Scottish Welfare Fund – Scotland – Monthly**



- ‘Helping people to stay in the community’ remains the most common reason for Community Care Grant applications (36% applications in 2019/20) (**Table 8**). In the last quarter in particular there were some relatively large changes in reasons for Community Care Grant applications which may relate to COVID-19. For example, the number of applications due to ‘Other’ reasons increased by 36% compared January to March 2019, and this category is likely to include applications where local authorities have recorded the reason as ‘COVID-19’ or similar on their own software systems, or could also indicate a decrease in data quality due to COVID-19 impacts.

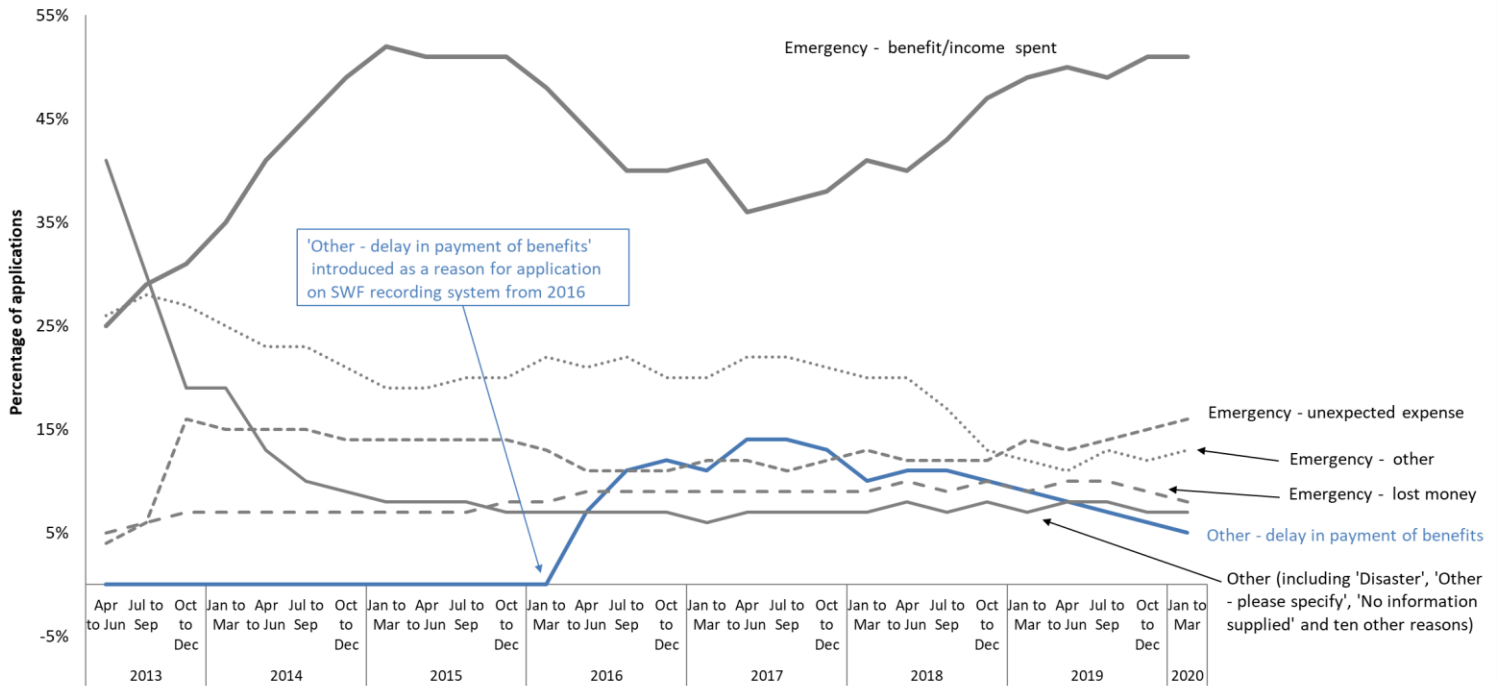
**Chart 2: Reasons for Application – Community Care Grants - Quarterly**



- The most common reasons for Crisis Grant applications are different types of emergency (91% applications in 2019/20), whereas disasters such as fires and floods are less common (less than 1% applications) (**Table 11, Chart 3**).
- Within the broader category of ‘Emergency’, the most common sub-reason remained ‘benefit/income spent’ (50% of applications) which has increased by 27% (23,665 applications) since 2018/19 (**Table 11**). Again in the most recent quarter there was a relatively large increase in applications due to ‘Other’ reasons (+33% compared to January to March 2019), which may relate directly to COVID-19, or to a decrease in data quality. There was also a relatively large increase in ‘Emergency – unexpected expense’ (+32% compared to January to March 2019).
- The number of applications due to delay in payment of benefits gradually increased after this reason was introduced in 2016, peaked in July to September 2018 (6,100 applications) and since then decreased to 3,275 applications in the most recent quarter, which was 5% of all Crisis Grant applications, and a decrease of 35% compared to the same quarter in 2019 (**Table 10, Chart 3**).



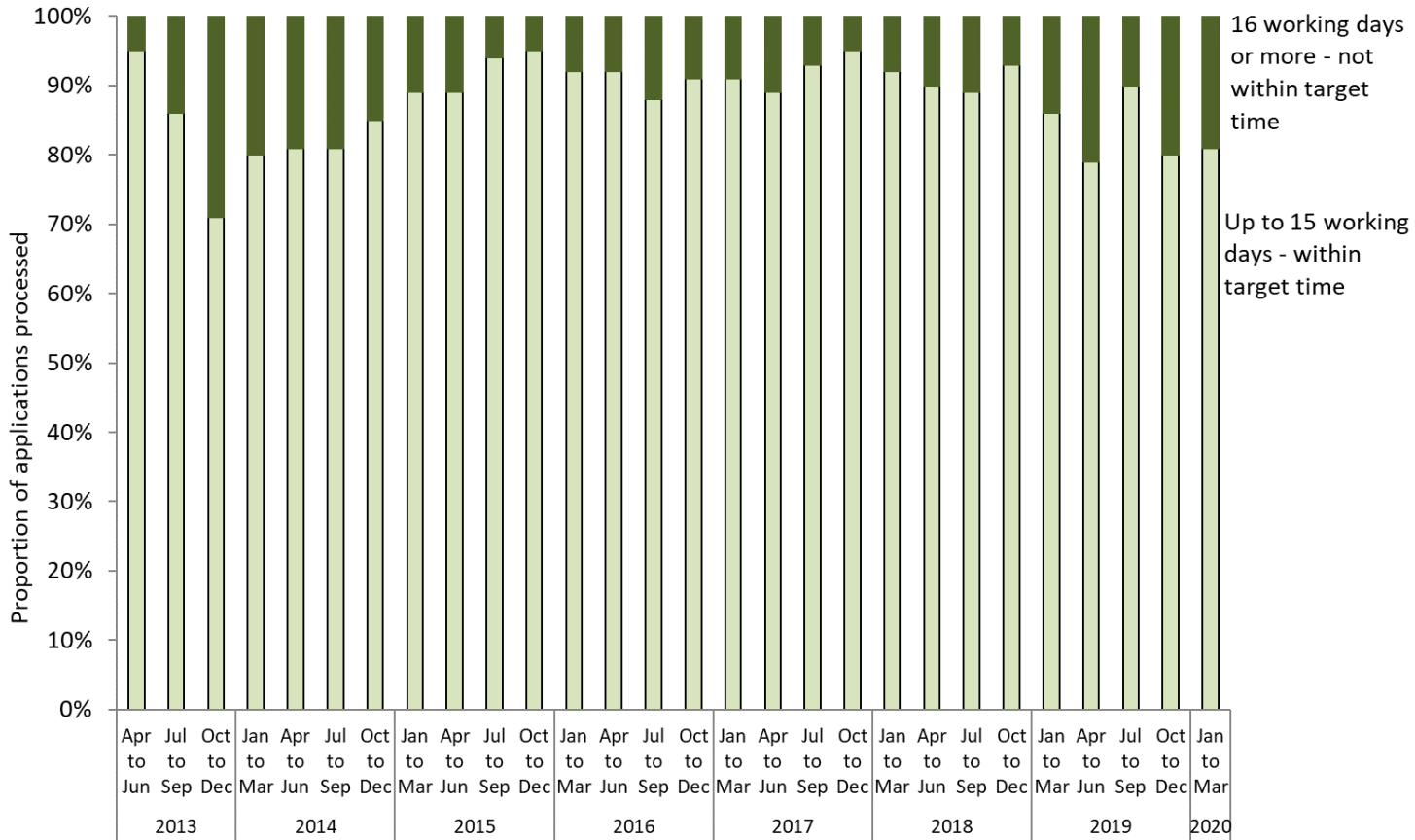
**Chart 3: Reasons for Application – Crisis Grants – Quarterly**



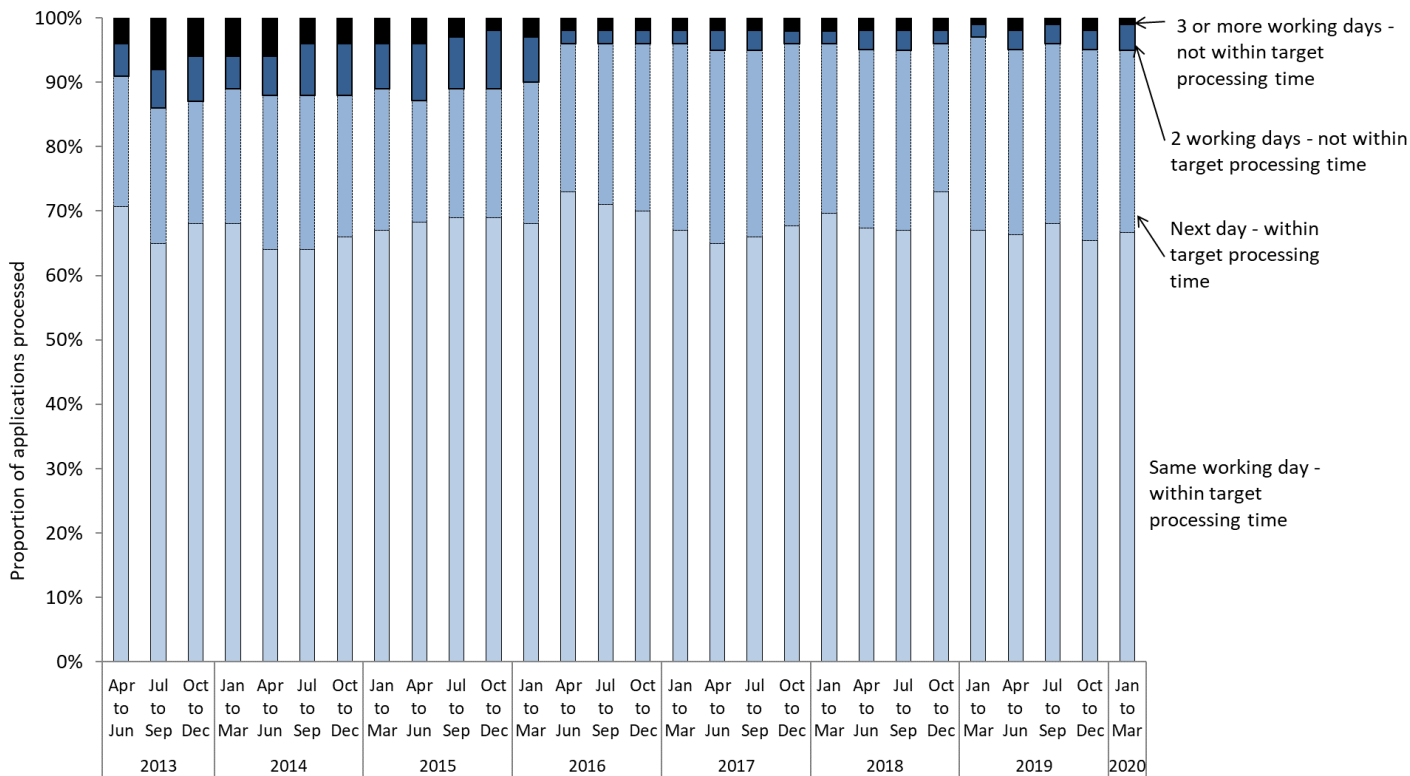
# Processing Times

- 82% of Community Care Grant applications were processed within the target time of 15 working days in 2019/20. This is a decrease of eight percentage points compared to 2018/19 (**Table 14, Chart 4**). This does not appear to be an effect of COVID-19, as processing times were around this level in three out of four quarters of the year. In the latest quarter, processing time varied by Local Authority, from 49% in Glasgow City to 100% in five Local Authorities: Clackmannanshire, Edinburgh, Inverclyde, Midlothian and North Ayrshire (**Table 15**). Proportion processed within target has been low for Glasgow City in previous quarters in 2019/20, and the council have indicated this has been due to high demand (**Table 1**).
- 95% of Crisis Grant applications were processed within the target time of the next working day, which is one percentage point less than 2018/19 (**Table 17, Chart 5**). In the latest quarter, the proportion processed on time was only slightly lower than previous quarters (94%). In the latest quarter processing times varied from 63% in Shetland to 100% in six Local Authorities (**Table 18**).
- A chart showing the variation in processing times for Community Care Grant applications within each Local Authority is included in the separate tables file that accompanies this publication (**Chart 4b**). This charts illustrate that as well as there being a variation in the proportion of applications processed on time between Local Authorities (**Tables 15 and 18**), there can be considerable variation within Local Authorities. For example, **Chart 4b** shows that for Community Care Grants since April 2013, the median processing time (or the middle value of processing times if all applications were ranked from highest to lowest) was lower than the target of 15 working days. However, 95% of applications took up to around 25 days to process, with 5% of applications taking longer than this.
- There is much lower variation in processing times for Crisis Grants. Since April 2013, the median processing time (or the middle value of processing times if all applications were ranked from highest to lowest) for all Local Authorities has been either the same or next working day.
- It is possible that cases are currently missing from the dataset used to produce this publication due to delays in processing, or due to cases being awarded in principle or 'pending' on local authority systems. It is therefore possible that estimates of the proportion of cases processed within target times could change for the latest quarter once these cases are received.

**Chart 4: Initial Processing Times for Community Care Grants – Quarterly**



**Chart 5: Initial Processing Times for Crisis Grants – Quarterly**



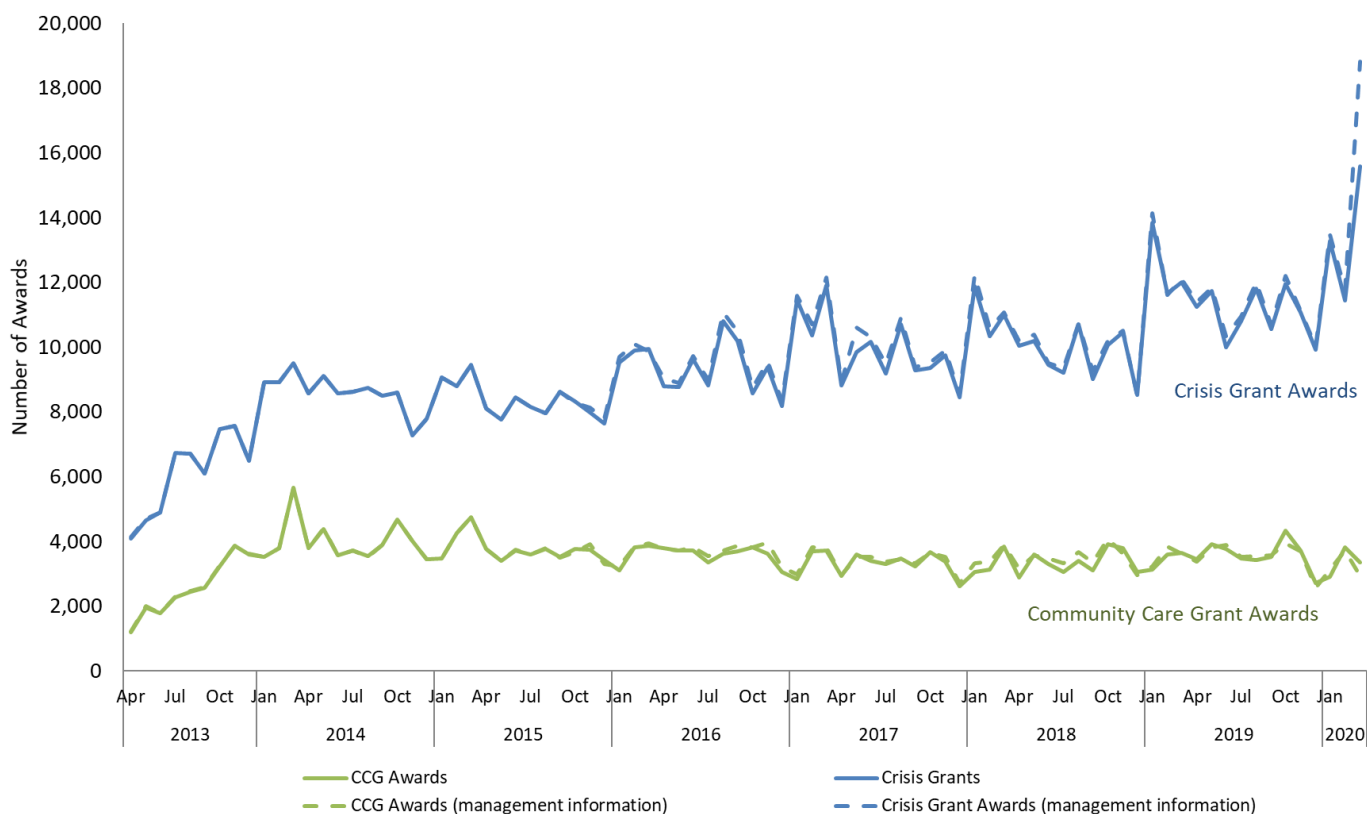
## Decisions and awards

- In March 2020 there was a sharp increase in Crisis Grant awards (+30% compared to March 2019) according to the Official Statistics, which appears to be due to the impacts of COVID-19. This increase may have been even higher according to the monthly management information (**Chart 6, Table 72, Table 73**), and the Official Statistics may have been affected by missing cases and data quality issues as described in the [data quality](#) section. At the same time, the Official Statistics suggest that the number of Community Care Grant awards decreased by 8% in March 2020 compared to March 2019 (**Chart 1**). Again, the decrease was larger in the monthly management information.
- Decisions were made on 77,300 Community Care Grant applications in 2019/20. The decision was to make an award in 55% of cases (42,360 awards), while the remaining 45% of applications were rejected (34,940 unsuccessful applications) (**Table 19**). The acceptance rate decreased by three percentage points compared to last year (**Table 23, Chart 7**).
- At Local Authority level, the greatest increase in Community Care Grant awards since 2018/19 was in Clackmannanshire (53% increase, **Table 21**), reflecting a 21% increase in applications (**Table 4**) and an increase of 8 percentage point in acceptance rate (**Table 23**). The greatest decrease was in Falkirk (27% decrease), reflecting a 12% decrease in applications and a 10 percentage point decrease in the acceptance rate. The highest acceptance rate was 83% in Orkney, and the lowest was 34% in Fife. Acceptance rates fell in most Local Authorities compared to 2018/19 (**Table 23**).
- In the latest quarter, 52% Community Care Grant decisions were to make an award, and 48% to reject the application (**Table 19**). This acceptance rate is slightly lower than the previous quarters in the year, or January to March 2019. In January to March 2020, the most common reason for rejections remained 'Reasons for application do not meet the conditions for an award' (63%), and there was a relatively large increase in 'Priority rating insufficiently high' (+95% compared to January to March 2019), making this the second most common reason for rejections (10% of rejections) (**Table 29**). These changes may be due to the impact of COVID-19.
- Decisions were made on 217,920 Crisis Grants in 2019/20. The percentage of successful cases was slightly higher than for Community Care Grant applications, at 64% (139,295 awards) (**Table 24**). The percentage of successful cases has decreased by one percentage points since last year (**Table 28, Chart 7**).
- At Local Authority level, the greatest increase in Crisis Grant awards since 2018/19 was in Scottish Borders (48% increase, **Table 26**), reflecting a 15% increase in applications (**Table 6**) and a 13% increase in the acceptance rate (**Table 28**). The greatest decrease was in Orkney (32% decrease), although this

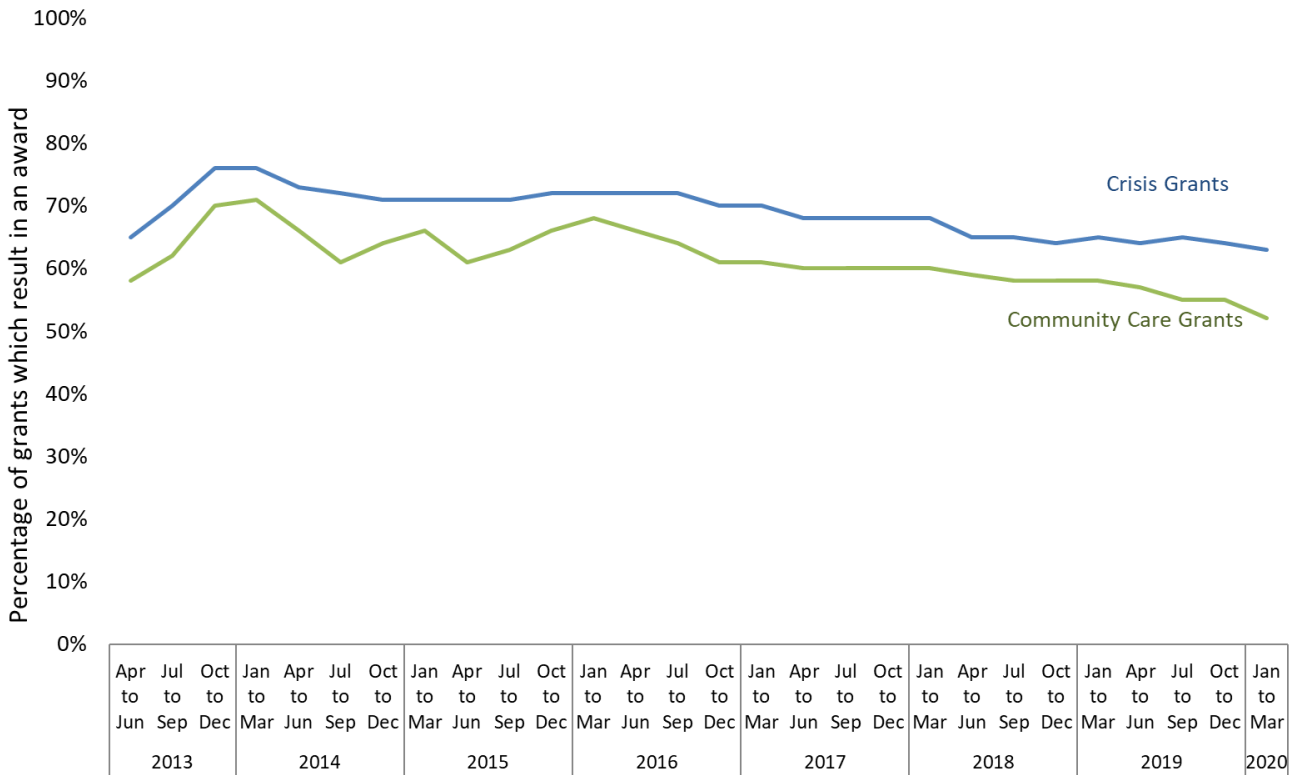
was a decrease of 25 awards. The highest acceptance rate was 96% in Eilean Siar, and the lowest was 46% in Falkirk and North Ayrshire. Acceptance rates fell in most Local Authorities compared to 2018/19 (**Table 28**).

- In the latest quarter, 63% Crisis Grant decisions were to make an award, which is slightly lower than the previous quarters of the year, or January to March 2019 (**Table 27**). In the latest quarter, the most frequent reasons for rejections were the same as January to March 2019 ('Excluded as a result of previous application history' (31%) and 'Reasons for application do not meet the conditions for an award' (23%). However there were also some very large relative changes in other less frequently used rejection reasons, such as 'Not on low income' (+263%), and 'Evidence of previous fraud' (+180%), which may be the result of COVID-19 (**Table 31**).

**Chart 6: Number of Scottish Welfare Fund Awards – Scotland – Monthly**



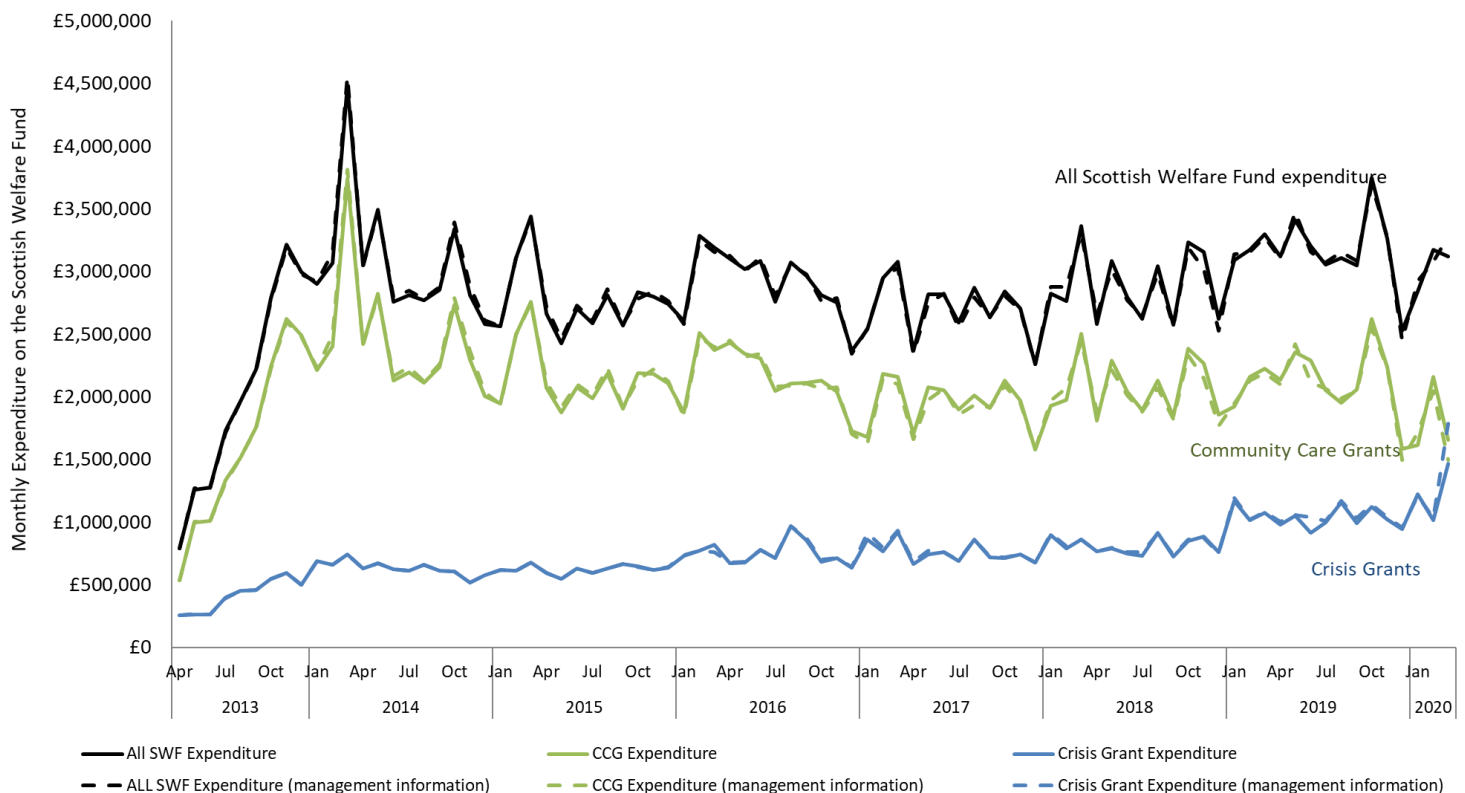
**Chart 7: Community Care Grant and Crisis Grant acceptance rates – Quarterly**



# Expenditure and budgets

- Unless otherwise stated, all expenditure information in this publication is based on the date of decision. As such it should be regarded as committed spend, rather than actual spend. Where a case has been reviewed, expenditure is assigned to the quarter of the initial decision rather than the review date. Further discussion of expenditure data quality is included in the [Data Quality](#) section of the publication.
- Local Authorities submit monthly management information returns to the Scottish Government. These returns also contain expenditure information on Community Care Grants and Crisis Grants. **Chart 8** shows that expenditure recorded in the quarterly monitoring matches closely with the information in the monthly returns at Scotland level until March 2020.

**Chart 8: Expenditure on the Scottish Welfare Fund – Comparison of official statistics and monthly management information – Scotland – Monthly**



Between 1 January and 31 March 2020:

- £9.1 million was spent through the Scottish Welfare Fund, 4% less than in January to March 2019 (£9.6 million) (**Table 39, Chart 8**). During this quarter, expenditure on crisis grants increased compared to last year (£3.7 million compared to £3.3 million, +14%), but expenditure on Community Care Grant expenditure decreased (£5.4 million compared to £6.3 million, -14%).

- The Official Statistics indicate that in March 2020, expenditure was 5% lower than in March 2019, with Crisis Grant expenditure 37% higher, and Community Care Grant expenditure 26% lower (**Chart 8**). The monthly management information suggests that these changes in expenditure were greater, with a 65% increase in Crisis Grant expenditure and a 32% decrease in Community Care Grant expenditure compared to March 2019. These differences are discussed in the [data quality](#) section.

During 2019/20:

- The available budget for awards in 2019/20 was £34.9 million, which included £33.0 million allocated by Scottish Government, and £1.9 million of underspend carried forward from 2018/19 (**Table 40**).
- A total of £37.6 million was spent on Scottish Welfare Fund awards (**Table 38**), including £24.7 million on Community Care Grants (**Table 34**) and £12.9 million on Crisis Grants (**Table 36**). This is an overall increase in expenditure during 2019/20 of 7%, with Community Care Grant expenditure being less than 1% different to 2018/19, but Crisis Grant expenditure increasing by 24% (**Table 34, Table 36**).
- Expenditure on Community Care Grants increased compared to 2018/19 in 14 Local Authorities, the greatest relative increase being in Clackmannanshire (59% increase, **Table 34**). Expenditure decreased in 18 Local Authorities, the greatest relative decrease occurring in Falkirk (31% decrease).
- Expenditure on Crisis Grants increased compared to 2018/19 in 25 Local Authorities, the greatest relative increase being in Scottish Borders (69%, **Table 36**). Expenditure decreased in seven Local Authorities, with the greatest relative decrease in North Ayrshire (19% decrease).
- Average award value for Community Care Grants decreased from £614 in 2018/19 to £584 in 2019/20. This value may have been impacted by some Crisis Grants being reported as Community Care Grants as explained in the [data quality section](#). The average award value for Crisis Grants increased from £83 in 2018/19 to £93 in 2019/20.

Expenditure compared to budget:

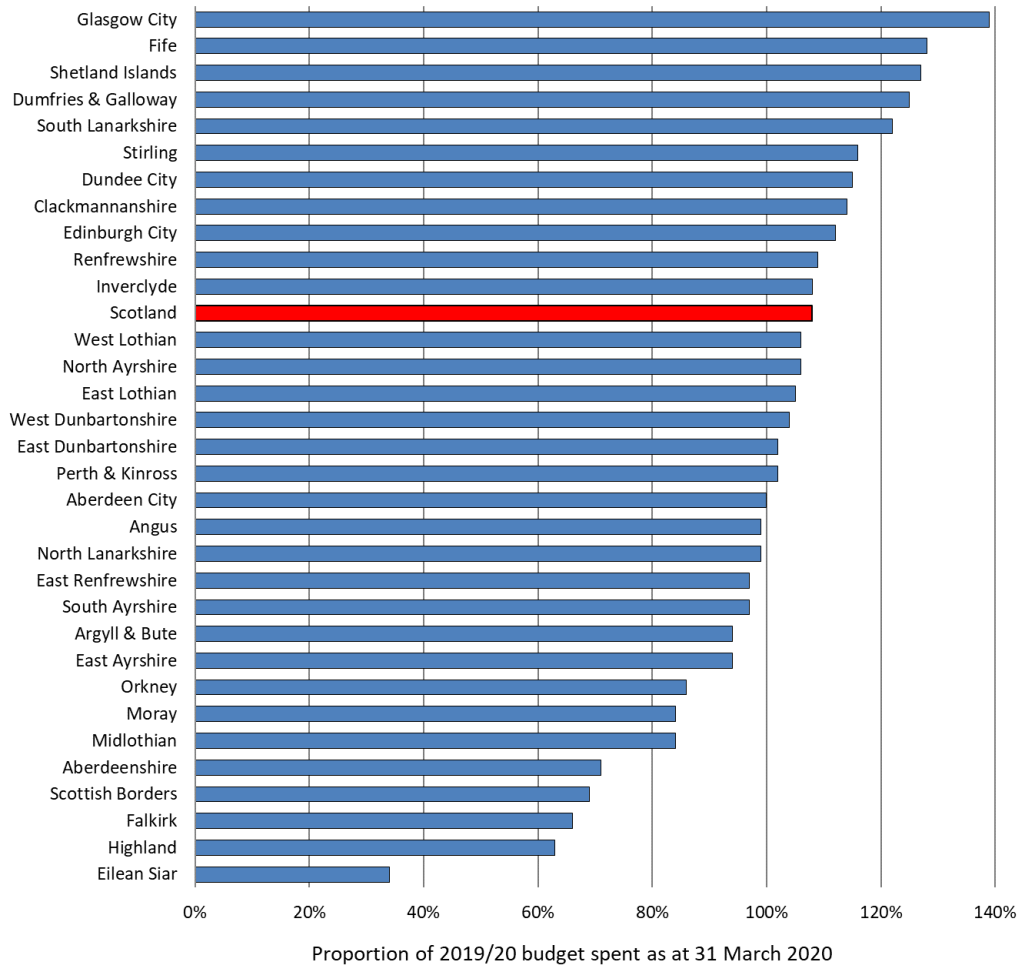
- As a whole, Local Authorities spent 108% of the available budget (the amount allocated by Scottish Government plus underspend from previous years) (**Table 42, Chart 9**). In comparison, at the end of 2018/19 100% of the available budget had been spent (**Table 42**). However, expenditure varied considerably between the local authorities.
- Eight Local Authorities spent less than 90% of their budgets in 2019/20: Aberdeenshire (71%), Eilean Siar (34%), Falkirk (66%), Highland (63%), Midlothian (84%), Moray (84%), Orkney (86%), and Scottish Borders (69%). Of



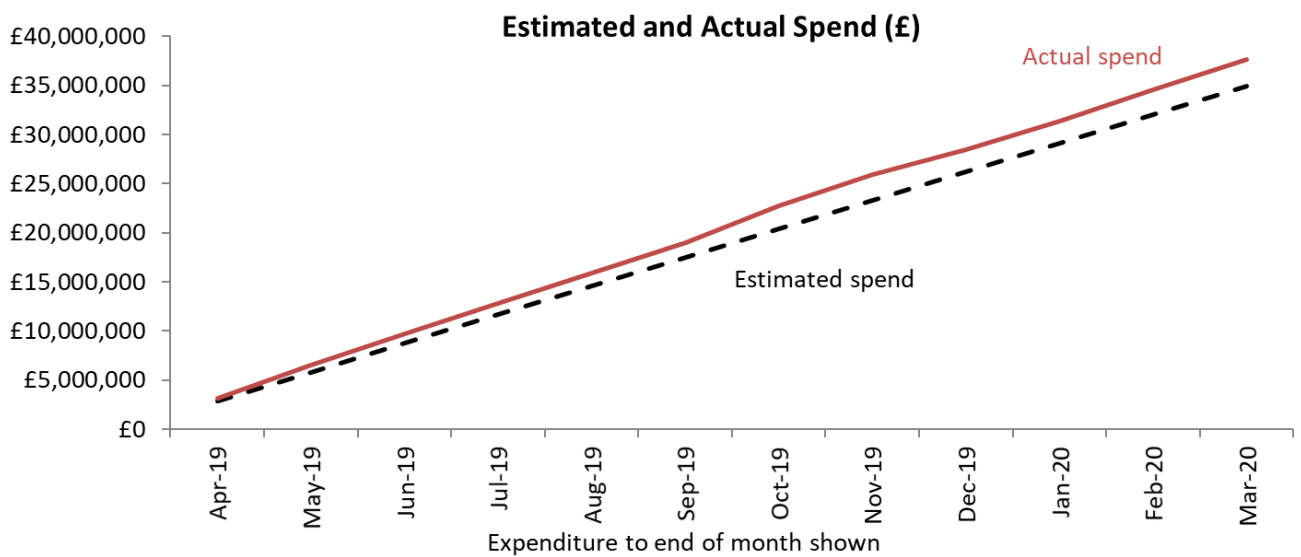
these eight Local Authorities, seven also spent less than 90% of their budgets last year. Collective underspend for the year was £1.9 million (**Table 40**), a similar level to the previous year.

- However, in 2019/20 17 local authorities spend more than their budget (**Table 42, Chart 9**), with the highest relative spend in Glasgow City (139% budget spent). Of the seventeen Local Authorities that overspent their budgets this year, thirteen overspent last year. The Local Authorities where expenditure as a proportion of available budget increased the most were Clackmannanshire (35 percentage points), Fife (31 percentage points), Glasgow City (24 percentage points), and South Lanarkshire (21 percentage points). In total Local Authorities overspent their available budgets for 2019/20 by around £4.7 million. This is more than double the overspend for 2018/19 (£1.9 million, **Table 40**).
- Local authorities were allocated £22 million of funding for COVID-19, which may have been used from March 2020. Scottish Government does not currently hold information on the amount spent by local authorities from this COVID-19 funding in March 2020. The maximum possible would be the £4.7 million overspend by the end of 2019/20. However, it is unlikely that all of this overspend was due to COVID-19. Some local authorities that spent more than their allocation of funding and previous underspends may also have committed to add their own funds to the Scottish Welfare Fund at the start of 2019/20. **Chart 10** indicates that there was an overspend of around 7-10% by the end of each month throughout 2019/20 (in comparison to an estimated flat expenditure profile), and that the overspend did not just occur due to the impact of COVID-19 in March 2020.

**Chart 9: Proportion of 2019/20 budget spent as at 31 March 2020**



**Chart 10: Cumulative expenditure on the Scottish Welfare Fund – Monthly – 2019/20**



## Housing costs within Universal Credit:

- From 1 April 2017, the UK Government introduced a change to the entitlement for housing costs within Universal Credit (UC), resulting in people aged 18-21 years no longer being eligible, unless the individual is covered by an exemption<sup>2</sup>. The policy applies to new claimants, claiming UC on or after 1 April 2017, in an area using the full, digital service. To mitigate against this, the Scottish Government extended the Scottish Welfare Fund on an interim basis to provide Community Care Grants to 18-21 year olds affected by this change<sup>3</sup>. Based on management information supplied to Scottish Government by Local Authorities, these grants amounted to around £14,000 from 1 April 2017 to 31 December 2018. Applications, awards, expenditure and review data relating to these grants have been excluded from the rest of this publication. On 5 November 2018 the UK Government laid regulations coming into force on 31 December 2018 revoking the removal of assistance with housing costs for those aged 18-21. We have not received any further management information on these grants since December 2018.

## Family Reunion Crisis Grants:

- Delivery of Family Reunion Crisis Grants commenced on 14 May 2018. The grants support refugee families arriving in Scotland under family reunion rules to settle with their family member already resident in the Local Authority area. Applicants can apply for both Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants through this scheme. Based on management information supplied to Scottish Government by Local Authorities, these grants have amounted to around £151,500 from 14 May 2018 to 31 March 2020.

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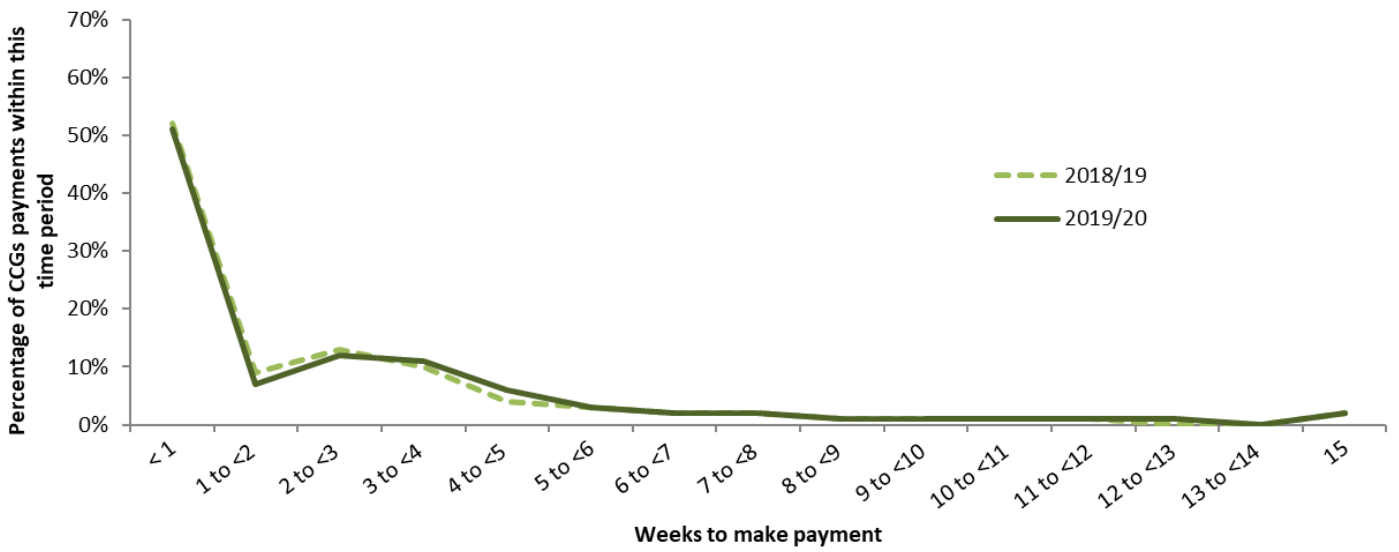
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-costs-for-18-to-21-year-olds>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-security/support-with-housing-costs/>

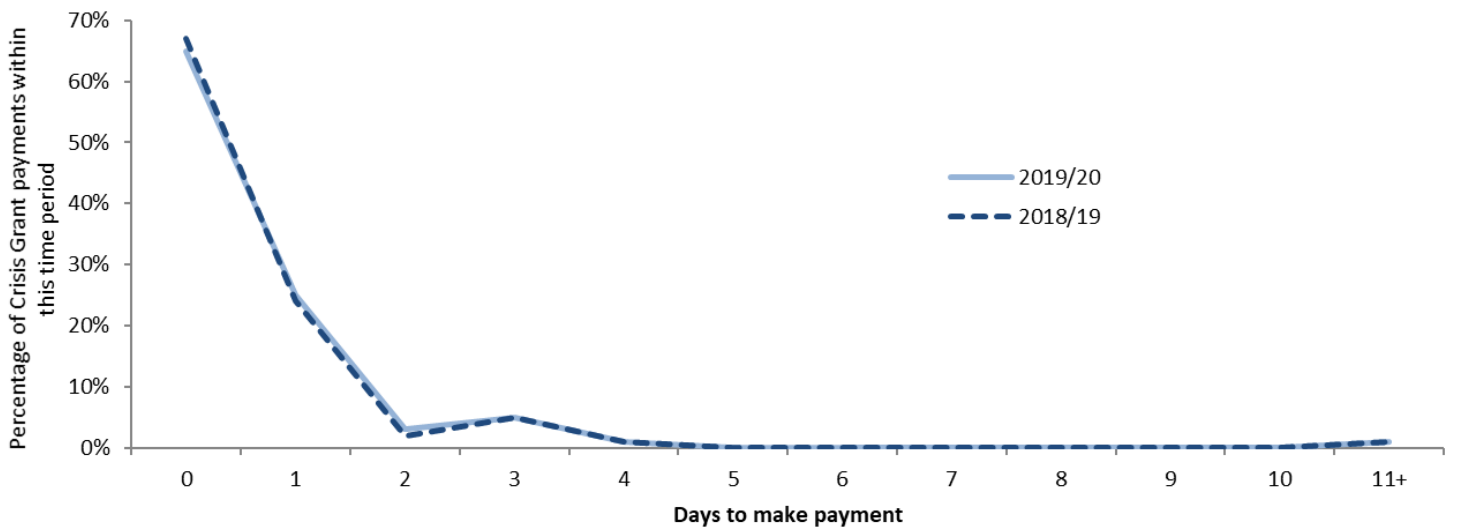
# Items and Payments

- In 2019/20 the most common Community Care Grant expenditure remained on floor coverings, beds and bedding, and kitchen appliances such as cookers, fridges and freezers (**Table 44**).
- In general, the most commonly awarded items and the numbers of these items awarded have remained similar quarter to quarter (**Table 43**). However, for January to March 2020 the Official Statistics are showing a 538% increase in awards for food and a 313% increase in awards for essential heating. This is likely to be due to the issue with Glasgow City COVID-19 related Crisis Grants being reported to Scottish Government as Community Care Grants (see the [data quality](#) section). Almost all other items were less frequently awarded in January to March 2020 than in January to March 2019, in line with the decrease in Community Care Grants awarded.
- In 2019/20 the most common Crisis Grant expenditure was on food, essential heating expenses and other living expenses, as in previous years (**Table 48**). The amount spent on these items increased by 23-26% each compared to 2018/19. In the latest quarter the proportion of crisis grant expenditure on food, heating and other living expenses remained similar to January to March 2019, although the total value of these items increased by 10-24% compared to January to March 2019, in line with the increase in crisis grants awarded.
- The most common payment method for Community Care Grants in 2019/20 remained provision of new goods (53% of payments, **Table 52**). The number of payments into banks increased in the latest quarter, which may be an impact of COVID-19 or due to some Crisis grants being reported to Scottish Government as Community Care Grant applications – in January to March 2020 10% payments were by this method, compared to 7% in January to March 2019, and the number of payments by this method increased by 55%. Cash remained the most common payment method for Crisis Grants (43% payments) (**Table 54**).
- In 2019/20 just over half of payments were made within one week (51%), which is similar to 2018/19 (52%) (**Chart 11**). Payment times for Crisis Grants remained similar in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19, with 65% Crisis Grants paid on the same day as all information being received (compared to 67% the previous year) (**Chart 12**).

**Chart 11: Distribution of time to make Community Care Grant payments (comparing 2018/19 with 2019/20)**



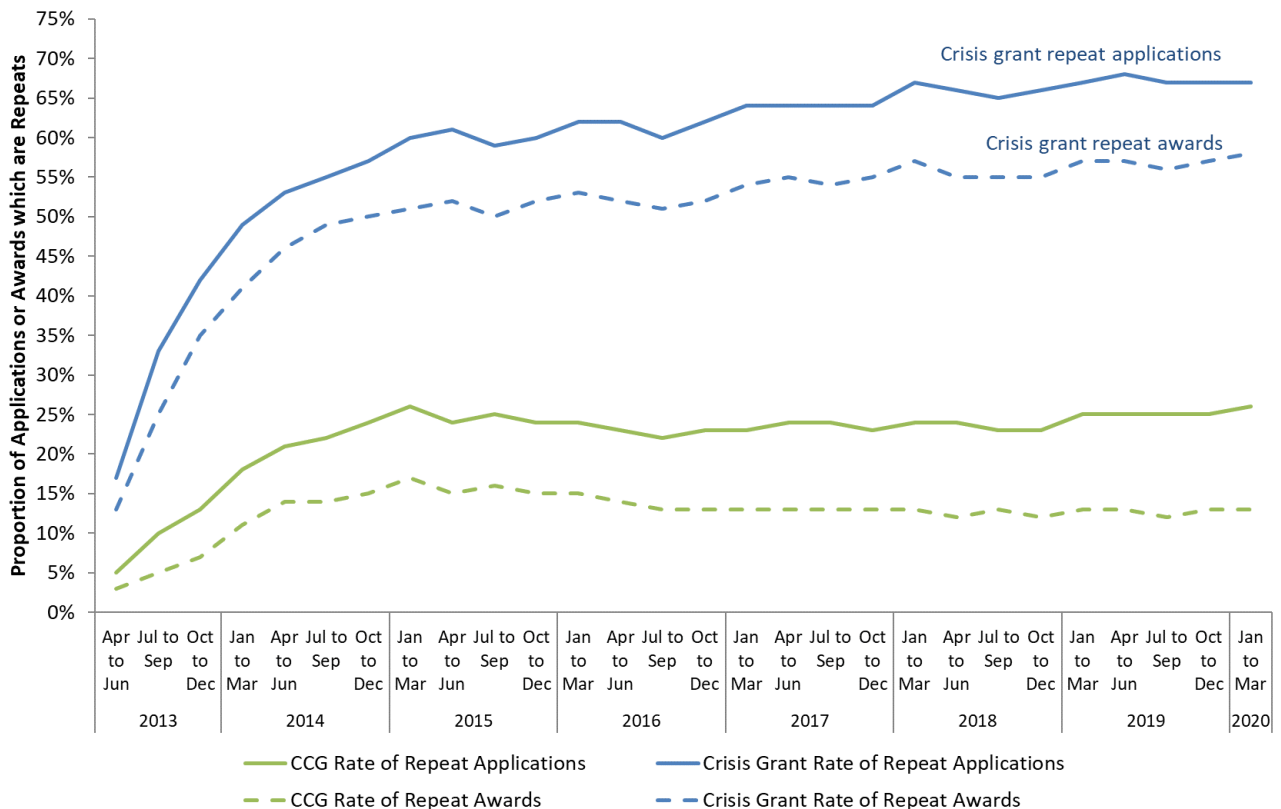
**Chart 12: Distribution of time to make Crisis Grant payments (comparing 2018/19 with 2019/20)**



# Repeat Applications and Awards

- There is a higher rate of both repeat applications and repeat awards for Crisis Grants compared to Community Care Grants (**Chart 13**).
- The number of repeat Community Care Grant applications and the number of repeat Crisis Grant applications both increased by 16% between 2018/19 and 2019/20 (**Table 65 and 69**). The proportion of applications that were repeats also increased slightly for Community Care Grants (from 24% in 2018/19 to 26% in 2019/20) and Crisis Grants (from 66% in 2018/19 to 67% in 2019/20). In January to March 2020, repeat applications for Community Care Grants increased by one percentage point compared to January to March 2019, and repeat applications for Crisis Grants remained at 67% in both January to March 2019 and January to March 2020.
- In 2019/20, 13% of Community Care Grant awards were repeats (**Table 67**), unchanged from 2018/19. 57% of Crisis Grant awards were repeats (**Table 71**), compared to 56% in 2018/19. Similarly in the latest quarter, 13% Community Care Grant awards were repeats, unchanged from January to March 2019, and 58% Crisis Grant awards were repeats, a slight increase from January to March 2019 (57%).

**Chart 13: Repeat applications and awards for Community Care Grants and Crisis Grants - Quarterly**



# Reviews

- Since April 2013, there have been 23,090 Tier 1 reviews for Community Care Grants, and 20,855 for Crisis Grants (**Table 55**)<sup>4</sup>. Just under half of decisions have been revised at this stage for both Community Care Grants (47%) and Crisis Grants (45%) (**Table 56**).
- Since April 2013, around 76% of Tier 1 reviews for Community Care Grants have been made within the 15 working day target, while around 88% of Tier 1 reviews for Crisis Grants have been made within the two working day target (**Table 57**). East Ayrshire have not been able to supply information on review processing times, which accounts for a further 2% Community Care Grants and less than 1% Crisis Grants where it is unknown if reviews were made within target times.

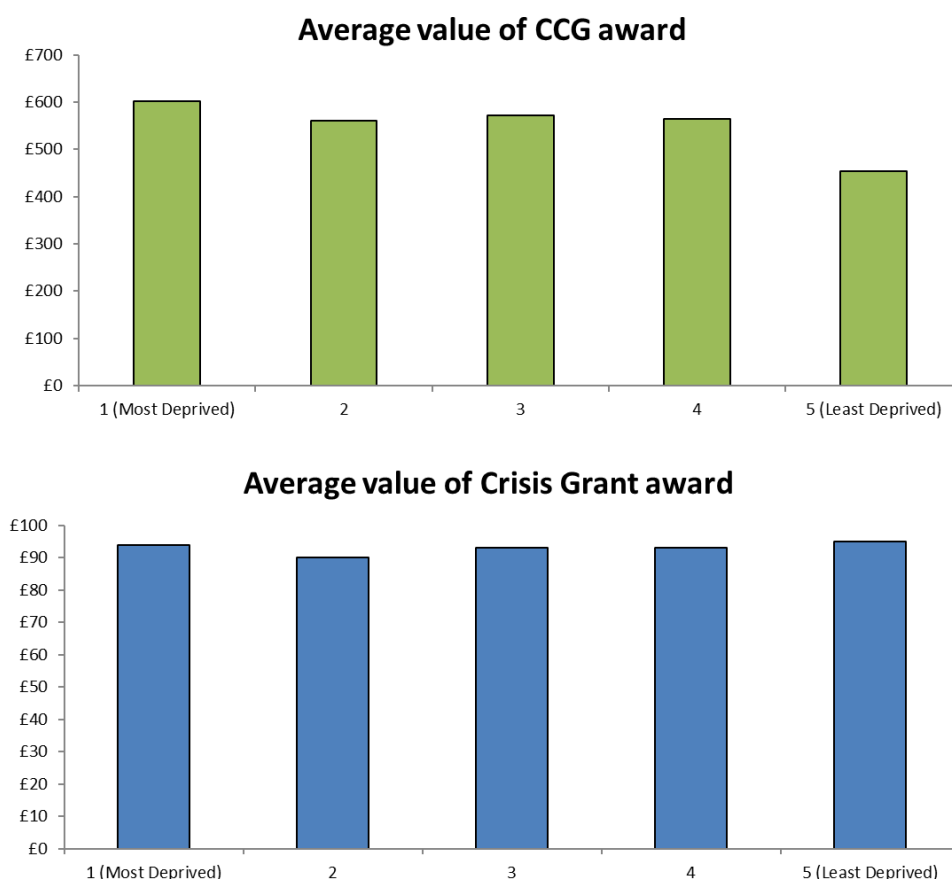
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<sup>4</sup> These figures do not include Tier 1 reviews for East Ayrshire for 2013.

# Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

- Scottish Welfare Fund awards tend to go to applicants living in more deprived areas of Scotland. Around one in five people in Scotland live in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland, as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). However, in 2019/20 over half of Community Care Grants (54%) and Crisis Grants (52%) were awarded to applicants living in these areas. In comparison, around 2% of Community Care Grants and 2% of Crisis Grants were awarded to applicants from the 20% least deprived areas (**Table 59 and Table 61**). In January to March 2020, the distribution of Community Care Grant and Crisis Grant awards between the SIMD deciles remained similar to January to March 2019 overall.
- Community Care Grant applicants in more deprived areas also tend to receive a higher average award value than applicants in less deprived areas (**Chart 14**). In 2019/20 applicants in the 10% most deprived data zones received an average award that was around £107 higher than applicants in the 10% least deprived data zones (£614 compared to £507, **Table 59**). For Crisis Grants, average awards were similar across the different SIMD rankings (**Table 61**).

**Chart 14: Distribution of average award value by SIMD<sup>5</sup> Quintile rankings of applicant's postcode – 2019/20**



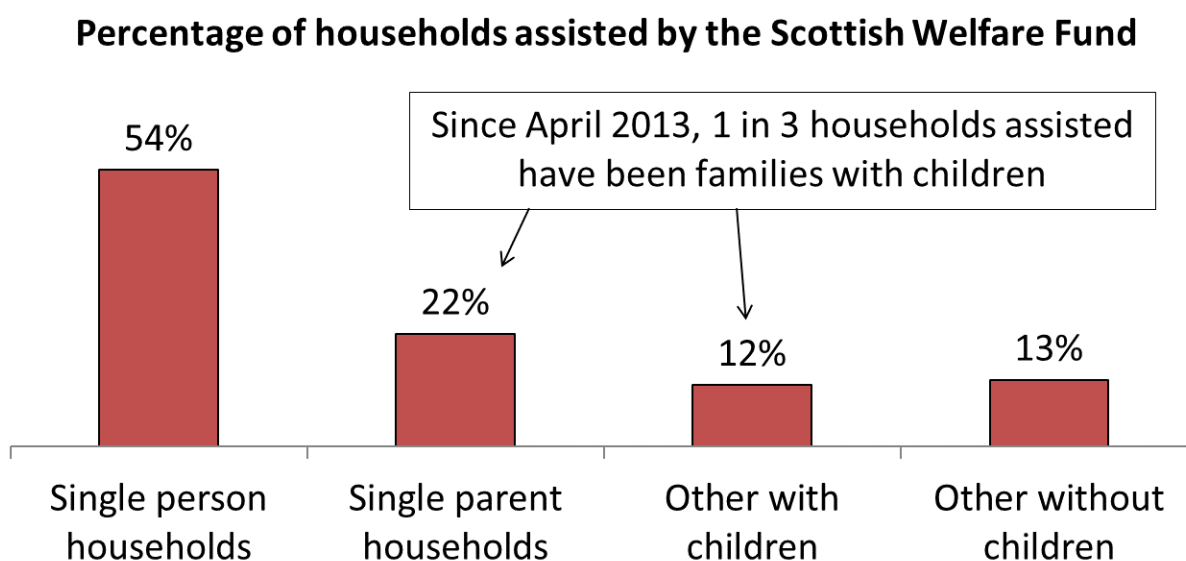
<sup>5</sup> To ensure the correct SIMD rankings are applied this time series uses SIMD 2012 for the period April 2013 to September 2016, SIMD 2016 for the period October 2016 to December 2019, and SIMD 2020 from January 2020 onwards.



# Characteristics of Households in Receipt of Awards

- Since the scheme began in April 2013, 378,190 unique households received at least one award from the Scottish Welfare Fund. More households have received a Crisis Grant (273,850, 72% of households) than a Community Care Grant (208,055, 55% of households) (**Table 62a**).
- Since the scheme began in April 2013, over half of all awards have gone to single person households (54%), and over a fifth to single parent households (22%) (**Table 62b, Chart 15**). In comparison, the latest household estimates for Scotland indicate that only 37% of households are single people, and 6% of households are single parent families<sup>6</sup>. A quarter of Scottish Welfare Fund awards have gone to couples, couples with children or other types of household (25%), whereas over half of households in Scotland are estimated to fall into these categories (58%). In total around a third (34%) awards have gone to households containing children.

**Chart 15: Household types of unique households receiving funds from the Scottish Welfare Fund 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2020**



<sup>6</sup> National Records of Scotland 'Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2019', <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/households/household-estimates/2018>

# Background

On 1 April 2013, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) abolished two elements of the Social Fund - Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans - and transferred funds previously spent on them to Scottish Ministers. In its place, the Scottish Government established the Scottish Welfare Fund. The Scottish Welfare Fund is a national grant scheme run by Local Authorities, based on [guidance](#) from Scottish Ministers. The guidance has been developed in partnership with COSLA<sup>7</sup>, Local Authorities and other stakeholders.

The objectives of the scheme are to:

- provide a safety net in a disaster or emergency, when there is an immediate threat to health or safety.
- enable people to live independently or continue to live independently, preventing the need for institutional care.

There are two types of grants in the Scottish Welfare Fund – Crisis Grants, and Community Care Grants.

A Crisis Grant aims to help people on a low income who are in crisis because of a disaster or an emergency. A disaster is something like a fire or a flood. An emergency might be when money has been stolen.

A Community Care Grant aims to:

- help people establish themselves in the community following a period of care, where circumstances indicate that there is a risk of the person not being able to live independently without this help.
- help people remain in the community rather than going into care where circumstances indicate that there is a risk of the person not being able to live independently without this help.
- help people set up home in the community, as part of a planned resettlement programme, following an unsettled way of life.
- help families facing exceptional pressures, with one-off items, like a cooker or a washing machine.
- help people to care for a prisoner or young offender on release on temporary licence.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cosla.gov.uk/about-cosla>

The Scottish Welfare Fund is a discretionary, budget-limited grant scheme that prioritises applications according to need. It provides grants that do not have to be repaid. It does not provide loans.

The DWP transferred the funding spent in Scotland on its Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for Living Expenses to the Scottish Government. For 2013/14 and 2014/15 this amounted to £23.8 million. The Scottish Government topped this amount up by a further £9.2 million, giving the Scottish Welfare Fund a total budget of £33 million for both these years. This level has been maintained at £33 million from 2015/16 to 2019/20 by the Scottish Government. Local Authorities have been able to top this up with their own funds, together with any underspends carried forward from previous years. There is no statutory limit on the amount of money which can be spent on the Scottish Welfare Fund.

In 2020/21 the programme budget for the Scottish Welfare Fund was increased to £35.5 million. In addition, £22 million was added in response to COVID-19, with a further £23 million held in reserve, to be targeted where it is needed later in the year. This publication covers applications made to the Scottish Welfare Fund until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, including around one week of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Therefore, while this report will include some applications related to COVID-19, the figures for the April to June 2020 quarter figures will provide a more complete picture. The Scottish Welfare Fund was introduced on an interim basis for the first three years, prior to setting the Fund out in law. The [Welfare Funds \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) received Royal Assent on 8 April 2015 and placed the Scottish Welfare Fund into law from 1 April 2016. The Act is supported by the [Welfare Funds \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#), and statutory guidance.

### **Local Authority Delivery**

- Local Authorities have the discretion to provide support in different ways. Not all grants will be cash payments. They may provide vouchers, a fuel card, or goods if they think that is the best way to meet the need.
- Local Authorities also have discretion on where in their organisation they process applications and how they link the scheme to existing services.
- A Local Authority may provide assistance out of its SWF only to a person who is resident in the Local Authority area, is about to become resident in the Local Authority area, or a person who is homeless. Applicants should apply to the appropriate Local Authority. The application process will depend on the Local Authority's approach to wider service delivery and the infrastructure it has in place. Local Authorities must make provision for applications to be taken via three delivery channels, for example, online, on the phone and face-to-face.
- Details of applications, how they were processed, and the outcomes and expenditure associated with applications are stored on Local Authorities' IT systems. Four IT companies provide IT systems which underpin the provision of the Scottish Welfare Fund.

## Application process

- Applications are processed by decision makers within Local Authorities. Scottish Government produces statutory guidance to provide a framework for decision makers to promote consistency in decision making. In making decisions, Local Authorities need to balance the needs of the applicant against the remaining budget. Joint applications for a Crisis Grant and Community Care Grant are treated as individual. In these statistics they are also counted as two separate applications. It is for the Local Authority to determine whether a grant should be made as a Crisis or a Community Care Grant. If an applicant applies for one, the Local Authority may decide to award the other if it is more appropriate to the applicant's circumstances.
- Applicants can make repeated applications for the Scottish Welfare Fund. A Local Authority does not need to consider an application if a person has applied for a Community Care Grant or a Crisis Grant for the same items or services within the last 28 days, where a decision has already been made and there has not been a relevant change of circumstances. Additionally, the number of Crisis Grant awards should normally be limited to three per person in any rolling 12 month period across all Local Authorities, although there can be exceptions.
- An initial decision will be made on the application, either to make an award for all or some of the requested items, or to not make any award. In these statistics we refer to these outcomes as 'accepted' and 'rejected' respectively. Crisis Grants are typically made in cash or cash equivalent. Community Care Grants can be fulfilled in cash, cash-equivalent or in kind, for example by providing white goods or furnishings.
- The target time for processing applications is 15 working days after receiving all the information allowing a decision to be made for Community Care Grants and by the end of the next working day for Crisis Grants.

## Review process

- If an applicant disagrees with the outcome of their application, there are two possible review stages. Firstly, a Tier 1 review will be carried out by the Local Authority. The target time for processing Tier 1 reviews is the end of the second working day for crisis reviews, and 15 working days for Community Care Grant reviews. At this point the original decision will either be 'revised' or 'not revised'.
- Following this, an independent Tier 2 review may be carried out by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Tier 2 reviews have been carried out by the SPSO since 1 April 2016 (previously this was done by Local Authorities). Information on tier 2 reviews carried out by SPSO can be found in the [SPSO's Annual Reports](#) and [Annual Statistics 2018-19](#).

## **Family Reunion Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants for 18-21 year olds**

- Family Reunion Crisis Grants, and Community Care Grants for 18-21 year olds affected by the change to the entitlement for housing costs within Universal Credit, are processed by Local Authorities using the same IT systems as other Scottish Welfare Fund awards. We therefore receive data for these Community Care Grant applications in monthly and quarterly data returns. However, these specific types of grants are not funded through the main Scottish Government allocation for awards. Local Authorities are reimbursed separately for these awards. Local Authorities send separate quarterly returns detailing the application reference numbers of applications for Family Reunion Crisis Grants, and 18-21 year olds affected by the change to the entitlement for housing costs. We have then excluded these applications from the analysis when producing this publication and accompanying publication tables.

# About the Data

## How the data is collected

One month after the end of each quarter, Local Authorities are asked to submit an XML file containing the information as set out in the data specification.

The data specification for the Scottish Welfare Fund and guidance to help Local Authority officers to record information are available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-welfare-fund---data-specification-and-guidance/>

The data sent to Scottish Government each quarter should include all applications where an initial decision, Tier 1 review or Tier 2 review have been completed, plus any updates to previous cases (e.g. where information within a case has been revised, or a case has reached a different stage). To take account of delays between applications being received and decisions made, and retrospective changes in award values, the data cuts that are sent to Scottish Government each quarter should be sent at least a month after the end of the quarter that will be reported on.

This data is then uploaded to the Scottish Government's ProcXed<sup>8</sup> website. Once the data has been validated by our software, the data is passed over to the Scottish Government's Communities Analysis Division.

Scottish Government also collects informal, monthly management information through a separate process as described in our recent management information publications available here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/swf-monthly-management-information/>

## Revisions

Each updated publication of statistics will include revisions to figures for previous quarters, with more recent quarters being subject to a greater degree of revision than more distant ones. There are several reasons for this:

(i) the cuts of data received by Scottish Government each quarter will include retrospective changes to past applications. For example, where the actual amount spent on an item was different to the amount initially awarded, this expenditure will be updated in the new data cut.

(ii) the cuts of data received by Scottish Government only include information about applications that have at least reached the stage of having an initial decision made. Some applications may therefore be received by the Local Authority in one quarter and decided in the next quarter. Scottish Government would only receive details about these applications in the next quarter's data cut, at which point the

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<sup>8</sup> [ProcXed.NET](#) is Scottish Government's on-line validation software that supports Local Authorities in collecting and validating data.

application will be added into the previous quarter's application statistics retrospectively.

(iii) Tier 1 and Tier 2 reviews can lead to changes in final outcome and final award amount. Where a case has been reviewed, expenditure is assigned to the quarter of the initial decision rather than the review date.

### **Processing times**

Initial Processing Time is the number of working days between the date all information was received and the initial decision. Our count of working days counts the number of Mondays to Fridays between these two dates. No allowance is made for local holidays and bank holidays. If the date all information was provided is missing, the application date is used instead.

### **Households**

We collect information on all people within each application. To group people into household units we filter the people table to contain only the main applicant and their partner. We ensure that there is no more than two people for each application. We generate a unique household reference based on the hashed National Insurance Number, gender and date of birth of the main applicant, and if applicable, their partner.

### **Repeat applications and awards**

An application is defined as a repeat application if the household made another Community Care Grant/Crisis Grant application within the 12 months of the current application. Similarly a repeat award occurs if an award was made within 12 months of the current award. While there is no limit on the number of Community Care Grants an individual can receive in any one year, Crisis Grants are normally limited to three in a rolling 12-month period.

### **Payment times**

The time taken to receive a payment was calculated as the date all information was received to the date of the last payment. If the 'all information date' is missing, the date the application is received is used instead. Last payment date includes payments made as part of reviews.

### **Data Quality**

To ensure the data we receive is of the highest quality, we have asked all IT providers to implement the data specification as fully as possible. The data specification includes a number of validations. These validations are provided through an XSD schema and have also been implemented into the ProcXed system. Once Local Authorities submit data to the ProcXed system, a number of validations are triggered and warning messages appear. Local Authorities may re-submit data to fix these errors or they can comment them to explain why they believe the data to be valid. On submission of the data to the Scottish Government,

each Local Authority is sent a detailed automatic report showing the contents of the data and any remaining errors.

To ensure sufficient data has been submitted, we cross check all submitted data with the monthly management information returns submitted to the Scottish Government (**Chart 6, Chart 8**). The automatic reports sent to Local Authorities contain charts which allow them to easily see if there is a discrepancy between these two data sources.

Known data issues January to March 2020:

- City of Edinburgh experienced a software issue in March 2020 that has caused some crisis grant awards and expenditure to be missing from the latest quarterly data extract supplied to Scottish Government. Comparison of the quarterly data to monthly management information (Table 73) indicates that around 1,335 crisis grants awarded in March are missing from the extract used to produce this publication, as well as around £141,000 associated expenditure on those awards. At local authority level this equates to around 61% awards missing from March 2020, 33% from the quarter Jan-Mar 2020 and 12% from 2019/20. These crisis grants will appear in the figures for April 2020 when the publication is next updated. This issue will also affect Scotland totals. It is not currently possible to amend case details so that they appear against the correct month/quarter/financial year.
- In March 2020, some COVID-19 related Crisis Grant applications received by Glasgow City have been recorded as CCG applications in the quarterly data extract supplied to Scottish Government. Comparison to the monthly management information (Tables 72 and 73) supplied separately by the local authority indicates that in March 2020, around 730 applications, 465 awards and £111,460 spend has been recorded as CCGs rather than Crisis Grants. For the quarter Jan-Mar 2020 this means that CCG applications, awards and expenditure figures for Glasgow City are too high by around 17%, 19% and 10% respectively. For 2019/20 as a whole the figures are too high in Glasgow City by around 4%, 5% and 2%. Conversely, the crisis grant figure are underestimated, and comparison to the management information indicates there may be an additional error with some crisis grant cases being missing from the quarterly extract. Overall it appears that around 11% crisis applications, 12% awards and 15% expenditure are missing from the quarter Jan-Mar 2020, and for 2019/20 as a whole applications, awards and expenditure are too low by around 3%, 3% and 4% respectively. We are working with the council to identify the cause of these discrepancies. These issues will also affect Scotland totals. Going forward, applications relating to COVID-19 will be reported to Scottish Government correctly as CCG or crisis grants as appropriate, and past figures will be revised if this issue can be resolved for past applications. Past figures may also be revised if Glasgow supply an updated extract which includes additional crisis applications for March 2020.
- North Lanarkshire have indicated that cases are missing from the latest quarterly data extract supplied to Scottish Government, compared to the



council's own figures for the quarter. Comparison to monthly management information (Tables 72 and 73) indicates that around 480 CCG applications, 205 CCG awards and £38,400 associated expenditure, and 1,100 crisis grant applications, 940 crisis grant awards and £76,400 associated expenditure are missing from the quarterly extract used to produce this publication. In Jan-March 2020, this means that North Lanarkshire CCG applications, awards and expenditure may be underestimated by around 49%, 30% and 12% respectively, with Crisis grant figures underestimated by 26%, 33% and 32% respectively. For 2019/20 as a whole CCG applications, awards and expenditure may be underestimated by 12%, 7% and 2% respectively, with crisis grant figures underestimated by 7%, 9% and 9% respectively. These issues will also affect Scotland totals. We are working with the council to identify the cause of this discrepancy. We have provisionally included the figures supplied by North Lanarkshire in their quarterly extract in this publication, however these figures may subsequently be revised if North Lanarkshire supply an updated extract which includes additional applications.

- Scotland level figures are affected by specific issues described for Edinburgh, Glasgow and North Lanarkshire. There may also be additional issues with data quality related to COVID-19. Comparison to management information (Tables 72 and 73) received from local authorities indicated for several local authorities that the number of applications recorded in quarterly extracts was slightly lower than in their monthly figures supplied separately, which could be due for example to delays in applications being processed, awards being kept as 'pending' or 'in principle' on local authority systems until they can be delivered/installed, until house moves can take place, until suppliers of goods reopen, etc. Overall at Scotland level, comparison to management information indicates that CCG applications, awards and expenditure for Jan-Mar 2020 may be overestimated by around 2-3% and for 2019/20 as a whole by 1% each in this publication. Crisis grant applications, awards and expenditure may be underestimated by around 7-9% and for 2019/20 as a whole by 2-3%. Any issues caused by processing or deliver/installation delays will be resolved in future updates to the publication as more data extracts are received.

#### *Missing information/delays in receiving information*

- An application is included in the quarterly data extract to the Scottish Government only when an application has been decided and when a payment has been made. For Crisis Grants, applications are less complex and payments are made quickly, resulting in almost no lag between cases being decided and being included in the data extract. However, for Community Care Grants, a large number of items may need to be ordered and payment may not occur until up to one month later, when invoices arrive. This results in a lag time between applications beginning in the Local Authority and applications being included in the extract to the Scottish Government. To rectify this problem, we are asking Local Authorities to submit data one to two months after the end of the quarter. This will ensure that, as far as possible, all relevant cases are included in the data extract.

- Some Local Authorities may not have been able to enter all of their data in time to include in this publication. Late entry of data may mean that this data appears in subsequent quarters, rather than in the quarter when the case was actually dealt with. As dates are automatically system generated, late entry of data has a knock on effect on any calculation which involves processing times or payment times.
- Some question responses may default to “Other” in some IT systems. This particularly applies for reasons for applications, rejections, reviews, review decisions and payment methods. We are currently working with IT providers and Local Authorities to ensure that the full range of questions and responses are available in all Local Authority IT systems. Some questions may not be completed at all. This includes the vulnerability and referrals questions for some Local Authorities.

### *Expenditure*

- Unless otherwise stated, all expenditure information in this publication is based on the date of decision. As such it should be regarded as committed spend, rather than actual spend. For example, a Local Authority may commit to purchasing floor coverings for a household and set aside money for this (on the decision date). In practice, it may be some time later before the Local Authority is invoiced and pays the money to the supplier (on the payment date). Overall, there is very little difference between analysing expenditure information using payment dates as opposed to decision dates. Where a case has been reviewed, expenditure is assigned to the quarter of the initial decision rather than the review date. This means that if the initial decision took place in 2016/17 but a review decision is made in 2017/18, all of the expenditure for the case is counted in 2016/17.
- It is possible for the value of an award to increase or decrease between the decision and payment date. For example, Local Authorities may estimate the cost of carpets and the final invoice for these may be less than originally thought. This results in money being paid back into their systems. Where we receive updated information about this change in expenditure in quarterly data returns, the statistics for previous quarters are updated to reflect this. We also receive separate reconciliations information from some Local Authorities. Over time, the expenditure data in the quarterly monitoring may exceed monies actually spent if reconciliations are not applied. Most recently, reconciliations have been applied to South Lanarkshire data from January to March 2018.
- West Lothian have indicated that the expenditure for 2013/14 is an underestimate. This appears to have been due to issues in setting up the IT system for this data collection at the start of the scheme in 2013. Information about expenditure was collected manually rather than through ProcXed and cannot now be updated. West Lothian have indicated that this has led to an ongoing underspend being calculated for the Local Authority. Additionally, other

Local Authorities have indicated that the figures published for annual over- and underspend do not always match Local Authorities' own accounts.

- Where Scottish Government receive updated information about expenditure from Local Authorities, the statistics for previous quarters are updated to reflect this. However, Local Authorities have a cut off point after the end of a financial year at which point they have to produce accounts. At this point, expenditure for the year is calculated, and over- or underspend is calculated. At this point the council meets the overspend, or rolls forward the underspend to the next financial year's budget. If there is a change in the value of an award after this date, this will not be reflected in Local Authority calculation of the available budget for the next financial year. Additionally, some Local Authorities may choose to top up the budget for the fund at the start of a financial year with additional funds.
- In previous publications, we have included funds provided by Local Authorities in the available budget, however for this version of the publication this funding has been removed from calculations. Available budget therefore only represents the amounts allocated by Scottish Government plus any underspend from previous years, and it is assumed that Local Authorities meet any overspend each year.
- Each year the discrepancies between these annual expenditure figures and Local Authorities' accounts are compounded. We are reviewing these differences and to realign our calculation of Local Authorities' over- or underspend.

#### *Joint Community Care Grant and Crisis Grant applications*

- Households can apply for both Community Care Grants and Crisis Grants in the same application. In versions of the publication covering the period up to December 2017, total applications reported were the total number of applications recorded on Local Authority IT systems. In some Local Authorities, these applications in some cases will include both a Community Care Grant and a Crisis Grant element. However, some Local Authorities now have a facility to split a single application into the Community Care Grant and Crisis Grant elements, and treat these as two separate applications. Where Local Authorities have used this facility on their IT system, Scottish Government would receive this as two separate applications, with no information about whether they had originally been made together as one application. Because of this, we have changed the methodology for how total applications to Scottish Welfare Fund are reported, from the 2017/18 publication onwards. For all Local Authorities, we now report the number of Community Care Grants and number of Crisis Grant applications added together. Therefore, joint applications for Community Care Grants and Crisis Grants will now be counted in the figures as two applications. This makes the figures for total Scottish Welfare Fund applications consistent across all the Local Authorities.

- In addition to the issue described above, Local Authorities have informed us that on some occasions, applicants may tick boxes on their application forms to apply for both a Community Care Grant and a Crisis Grant, however, based on the types of item, which have been requested the Local Authority, will process this application as only a Community Care Grant (e.g. if only flooring requested) or only a Crisis Grant (e.g. if only food requested). In these cases, the statistics in this publication reflect the way in which an application has been processed by the Local Authority, rather than the original tick boxes selected by an applicant.

### *Payment Methods*

- An error in data processing has been discovered in regard to the Payment Method categories of 'Cash alternative' and 'Payment into bank'. This error has now been fixed and the time series has been revised to reflect this update.

### *Reviews*

- Orkney are unable to supply Tier 1 review information via the ProcXed system. Orkney have supplied full details about all reviews carried out separately and these numbers are included in the tables, however as numbers are small these values have been suppressed for disclosure control.
- East Ayrshire were unable to submit data on Tier 1 reviews via the ProcXed system until July 2018, but were able to supply summary information about numbers of review applications and decisions separately for 2014 onwards, which is included in the publication tables. From July 2018 onwards East Ayrshire have supplied full review information via ProcXed.

### *Improvements*

- We are working with Local Authorities to make the data more consistent across data fields and Local Authorities. We are reviewing how Local Authorities interpret the guidance and record information and also identifying issues that are due differences in IT systems.

### *Management information*

- Potential data quality issues in the monthly management information are described in our recent publications available here:  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/swf-monthly-management-information/>

## **Comparisons with other UK Statistics**

Annual reports by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the Social Fund for the period prior to 1 April 2013 are available from the Department for Work and Pensions. The most recently available report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/annual-report-by-the-secretary-of-state-for-work-and-pensions-on-the-social-fund-2012-to-2013>

On 1 April 2013, the Department for Work and Pensions devolved the responsibility for Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans to the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and directly to English Local Authorities.

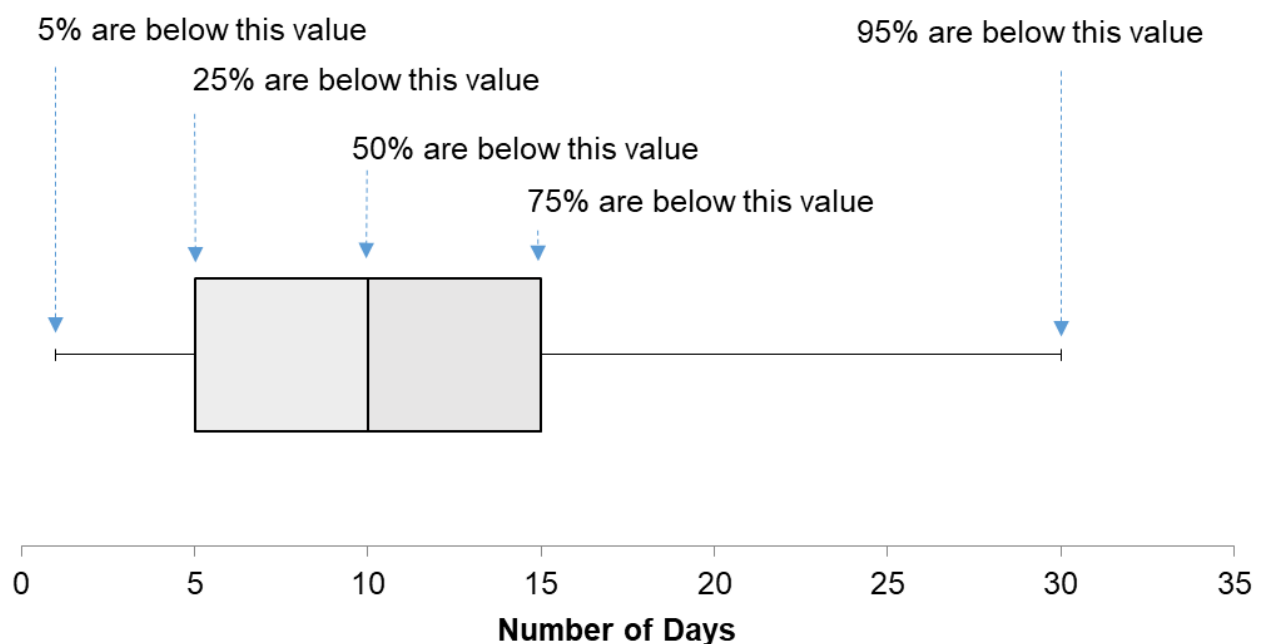
As a single national scheme covering the UK is no longer in operation, comparable statistics for other parts of the UK are not available.

## Boxplots

Boxplots have been included to show the variation in processing times for applications within each Local Authority (**Chart 4b**). For each application received to the Scottish Welfare Fund, processing time has been calculated based on the number of working days between the date all information was received and the date the initial decision was made. A processing time of zero days indicates the application was processed on the same day that all information was received. The boxplots show (i) the average value (this is the median, or middle ranked value) of processing times across all applications within a particular Local Authority, and (ii) the variation in processing times among the applications within a Local Authority.

The variation among processing times is shown using a 'box' and lines extending out from the box (illustrated in the example below). The box shows the range of values around the median within which half of the processing times from a particular Local Authority fell. The lines extend out from the box to show the range of values within which 90% of the processing times from a particular Local Authority fell. The larger the box, and the longer the lines, the more variation there is among the processing times within the Local Authority.

### Example of a boxplot showing processing times within a Local Authority



In the example above:

- The median value for processing times was ten days. When all the applications' processing times were ranked in order, the middle value was ten days. Half of the processing times fell below this and half above this.
- The width of the box was relatively small, indicating that half of the applications were processed in five to 15 days.
- However, some applications took much longer to process. The end of the line to the right of the chart indicates that 95% of applications took up to 30 days to process.

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### **Correspondence and enquiries**

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

Amelia Brereton

Social Security Statistics

Telephone: 0131 244 5464

e-mail: [SocialSecurityStats@gov.scot](mailto:SocialSecurityStats@gov.scot)

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician, Telephone: 0131 244 0442,

e-mail: [statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

### **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/sg-social-security-scotland-stats-publications/#scottishwelfarefundstatistics>

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.

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