social research

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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EQUALITY, POVERTY AND SOCIAL SECURITY

**Research Findings
No.21/2019**

Developing the Scottish Social Security Charter - Visual Summary of Research Findings

Background

The Scottish Government is becoming responsible for some of the benefits previously delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Department for Work and Pensions → **Scottish Government**

This report describes the co-design process used to draft the Charter for Social Security Scotland, the executive agency who will deliver benefits in Scotland.

Who took part?

A diverse range of people were involved in the Charter co-design across a series of **workshops, focus groups, interviews** and a **survey.**

The people who came to the workshops were called the Core Group. They mostly came from the Social Security Experience Panels. The panels are 2,400 volunteers who have experience of the benefits coming to Scotland.

34
Core Group members

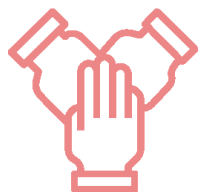Including disabled people with experience of:

- Mental illness
- Learning conditions
- Physical conditions
- Sensory conditions

26
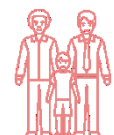**other diverse people took part in workshops:**
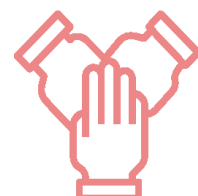
- LGBT people
- Ethnic minorities and asylum seekers
- Young carers
- People from islands
- Parents

462
Survey responses from Experience Panel members

41%
Man or boy

58%
Woman or girl

Participants were between

16 – 80+

years old

Most survey participants were disabled or had a **long term health condition**, including:

chronic pain

severe hearing conditions

severe visual conditions

other kinds of long term health condition

Stakeholder organisations were also involved. This included disability organisations and charities. They provided feedback, advice and ideas for the Core Group to consider.

Scottish Government officials, including researchers and policy officials helped run the sessions and pull together all the information.
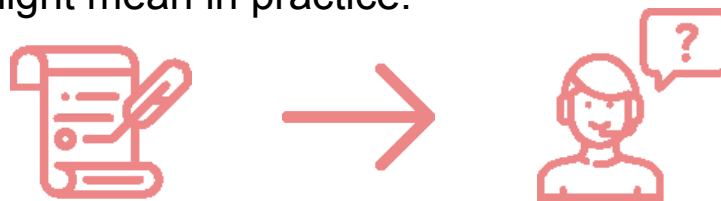
The Charter – What should it cover?

The Charter is based on a list of "principles" from the Social Security (Scotland) Act.

These principles are about how the new social security system in Scotland should run, to make sure it is fair and works for everyone who might need it.

We asked the Core Group to think about these principles and what they might mean in practice.

The Core Group came up with a list of statements about what the principles mean. This list covers 5 important areas:

- Clients
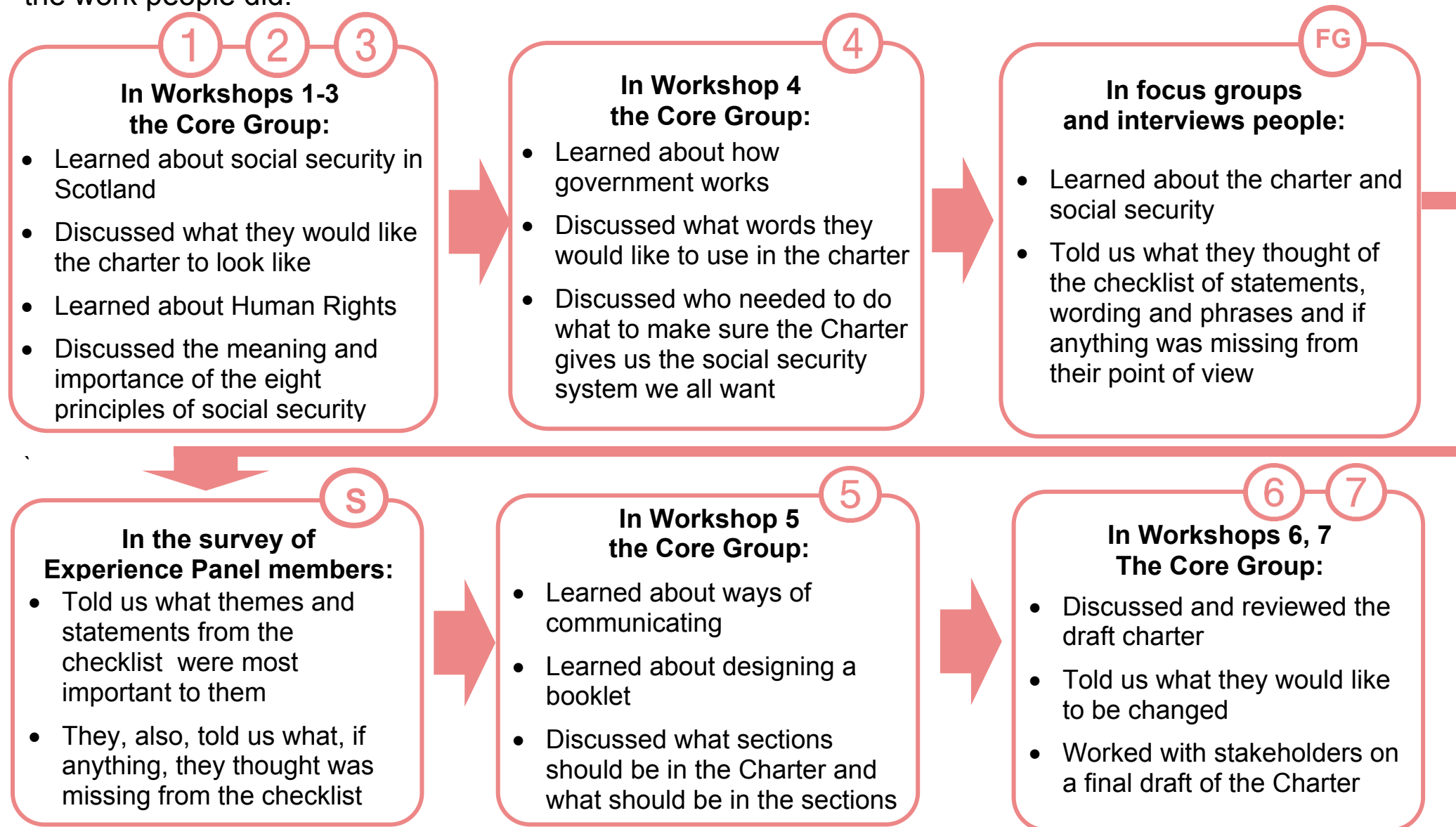- Staff behaviour
- Processes
- Systems
- Wider culture

The list became a **checklist** for what people wanted to be in the Charter.

How did people develop the charter?

Experience Panel members and others that took part were given a great deal of information and had a lot of discussions which led to the development of the checklist and the Charter itself. The boxes show some of the work people did.

In Workshops 1-3 the Core Group: (1 2 3)

- Learned about social security in Scotland
- Discussed what they would like the charter to look like
- Learned about Human Rights
- Discussed the meaning and importance of the eight principles of social security

In Workshop 4 the Core Group: (4)

- Learned about how government works
- Discussed what words they would like to use in the charter
- Discussed who needed to do what to make sure the Charter gives us the social security system we all want

In focus groups and interviews people: (FG)

- Learned about the charter and social security
- Told us what they thought of the checklist of statements, wording and phrases and if anything was missing from their point of view

In the survey of Experience Panel members: (S)

- Told us what themes and statements from the checklist were most important to them
- They, also, told us what, if anything, they thought was missing from the checklist

In Workshop 5 the Core Group: (5)

- Learned about ways of communicating
- Learned about designing a booklet
- Discussed what sections should be in the Charter and what should be in the sections

In Workshops 6, 7 The Core Group: (6 7)

- Discussed and reviewed the draft charter
- Told us what they would like to be changed
- Worked with stakeholders on a final draft of the Charter

The Charter – What it should be like?

Making a Charter that is practical

The people who took part then thought about how this list could be turned into steps that Social Security Scotland or Scottish Government can commit to.

This is to make sure that it is clear what they need to do to deliver the Charter.

Creating sections in the charter

The Core Groups agreed that the Charter should be called "Our Charter."

They agreed the subtitle "What you can expect from the Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland."

They also agreed that the Charter would include:

- An Introduction
- A People's Service
- Processes that Work
- A Learning System
- A Better Future
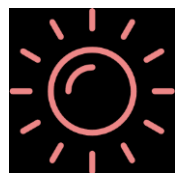
The Introduction:

The introduction sets out:

- The background to the changes to social security in Scotland and the eight principles from the Act

- A summary of what the charter is

- Who was involved in writing the charter

- That the Charter is important to everyone in Scotland

- The process for making sure the Charter commitments are delivered and who would be responsible for this

- What the difference is between the Scottish Government, Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Parliament, and what their roles are for the Charter

- Who people should get in touch with if they have a problem

A People's Service

The summary for this section is:

"We are here to make sure your get everything you are entitled to"

This section tells you what staff should do to help you and to make sure that you can get everything you are entitled to.
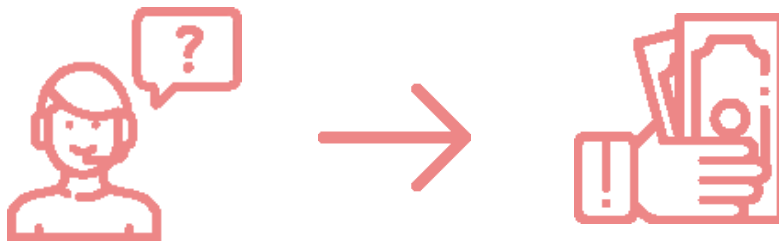
It also tells you what responsibilities clients have when they use Social Security Scotland's services.

People felt it was important that staff were:

- Knowledgeable

- Kind

- Flexible

They also said it was important for clients to give staff feedback to help Social Security Scotland to improve.

Processes that Work

The summary for this section is:

"We will design services with the people who use them"

This section tells you how Social Security Scotland will design its processes so that they work for the people that will use them.

People said it was important that process are:

- designed with people who use them

- that they should be flexible, adaptable and inclusive

- simple and clear.

A Learning System

The summary for this section is:

"We will encourage feedback and empower people to deliver the best service possible"

This section is about what the culture of the new system should be like.

People said it was important that:

- clients are involved

- Social Security Scotland owns up to mistakes and learns from them
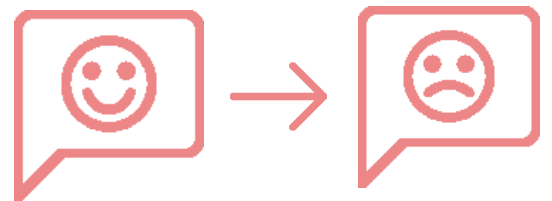
- Social Security Scotland builds trust

- Social Security Scotland supports their staff
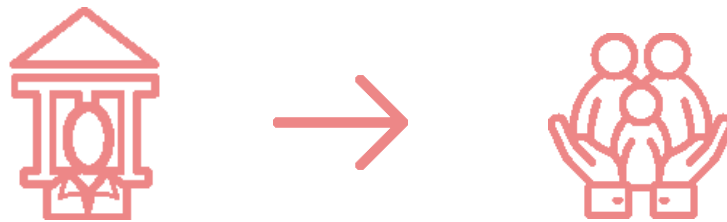
- Social Security Scotland is committed to being accessible

A Better Future
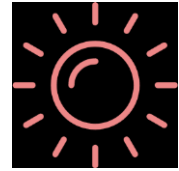
The summary for this section is:

"We will use new powers to invest in the people of Scotland – making a positive difference to all of our lives"

This section is about what Scottish Government will do to make sure it is making a positive difference.

People felt it was important that:

- Scottish Government uses the new powers that it has for Social Security to make a positive difference

- Scottish Government treats social security as an investment in the people of Scotland

Next steps

The Charter is being looked at by the Scottish Parliament.

We will then look at how we can measure whether the Charter is being delivered. This will be used to make sure that Social Security Scotland keeps improving.

The people who helped to write the Charter will help to develop how we measure it.

Scottish Government will publish information about how well Social Security Scotland is delivering the Charter every year.
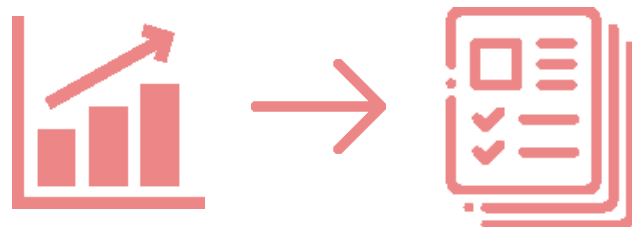
This report is available on the Scottish Government Publications Website
(http://www.gov.scot/Publications/Recent)