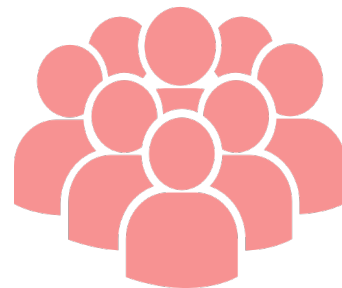


**EQUALITY, POVERTY AND SOCIAL SECURITY****Social Security Experience Panels:  
Carer's Allowance Supplement  
Visual Summary****Background**

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

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

Over 2,400 people from across Scotland have joined the Experience Panels. They all have recent experience of the benefits that are coming to Scotland.



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

**2,400+  
Experience Panel  
members**

## About the research

This report details the findings of the Carer's Allowance Supplement survey.



**507**

Invites



**129**

survey  
responses

The research took place in



**2019**

## The research explored:



Respondents' experience of receiving the Carer's Allowance Supplement letter



How the extra payment had helped respondents



Respondents' experience of receiving the payment

Participants were between

**16 – 79**



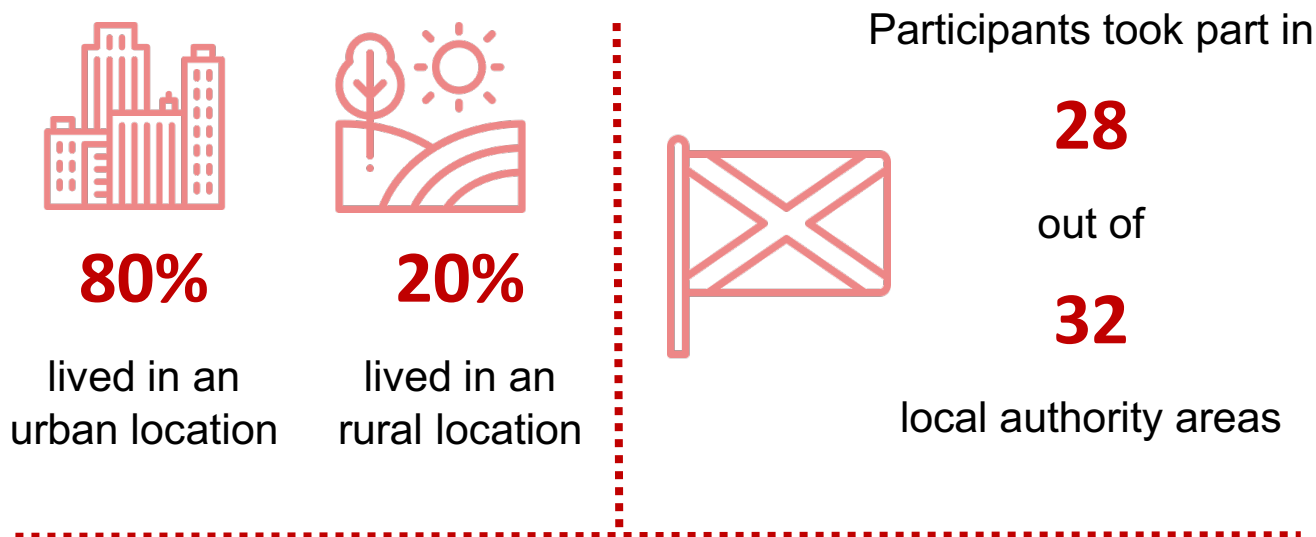
**33%**

Man or boy

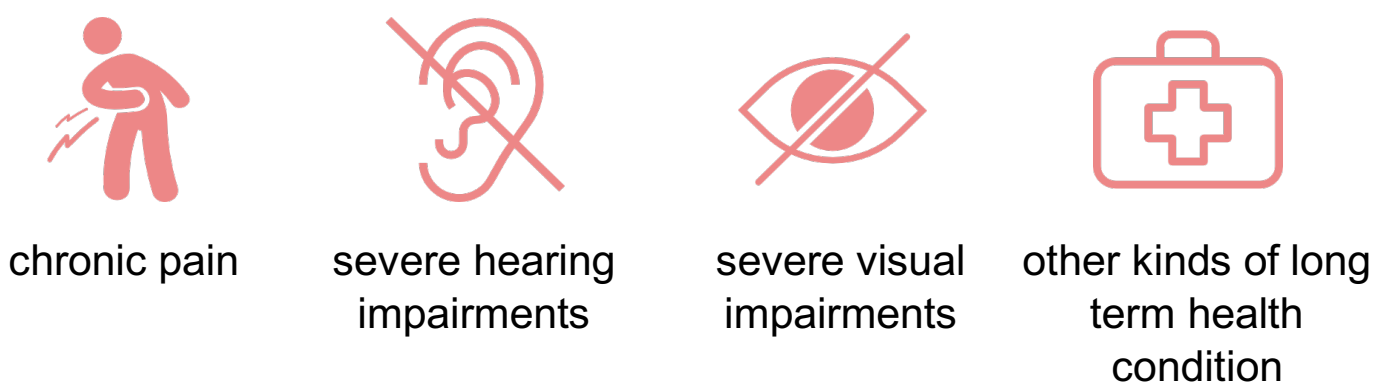


**66%**

Woman or girl



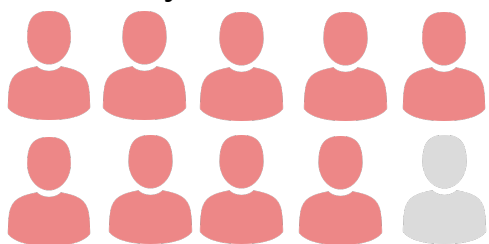
**Most survey participants** had a **disability** or **long term health condition**, including:



## Experience of Carer's Allowance Supplement

This report outlines the views of people who responded to this survey. These may not be shared by all who receive Carer's Allowance or Carer's Allowance Supplement.

Nearly **nine in ten** respondents (**89 per cent**) who took part in the survey **received** Carer's Allowance Supplement.



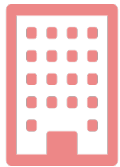
## Hearing about Carer's Allowance Supplement



Before receiving the letter, **over eight in ten** respondents (**89 per cent**) had heard about the Carer's Allowance Supplement.



The **most common** way respondents found out about Carer's Allowance Supplement was through **social media (42 per cent)**.



This is followed by respondents finding out about the supplement **through other organisations (13 per cent)**.

## How respondents felt about the letter



**Nearly all** of the respondents (**93 per cent**) received a letter about Carer's Allowance Supplement. **Nearly all** of these (**97 per cent**) felt the letter was **helpful/very helpful**.

Most respondents felt that the **letter** was **clear and concise**.

"Easy to understand. No fancy words that some people might not understand."



They felt that the letter was **informative** and **straightforward**.

“Felt like I was kept well informed and took away any confusion about if you need to apply.”



Respondents said that the letter made them feel **valued** and **appreciated**.

“Happy someone is taking notice of the work carers do.”



Respondents described the way the letter was written as **friendly**. They said it made them feel as though this letter was ‘**given with compassion, dignity, fairness and respect**’.

“The tone of the letter made me feel valued.”

Respondents described the letter making them **feel proud**, as the **format and branding** of the letter took into **account the opinions of Experience Panel members** and made them feel appreciated.

“The letter was rewarding to me as an experience panel participant. It used the colours and logo of images that I helped to select and also approve once decided.”



**A few** respondents felt that the letter was **unhelpful/very unhelpful (3 per cent)**.

These respondents felt that the letter lacked clear information.

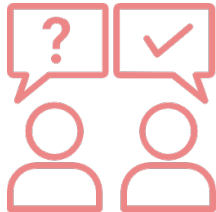
“Not clear and the letter came in long after the payment was made.”



They felt the letter should have **come earlier**. They also wanted to know the **exact dates** for when the supplement would be **paid into their account**.

“It could have arrived earlier. It appeared a bit like an afterthought. People in receipt of benefits need to know on what day it’s going to be available, not during which month. So it could have been more precise.”

## What questions did you have about the letter?



After receiving the letter, **over eight in ten respondents ( 81 per cent)** did not do anything.



Those who did do something most often said they looked for more information about the payment **online**.

**More than eight in ten respondents (82 per cent) did not have** any questions about the Carer's Allowance Supplement after receiving the letter.



**One in ten respondents (10 per cent)** still had questions about the Carer's Allowance Supplement.



The **most common question** asked by respondents was on the **payment dates for Carer's Allowance Supplement**. This was **followed by the reason** behind the supplement being **paid twice a year**.



**Other questions** included questions about **impact on other benefits**, need to **declare to the tax office**, and if the supplement would be **taken back by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**.

“I wasn’t sure if I had to contact the tax office to declare it...or whether they would be informed automatically.”

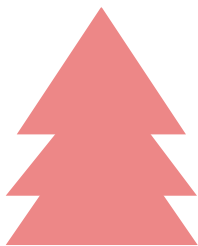
## How has getting this extra money helped you?



Respondents described how the money helped to **pay** for necessities they **needed** but **couldn’t afford**.

“It helped with heating and weekly messages.”

“It allowed me to pay for bills that would have been a struggle to pay.”



Respondents spoke about how the **December payment helped** them during the Christmas period.



“It helped me organise Christmas without debt or stress.”



Respondents spoke about the **positive impact** that receiving the letter and payment had on them.

“Getting the letter and money helped financially of course but it also gives you an emotional boost.”

## What needs to improve

While the payment was welcomed, respondents felt that it was **not enough for the amount of work carers do.**

“My caring role is not the equivalent of a full time job. It’s more than that. It’s a 24/7 job....personally I do still believe it’s not enough.”



Respondents described that while it felt the payment was a **step in the right direction, more needs to be done.** This was a **major concern** for those who had needed to **give up full time work** to become carers.

“It was sucked into our daily living costs so was no direct benefit to me. When I gave up work we lost almost 30K overnight.”



Respondents described the need for **more clarity and precision** in letters.

“Not clear and the letter came in long after the payment was made.”

A few respondents highlighted the need to put down the **exact dates** for when the supplement would come in the letter.

“People in receipt of benefits need to know on what day it’s going to be available, not during which month.”



There were a **few respondents – six per cent** – who **did not receive** the payment when the expected to.

“I would not like money going into the bank without prior notification.”

## **Next Steps**

The Scottish Government will continue to work with the Experience Panels in the development of Scotland’s new social security system.

The content of this report will be used to improve the letter for Carer’s Allowance Supplement.



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