

Social Security Experience Panels: Follow Up Survey about Appointees

Background

The Scottish Government is 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 joined the Experience Panels when they started in 2017. They all have recent experience of the benefits that are coming to Scotland.



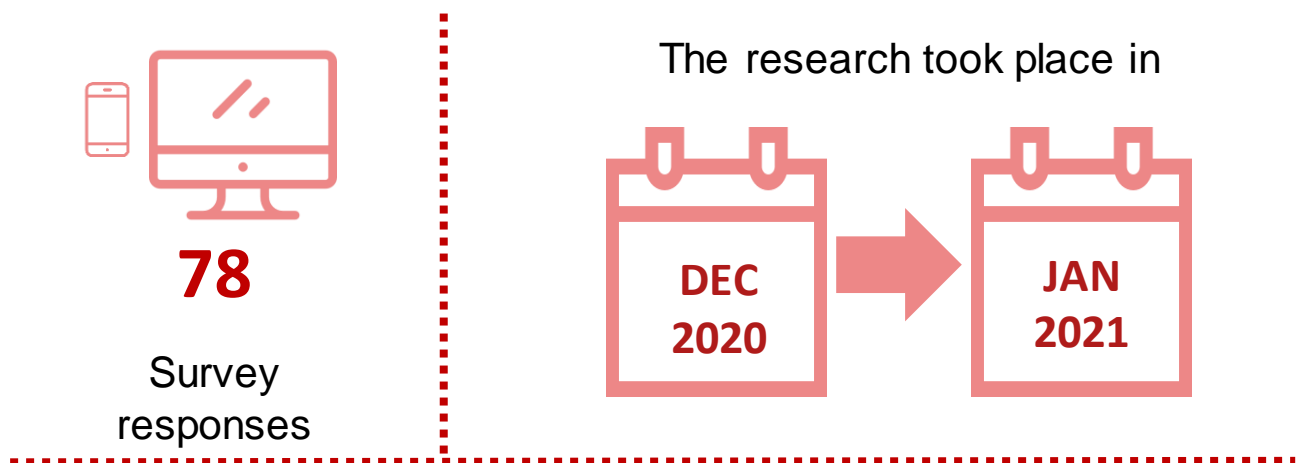
The Scottish Government is working with Experience Panel members to create Scotland's new social security system.

2,400+
**Experience Panel
members**

About the research

This report gives the findings of research with Experience Panel members about the appointees system. An **appointee** is a person given the power to act on another person's behalf by a social security agency.

This was a short follow up survey to previous research carried out in Summer 2020. A visual summary of the previous research can be found here: [Social Security experience panels: appointees - visual summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2021/01/Social_Security_experience_panels_appointees_visual_summary.pdf)



The research asked views about:



When someone who is capable of acting for themselves **chooses** to have an appointee act on their behalf.



What types of professional people could confirm that an appointee is **suitable**.

About the survey participants

Around half (49 per cent) were aged between

45 – 59

years old



40%

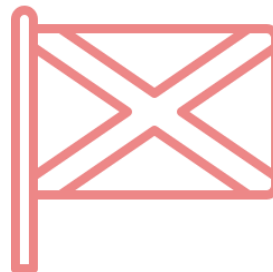
Man or boy



60%

Woman or girl

Almost all (93 per cent) had a disability or other long term health condition.



Respondents took part from **29** local authority areas.

Professional People



Social Security Scotland have a duty of care to clients and may want to check that an appointed person is suitable. One way to do this would be to ask a **professional person** to confirm this.



A **professional person** is someone who earns their living by doing a job that requires a certain level of education, skill, or training.

Examples of a professional person may include:



Healthcare providers



Social workers



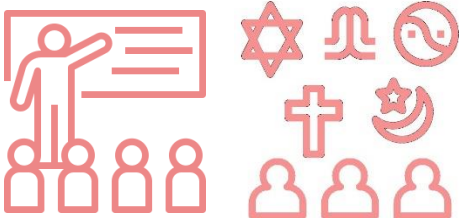
Solicitors



Support workers



Overall, respondents understood who was included in the categories covered by the list. Respondents gave a number of suggestions for additions to the list.



The **most frequent** suggestions were people who work in **education**, such as teachers, and **religious leaders**.

Other examples included:



People who work for charities or support services



Elected officials such as councillors



People who work in the emergency services



Family and friends



We asked respondents what professional people in their lives they would want Social Security Scotland to contact about an appointee. Many respondents said **medical professionals** including GPs, nurses, psychiatrists, and consultants.

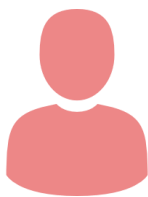


Some participants said **solicitors, social workers, or people who work for charities or support services.**

Concerns



Some respondents were concerned that a professional person might not **know a client or appointee well enough**.



“If the duty social worker read a file - that's not coming from knowledge of an individual. I would want to think it went a little deeper than that to check who they were asking and how well they knew me or any client.”



Some respondents were concerned that asking a professional person could cause **delays**.



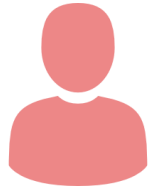
“My only concern would be that GPs get bogged down with this type of work and hurry through a claimant's records.”



Some respondents said they would want **updates** about the process. Others said that Social Security Scotland should ask them before contacting a professional person.



Some respondents said it was important that certain information about them was kept **private**. They thought that professional people should only share certain information.



“As long it was with my consent and any irrelevant information was not disclosed without that consent.”

Next Steps

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

These findings will be used to inform and develop the design of the appointees system in Scotland.



© Crown copyright 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

ISBN: 978-1-80004-692-4

Published by the Scottish Government, March 2021