



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

Our Charter a summary

What you can expect from the Scottish
Government and Social Security Scotland

For a full version of Our Charter visit mygov.scot.
Our Charter can be provided in audio, Braille,
easy read, large print or alternative languages
by calling 0800 182 2222.

Dignity,
fairness,
respect.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

A people's service

We are here to help you get everything you're entitled to.



Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Government will:

1. be patient, kind and consider how you might feel
2. listen to you, trust you and treat you as an individual
3. treat everyone equally, fairly and without discrimination
4. support you through your application, keeping you updated and explaining what will happen and why
5. ensure staff are knowledgeable about social security to help you get what you're entitled to
6. refer you to independent advice and support if you want extra help with your application or appeal. You are also entitled to ask someone that you know to support you
7. make decisions in a way that is consistent and accurate – and aim to get them right first time
8. be honest, provide clear reasons for decisions and explain what to do if you disagree
9. pay you on time in the right amount
10. refer you to other organisations, services or forms of help where they could help improve your wellbeing or financial circumstances

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11. tell you if we think you might be entitled to benefits not delivered by Social Security Scotland
 12. recruit people who care about delivering a service based on equality, respect, dignity and human rights
 13. involve people with diverse lived experiences of social security and the organisations that represent them in training staff.

Please help us by:

1. treating staff with dignity, fairness and respect
 2. telling us if you have particular access or cultural needs – we'll do our best to meet them
 3. giving us the information we need to help you and telling us if something changes that might affect your entitlement
 4. telling us about any problems with getting this information that we might be able to help with
 5. telling us how you feel about the service. We always want to get better and your ideas can help us do that.
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Processes that work

We will design services with the people who use them.



Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Government will:

1. make communications, processes and systems as simple and clear as possible by testing them with the people who will use them
2. recognise that your time is precious and handle your application and enquiries as quickly as we can
3. adapt processes and ways of communicating as much as we reasonably can to meet your needs and preferences, for example by providing interpreters
4. support your wellbeing and make your contact with us as positive and stress-free as possible
5. ensure that disabled people who need help with the application process can get independent advocacy
6. deliver face-to-face services in local communities in places that are convenient and accessible. This includes home visits if appropriate
7. look at your application again if you disagree with a decision. This is called a re-determination. When we do this someone different will look at it as if it was a completely new application
8. explain how you can appeal if you still don't think the right decision has been made after a re-determination
9. continue to pay you at the same level if you challenge a decision to reduce or stop your benefit
10. only carry out a face-to-face assessment for disability benefits when we are not able to make a decision with information that is already available
11. ensure face-to-face assessments are carried out in a way that puts your wellbeing first
12. make sure that face-to-face assessments are carried out by qualified staff who understand your condition and the impact it is having on you.

A learning system

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



Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Government will:

1. listen, learn and improve by owning up to mistakes and valuing feedback, complaints and appeal decisions
2. encourage you to provide feedback, explain how you can complain and do everything we can to make things right
3. involve people using the service in measuring how well it works - including the commitments in Our Charter
4. make sure staff are well trained, supported and well equipped to do their jobs
5. ensure staff understand the needs of different people and the barriers they face - so that no-one experiences discrimination because of who they are
6. encourage staff to speak up when they feel we could provide a better service
7. build a workforce that reflects the diversity of the people of Scotland
8. create a culture of trust by being open and transparent
9. work with other organisations to ensure services and policy are joined up to provide the best possible help and support
10. encourage other organisations working in social security to adopt the approach described in Our Charter
11. base services in places that are accessible and welcoming for everyone.



A better future

We will invest in the people of Scotland –
making a positive difference to all our lives.

The Scottish Government will:

1. embed the social security principles and Our Charter in the policymaking process
2. involve people with diverse lived experiences of social security in developing policy
3. develop policy that seeks to advance equality, non-discrimination and the human right to social security as defined in laws, treaties and guidance
4. use social security powers to help ensure people can play a full and active part in society
5. promote a positive view of social security, explaining it is a public service to be proud of – a human right there for all of us who need it
6. publicly challenge the myths and stereotypes about social security to help reduce stigma and negativity
7. change the language on social security - introducing more positive words to describe the service and the people who use it
8. look for ways to make eligibility rules fairer and consider creating new benefits to meet people's changing needs

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9. review the payment levels of Scottish benefits every year
 10. increase the value of disability, employment-injury, carers and funeral expense benefits every year in line with inflation
 11. improve take-up, ensuring as many people as possible get what they are entitled to, making a particular effort to reach people who are most likely to be excluded
 12. use social security powers to contribute towards tackling poverty
 13. work with other public services to support delivery of the National Outcomes. These define the Scottish Government's vision for a fairer, more prosperous Scotland
 14. allocate resources fairly and efficiently, delivering value for money in a way that puts people first
 15. develop ways of measuring how we are doing against the commitments in Our Charter.
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Who can you tell if you do not think Our Charter is being met?

For feedback, suggestions and complaints, please speak to a member of Social Security Scotland staff, visit www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/what-we-do/feedback or call freephone 0800 182 2222.

Staff will try to help you right away and to ensure we do better next time. We will listen, learn and improve.

If you are still unhappy please contact independent Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

Visit sps0.org.uk or call freephone 0800 377 7330.

You can also complain about matters relating to policy decisions (eg. levels of payment or eligibility rules) direct to Scottish Ministers. Please contact sgcomplaints@gov.scot

Contact us

 0800 182 2222

 mygov.scot

 @SocSecScot

 Social Security Scotland



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Text Relay Service: 18001+ 0300 244 4000
(service for the hard of hearing).

If you are a British Sign Language (BSL) user, you can contact us via our national BSL video relay service Contact Scotland-BSL.

Visit contactscotland-bsl.org/device-direct/