

**Social Justice and Social Security Committee
Thursday 26 June 2025
20th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)**

Scottish Commission on Social Security

Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. At its meeting of 6 March 2025, the Committee agreed to schedule an evidence session with the Chair of the Scottish Commission on Social Security, Ed Pybus.
2. A key role of the Scottish Commission on Social Security is to provide expert advice to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Ministers on devolved social security matters.
3. Members of the Committee wish to hear about the work of the Scottish Commission on Social Security and its priorities for the future role of the Commission.

Witnesses

4. The Committee will hear from the following witnesses:
 - Ed Pybus, Chair, Scottish Commission on Social Security
 - Judith Paterson, Board Member, Scottish Commission on Social Security

Written submission

5. The Committee received a written submission in advance of the evidence session. Please see Annex A for details of the submission.

**Clerks to the Committee
June 2025**

Annex A

Written Submission by Scottish Commission on Social Security

The Scottish Commission on Social Security (SCoSS) is an independent public body established by the [Social Security \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#) ('the 2018 Act'). We provide expert advice to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Ministers on devolved social security matters. We are delighted to have been invited to talk to the Committee about the role we have played since 2019 and share our priorities for the future role of the Commission in supporting the development of the devolved social security system.

A considerable area of our focus, to date, has been on the provision of robust pre-legislative scrutiny of regulations about social security assistance made under the 2018 Act. This reflects the establishment of new rules for the delivery of Scottish benefits, and has involved the publication of 36 detailed reports which have been shared with the Committee. This has included 342 recommendations, 90% of which have been accepted or partially accepted by the Scottish Government. These recommendations have addressed technical legislative changes, policy decisions, and the delivery of social security.

Since taking up the position of Chair, in August 2024, it has been clear that the focus of the Commission is beginning to shift from scrutiny of the initial devolution of social security benefits to consideration of draft regulations that seek to amend existing devolved benefits. This has a subsequent impact on the depth and extent of our scrutiny workload with reports often required within restricted timescales. We anticipate that this change in focus will continue in 2025-26 as the initial devolution of benefits approaches its conclusion.

The 2024-25 financial year marked a number of significant milestones in the development of the Commission. In March 2025, we published our first report under our statutory function to assess the extent to which the expectations set out in the Scottish Social Security Charter are being fulfilled. The report considered how people with communication needs experienced the Scottish social security system. Overall, people's experiences of Social Security Scotland were positive and better than their experiences of the UK system. However, there were examples where needs had not been met as fully or consistently as they could have been. Our report makes recommendations where inclusive communication practices and access to advocacy services could be improved. We are now considering what would be most useful for us to look at next.

Alongside this, the Social Security (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2025 will result in welcome changes to our scrutiny role and governance. The Act provides for an extension to the Commission's remit, including the addition of new scrutiny powers, for example, over care experience assistance and information for audit. We intend to continue to provide robust, effective and efficient scrutiny of these matters, contributing

our expertise to the Committee's ongoing scrutiny of the delivery of the Scottish social security system.