
Statement of Data Needs

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This publication is available at www.fiscalcommission.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: Scottish Fiscal Commission, Governor's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DE or info@fiscalcommission.scot

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Foreword

The Scottish Fiscal Commission (SFC) is the independent fiscal institution for Scotland. Our statutory duty is to provide independent and official forecasts of the economy, tax revenues and social security spending to inform the Scottish Budget. We also provide an assessment of the reasonableness of the Government's borrowing projections and set out the funding for the Scottish Budget. As part of this role, we will produce a report on the long-term sustainability of the Scottish Government's public finances in 2023.

This Statement of Data Needs sets out our data requests and recommendations for improvements in the data and information we receive to produce our forecasts and support our work on fiscal sustainability and public funding. This previously annual publication is now published biennially. The frequency of the publications is extended to two years to allow sufficient time for development of the engagements and collaborations between the Commission and the data providers.

We can report that following the previous Statement of Data Needs in 2020, several improvements were made by the data providers to address our data needs. These are summarised in Annex A. Specifically, we established several successful processes with HM Treasury to ensure we have access to information on the effects of UK Government policy changes, which have been set out in a memorandum of understanding published in August 2022.

As in the previous Statement of Data Needs in 2020, we want to express our appreciation for data providers continuing to publish statistics over the course of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Statistics on COVID-19 related changes to the population and labour market participation have been particularly invaluable in producing our forecasts.

We have organised this statement by topics of social security, public funding (including fiscal sustainability), economy and tax.

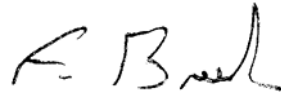
This statement highlights the areas where we require data for our social security forecasts. We especially have concerns around the data produced by Social Security Scotland on disability payments as the new payments launch and clients are transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). These payments account for a large proportion of the Scottish Budget spending. The Scottish Government has introduced significant reforms and we need data to produce and revise our forecasts of spending as the payments launch and to support the Scottish Parliament in scrutinising the Scottish Budget and future spending plans.

We also highlight data needs necessary for our forecasts in other areas including economy and tax. We are working closely with organisations such as the Scottish Government, Office for National Statistics (ONS), DWP, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and Revenue Scotland, to receive the required data and relevant clarifications on terminology and data production.

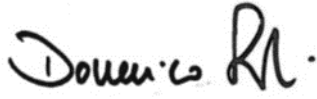
We also anticipate the upcoming publication of the outputs from Scotland's Census 2022 for the population data we use in a range of our forecasts including labour market, income tax, and social security payments.



Professor Graeme Roy



Professor Francis Breedon



Dr Domenico Lombardi



Professor David Ulph

30 August 2022

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Chapter 1

Introduction

- 1.1 The Commission is responsible for economic and fiscal forecasting to inform the Scottish Budget. It is essential that we have access to the relevant information and data to fulfil our statutory duties. We regularly publish a Statement of Data Needs to specify our requirements from the organisations that provide us the relevant data, and highlight any areas for improvement to support production and evaluation of our forecasts.
- 1.2 Many of our previous data requests in Statement of Data Needs publications have been addressed. The progress of these requests is summarised in Annex A.
- 1.3 This publication describes our current data requests for different forecasts broken down across the Social Security, the Public Funding and the Economy and Tax chapters. Summary chapter provides an overview of the specific recommendations.
- 1.4 For social security, there are several areas where improvements are required in both the collection and publication of data by Social Security Scotland. The quality and availability of the data we require directly affects our ability to support parliamentary scrutiny of the Scottish Budget by both producing and then evaluating our forecasts.
- 1.5 We received significant interest in our estimates of increased spending on Child Disability Payment (CDP) and Adult Disability Payment (ADP) and expect our forecast evaluation reports of those estimates to attract similar interest.
- 1.6 Our data needs are significantly greater for the disability payments than for the initially introduced low-income payments, which have been the focus of previous evaluation reports. Our greater data needs reflect the complexity of the payments, the considerable changes being introduced by the Scottish Government, the size of spending and the public interest in understanding how those changes affect the level of spending.
- 1.7 In 2023, we will produce a report on the long-term sustainability of the Scottish Government's public finances. To project Scottish Government spending in the future, we require further clarity on the level and classification of current spending as well as spending plans as set out in Scottish Government Budgets or Spending Reviews.
- 1.8 In 2020-21, we successfully trialled new processes to access the information we require from HM Treasury. We welcome the final arrangements with HM Treasury and setting out of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) published in August 2022.¹ We continue to recommend the Commission is provided with statutory access to information held by the UK Government and UK public bodies.
- 1.9 Further engagement is required with the ONS and HMRC on regional earnings data to inform our estimates on Scottish wages and earnings, as well as public sector employment and average earnings. We require these data for our economy forecasts, which in turn apply to our income tax forecasts. This request of public sector employment data extends to the Scottish Government.

¹ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2022) Memorandum of Understanding with HM Treasury ([link](#))

These data will allow for consistency in our forecasts of the public sector earnings and the overall public spending.

- 1.10 We use labour productivity data on hours worked in our economic forecasts of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. We encourage the Scottish Government to consider in more detail the productivity measures in their labour statistics and provide a clearer definition of average hours worked.
- 1.11 We also highlight the lack of regional price indices for an accurate measure of regional inflation data as part of our economic forecasts.
- 1.12 We are currently in discussions with the Scottish Government and HMRC about receiving more timely information on self-assessment liabilities.
- 1.13 We also require more detailed data on the Scottish Landfill Tax and specifically the total tonnage that will be liable for the Biodegradable Municipal Waste Ban in 2025.
- 1.14 For future publications of our forecasts, we are expecting to use the data from Scotland's Census 2022. We will use the population data at Scotland level, with age and sex breakdowns, alongside the population projections data produced by the National Records of Scotland (NRS). We will use these population data in our economic forecasts for labour market, income tax and demographic characteristics for social security payments. We would welcome updated timetables for publication of the census data, clear guidance on the data composition in terms of definitions and how each variable is derived, and information on the confidence levels of estimates so that we can incorporate these in our models effectively.
- 1.15 As an overall message, we encourage all our data providers to adopt and follow the Code of Practice for Statistics.² We are voluntary adopters of the Code and apply the principles to the production of our forecasts. The commitment to the Code's pillars of trustworthiness, quality and value offers a greater commitment to quality data, processes and methods against recognised standards.

² Code of Practice for Statistics ([link](#))

Chapter 2

Social Security

Introduction

- 2.1 Since our last Statement of Data Needs was published in September 2020, social security has seen significant policy changes. These include the launch of the new Scottish Child Payment, the introduction of Child Disability Payment, which replaces Disability Living Allowance for Children, and most recently on 29 August 2022 the launch of Adult Disability Payment which replaces Personal Independence Payment. Further changes are planned with the launch of Low Income Winter Heating Assistance in the winter 2022-23, and the devolution of Winter Fuel Payments the winter 2024-25. These changes significantly increase social security spending, as highlighted in our May 2022 Scotland's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts (SEFF).³
- 2.2 New payments are complex in terms of modelling and are inherently more difficult to forecast compared to the established payments. In addition, the number and scale of the changes that are made to the disability payments to be delivered in Scotland, meant that our initial forecast for 2021-22 relied heavily on judgement. To produce future forecasts for these payments, evaluate and improve our forecasts, it is essential that we receive robust and detailed data on a clear and consistent basis.
- 2.3 There has been a wide range of new data published during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic by the Scottish Government, National Records of Scotland (NRS) and Public Health Scotland, which we welcome and have used to inform our social security forecasts. Regular and timely data on COVID-19 cases and contacts, and management information on Self-Isolation Support Grant (SISG) spending informed our forecasts' spending on SISG. NRS population data on births and deaths has informed our population and Funeral Support Payment forecasts, and pregnancy data in the 'wider impacts dashboard' has informed our forecasts of payments for children. We would welcome the continued publication by NRS of births by month of birth and the Public Health Scotland pregnancy data.
- 2.4 This chapter details the data that we need for forecasting spending on social security payments. We present these data requests by the specific organisations that hold and produce these data, including Social Security Scotland, the Scottish Government and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Data requests

- 2.5 We are responsible for producing spending forecasts for devolved social security payments to inform the Scottish Budget. We are required to explain our judgements and changes to our forecasts. We have a statutory duty to evaluate our forecasts, including our estimates of additional spending on new payments. We require robust and timely data to provide detailed evaluations of our forecasts and explain those to the Parliament. As well as improving our future forecasts, the evaluation process is an important part of the Scottish Parliament's scrutiny of the Scottish Budget.

³ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2022) Scotland's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts – May 2022 ([link](#))

This is particularly important now when there are significant changes being introduced to the new Scottish social security system.

- 2.6 We have a statutory right of access to data and information held by Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Government. If data are not collected or processed in a way that these can be made available, this limits our capacity to produce and evaluate the required forecasts for the Scottish Budget.
- 2.7 Social Security Scotland is the executive agency set up by the Scottish Government to deliver and administer the devolved social security benefits. The Scottish Government develops the intended approach of delivering social security system and principles, while Social Security Scotland administers these services directly to clients. We have shared our data needs with Social Security Scotland and the Scottish Government on a regular basis. We have been involved in the consultation process for the new IT system for Social Security Scotland and highlighted our data needs. Some of our data needs for some of the payments have been met. However, the new systems used by Social Security Scotland are currently not designed in a way that meets or prioritises our, and other users' data needs for the new Scottish disability payments. We also work closely with DWP to share our data needs and receive updates on the existing data available.

Social Security Scotland

- 2.8 As Social Security Scotland launches new payments to replace the payments administered by DWP, Social Security Scotland is increasingly becoming our main data provider.
- 2.9 We have engaged with the Scottish Government programme team designing the data processing systems over the last four years ahead of the introduction of the payments. We have shared our data needs for producing forecasts that reflect the characteristics and trends of the Scottish Government's social security clients. For the first payments devolved and the new unique Scottish payments, such as Best Start Grant and the Scottish Child Payment, Social Security Scotland has provided us with the data that we need. This has allowed us to produce and evaluate our forecasts for these payments.
- 2.10 As more new and increasingly complex payments are being introduced, we require more detailed and varied data. These payments replace those devolved to the Scottish Government in April 2020, but which have continued to be administered by DWP on behalf of the Scottish Government. Child Disability Payment (CDP) and Adult Disability Payment (ADP) are the first two payments to launch, replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children and Personal Independence Payment (PIP), respectively. These payments are more complex than previous payments launched by Social Security Scotland as the eligibility criteria are related to the impact the disabling condition has on the client rather than being based on receipt of another benefit, and clients can receive support at different payment levels depending on their condition and level of support needed. Social Security Scotland will administer all new applications to these payments. Clients currently receiving the UK-wide payments will be transferred from DWP to Social Security Scotland. Social Security Scotland is responsible for publishing data on new applications, case transfers from DWP, the award combination of their clients and data on reviews and appeals.
- 2.11 At this point, we are working with Social Security Scotland to ensure that their publications for the disability payments meet our data needs. These publications are informative, but the published data are not currently sufficient to allow us to continue producing our disability payment forecasts on a consistent approach and do not allow us to evaluate our estimates of additional spending from the new payments above the existing DWP payments.

- 2.12 At the time of publishing this document, Social Security Scotland has published five official statistics publications on CDP and one official statistics publication on ADP.⁴ It should be noted that these statistics are being published as experimental statistics, which refers to new official statistics undergoing evaluation. We are working collaboratively with Social Security Scotland to ensure their publications meet our needs. However, we are concerned by the data currently available for CDP on new applications and clients who are transferred from DWP to Social Security Scotland. We are not receiving the same level of detail in the data provided by Social Security Scotland as we did from DWP. We require these data to produce our forecasts. We hope that this will be resolved promptly as there is a risk that future publications on ADP data have the same issues.
- 2.13 Our combined forecast for CDP and ADP in 2024-25 when all existing clients will have been transferred to the new Scottish payments is £3,265 million, which accounts for 57 per cent of total social security spending. Currently, our estimates of additional spending on CDP and ADP are based on assumptions we have made, largely based on data from previous DWP changes. Without information from Social Security Scotland on the new payments, we will not be able to evaluate the assumptions we made and improve our future forecasts. These data issues limit our ability to produce evidence-based forecasts, which may result in large forecast errors with significant implications for the Scottish Budget. This, in turn, may have implications on the budget allocation for social security spending.
- 2.14 In this Statement of Data Needs, we differentiate between data collection and data dissemination issues. Data collection issues are areas where Social Security Scotland are not collecting certain data that have been collected by DWP historically. This is especially concerning because once data are not collected this information is lost and cannot be recovered or published at a later date. This issue has long-term implications for data analysis. Data dissemination issues are where the data are being collected but are not being published or shared at this stage. This can be rectified retrospectively once systems or processes are more established and Social Security Scotland have sufficient staff and resources to undertake the analysis. The data dissemination issues currently present a short- to medium-term problem and have potentially significant consequences on the quality of our forecasts over the next few years.

Data dissemination issues – Child Disability Payment

- 2.15 DWP publishes data on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) caseload and payments using an online tool called Stat-Xplore.⁵ This versatile and flexible tool allows us to extract data on Scotland-specific clients and provides the data breakdowns that we require to produce our forecasts. From November 2021, Child Disability Payment (CDP) replaced DLA for Children as the disability payment for children and young people who live in Scotland. The transition of data owner from DWP to Social Security Scotland has created a break in the data series because the data produced by Social Security Scotland is not consistent with the data previously provided by DWP that we require for forecasting.
- 2.16 Any breaks in data series or reductions in the quality of data will make it more difficult to compare the payments over time. This will greatly hamper the Scottish Government's ability to evaluate their new policies, our ability to assess the accuracy of our forecasts, and potentially lead to larger forecast errors in the future.

⁴ Social Security Scotland publications on Child Disability Payment ([link](#));

Social Security Scotland publication on Adult Disability Payment ([link](#))

⁵ DWP Stat-Xplore ([link](#))

- 2.17 Data dissemination issues present a substantial risk to our forecasts in the short and medium term. If sufficient data on CDP are not made available, then the quality and accuracy of our forecasts will decrease.

Box 2.1: Recommendation 1

Social Security Scotland to publish data comparable to DWP on a consistent basis and backdate the data to the launch of payments, avoiding any breaks in the data series.

- 2.18 We have expressed our concerns and given opportunities for Social Security Scotland to review and address these by improving their publications. We have submitted a request to Social Security Scotland highlighting our priority data needs. For producing our forecast and evaluating the payments, we require:
- Total number of people in receipt of CDP each month, which we refer to as caseload. To date we only have two quarterly snapshots of caseload, for March and June 2022. We need these data to distinguish between new applicants and people who have been transferred from DLA, and for further breakdowns of the data for both groups.
 - The number of clients in receipt of the different payment award combinations each month in order to estimate the average award. Social Security Scotland started to publish data on the award combination at the initial decision stage for applications, but this does not allow us to calculate the average payment awarded to clients, as some of the clients may have successfully challenged their initial decision, or no longer be in receipt of payment.
 - Information on the characteristics of clients receiving payments and their awards. This includes the payment that they receive, their age, and sex or gender.
 - We also need information on the number of people receiving Short Term Assistance payments.
 - Looking to the future, we will require breakdowns of the caseload by length of award, main disabling condition, and the outcomes of reviews and appeals.
- 2.19 At this point, the data presented in the CDP publications have not been adequate for our forecasting and evaluation purposes. Because of this, the initial Social Security Scotland data on CDP were not used in our latest forecast in May 2022 and we were unable to revise our forecasts based on the first five months of CDP delivery.
- 2.20 As highlighted by Audit Scotland in their 2019 report, Social Security Scotland is a large-scale programme and “taking a phased incremental approach to delivery”.⁶ Social Security Scotland has informed us that their capacity to meet our needs is constrained by limited resources. While we understand and are sympathetic with their situation, not having access to the appropriate data will become increasingly problematic as time goes on. As the costs of CDP become larger with all cases eventually being transferred from DWP, it will consequently account for an increasing proportion of the social security spend.
- 2.21 Similar issues and risks were identified in the report by the Scottish Government Directorate for Internal Audit and Assurance presented at the May 2022 Social Security Scotland Audit and

⁶ Audit Scotland (2019) Social security: Implementing the devolved powers ([link](#))

Assurance Committee.⁷ The report included an in-depth review of CDP delivery, it identified “insufficient management tools” because of a “failure to consider management information requirements and embed them as part of the design process” and that “there is no viable data to use as a baseline”.⁸

- 2.22 Ideally, we use publicly available data in our forecasts to allow for transparency and greater scrutiny. However, we understand that it may be necessary in the immediate short-term for us to receive data from Social Security Scotland directly whilst their publications are being fully developed in the medium to long term.
- 2.23 If we are not able to receive our minimum data requirements in the short term then this poses a risk to the Scottish Budget as our forecast errors are likely to increase. Social Security Scotland is increasingly becoming our biggest data provider with the rollout of replacement payments for the disability benefits, so we can no longer rely on the data published by DWP which currently form the basis for most of our forecasts.

Data dissemination issues – Adult Disability Payment

- 2.24 We are also concerned that Child Disability Payment (CDP) data dissemination issues will carry over to Adult Disability Payment (ADP) statistics. The pilot for ADP started in March 2022, and Social Security Scotland has already published some initial statistics. ADP is replacing Personal Independence Payment (PIP) nationally from 29 August 2022. Any break in data series or change in the data collected from that point compared to data published for PIP will present a much larger risk to the Scottish Budget than CDP, as it makes up a larger proportion of social security spending.
- 2.25 Similar to the issues with the CDP, we have highlighted our priority data needs to Social Security Scotland for ADP. These data needs will expand as the payment develops. For producing and evaluating our forecasts, we require:
- Regularly published data on the number of clients, caseload split by new applications and case transfers, their awards broken down by daily living or mobility level of award, and the characteristics of those clients, including single year of age and sex or gender.
 - Data on the length of time a client has been on the caseload and the number of new successful applications (inflows to the caseload) each month or quarter.
 - Information on the outcomes of applications and award reviews, such as appeals information to calculate the success rates, and the proportion of cases with an award increased, decreased or disallowed.
 - Looking to the future, we will need breakdowns of the caseload by disabling condition, including being able to identify clients who receive ADP under terminal illness rules. To take account of future policy changes, we would also request detailed data on the outcome of their assessments, and to which extent they meet the different eligibility criteria.
- 2.26 This information would allow us to continue analysing ADP in the same way we have been able to analyse PIP, produce forecasts, and evaluate our forecasts, including our estimates of additional spend arising from the launch and delivery of ADP. Our latest forecast is for spending on ADP to be higher than spending on PIP would have been by 2027-28. In the absence of the data we need, it

⁷ Social Security Scotland (2022) Audit and Assurance Committee – 17 May 2022 ([link](#))

⁸ Directorate for Internal Audit and Assurance (2022) Internal Audit Report. Social Security Scotland 2021-22. Child Disability Payment In-Depth Review – 27 April 2022 ([link](#))

will be very difficult for us to evaluate whether this forecast is too low or too high. If we have access to the data required, we will start to see early indications as to whether the forecast is accurate and could revise our forecast accordingly.

- 2.27 We also need information on the number of people receiving Short Term Assistance payments for each disability payment; and we need to continue being able to break down the caseload into the main disabling conditions to identify those who are terminally ill, in order to assess our forecasts.

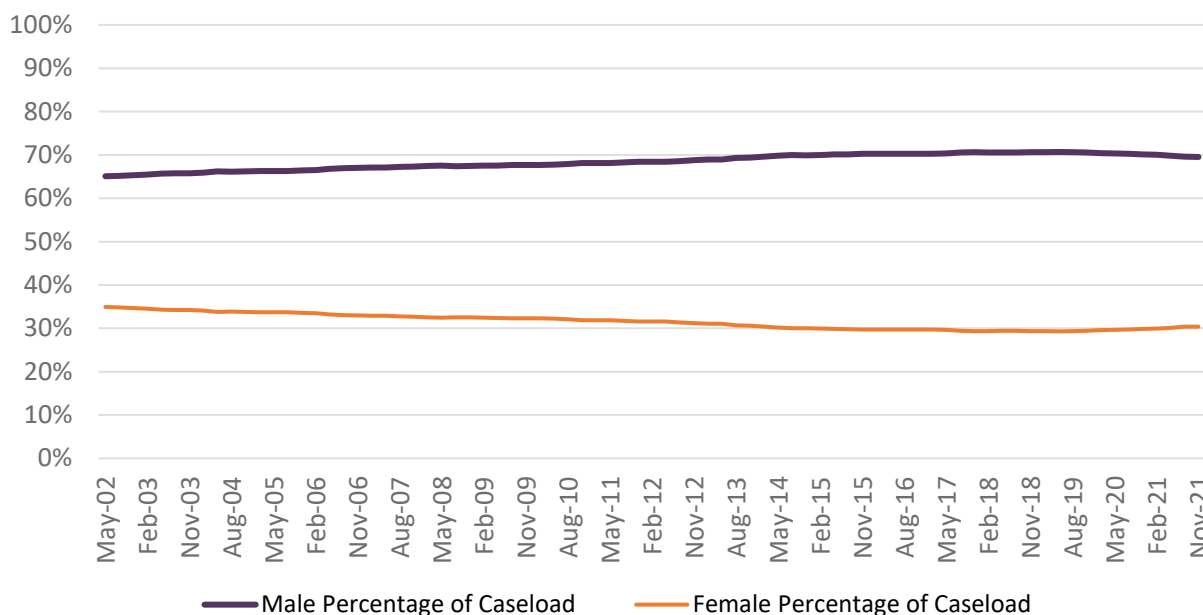
Data collection issues – Child Disability Payment

- 2.28 In addition to the data not currently reported, we are concerned about data that Social Security Scotland is not collecting as part of their application process. If these data are not collected, these cannot be recovered. We are particularly concerned about Social Security Scotland planning to stop collecting information on the sex or gender of the disabled children through the CDP core application form.
- 2.29 While the terms sex and gender are sometimes used interchangeably, these represent different data in terms of meaning and context.⁹ For the purposes of our data needs we will use data collected on either sex or gender, as long as it is consistent in the method of collection.
- 2.30 While we understand that the information on the sex or gender of children in receipt of payments is not collected because it is not relevant to the award of the payment, we use this information in our forecasts to analyse and apply the trends in applications and prevalence of conditions in the different sex or gender groups. In addition, other stakeholders will use the information to assist in equality monitoring of the payment.
- 2.31 Evidence shows that there is a long-term trend in child disability applications and a higher prevalence of certain conditions for male than for female children. This may indicate gender bias in prevalence of disability diagnoses. We use this information to adjust the trends by sex or gender and disabling condition to produce forecasts for caseloads.
- 2.32 When an application is made to Social Security Scotland, clients are asked to complete an equality monitoring form, which asks for information on age, gender, ethnicity and other characteristics. Information from the equality monitoring form is held separately to the application.
- 2.33 Social Security Scotland plans to remove the question on sex from the core application and to collect this information on the sex or gender of the child applying for CDP through the equality monitoring form that accompanies the payment application. Currently, the equality monitoring form collects the gender information on the person completing the application, usually the parent or carer, rather than the child. From a forecasting point of view, the information currently collected in the equality form is not useful to understand the characteristics of the children in receipt of the payment.
- 2.34 Male children currently make up 70 per cent of the DLA for Children caseload, and this proportion has been growing over the last 20 years, as shown in Figure 1. In addition, the prevalence of certain conditions is higher in male children compared to female children. Incomplete or inconsistent data on sex or gender will reduce our ability to accurately forecast spending on CDP because we will not

⁹ Scottish Government (2021) Sex, gender identity, trans status – data collection and publication: guidance ([link](#))

be able to monitor and project different trends for male and female children separately. This may also affect the Scottish Government's own ability to evaluate the success of their new payment.

Figure 1. Male and female proportion of DLA for Children caseload.



Source: Department for Work and Pensions.

- 2.35 Not collecting information on sex or gender of the disabled child as part of the main application form may result in lower data quality and missing information. Responses on the equality monitoring form are provided on a voluntary basis and generally tend to have a low response rate, and hence, is not a viable data collection method in these situations. Moreover, collecting important information as part of the equality monitoring form may not be effectively linked to the data on payment awards. As well as this, the Scottish Government do not propose to have an overlap where sex or gender is collected on the core application form and the equality monitoring form at the same time. We will therefore not be able to evaluate whether one sex or gender are less likely to fill out the optional equality monitoring form, so we will not know if the remaining gender or sex information is biased.
- 2.36 Given that the sex or gender of the child is not currently collected on the equality monitoring form, any removal of it from the main application form will cause a break in the data. Given how stark the contrast between male and female proportions of the caseload is, it is crucial that we have a continuous dataset that allows us to evaluate the introduction of CDP.
- 2.37 Sex or gender information can be used to monitor long-term trends in uptake of the payments, and any gendered bias or prevalence should be considered in policy implementation and delivery. Further breaks in the data collected, especially on equality monitoring information, will make it difficult to evaluate the effect of the new payments. The current data does not allow for detailed evidence for policy evaluation on CDP for a vulnerable group of the population, specifically disabled children.
- 2.38 Further, the collection of these data would have an additional benefit to other data users. The collection of data on sex or gender is closely related to research into intersectionality between disability and gender, and human rights-based approaches to evaluation of policy intervention and

delivery. There are numerous sources of evidence, for example, of disabled girls experiencing inequality in accessing services, health provision and education attainment.¹⁰

Data collection issues – Adult Disability Payment

- 2.39 There are also data collection issues with ADP. We are particularly concerned about Social Security Scotland not collecting the sex or gender of applicants on ADP. Whilst sex or gender does not currently seem to be the driving force behind trends in ADP, we only know this because we currently have data on the sex of clients from DWP. This may change in future, for example, if there is an increase in conditions more commonly found in one sex or gender than others, and if there is no data available for sex or gender then this kind of analysis will not be possible.
- 2.40 If sex or gender did become a material factor behind changes in ADP caseload or spending and we do not have access to data on this then this could pose a large risk to the Scottish Budget, given the size and scale of ADP. A pilot for ADP has started and sex or gender are not being collected in the core application form.

Box 2.2: Recommendation 2

Social Security Scotland to collect robust and reliable data on a consistent basis using the core application form with information on the characteristics of clients receiving payments, including sex or gender, age, award they receive, payment they receive, their condition, duration of claim and the outcomes of reviews and appeals.

Data users' engagement

- 2.41 The creation of Social Security Scotland provided an opportunity to produce data and information on the new payments which was at least as good as that published by DWP. This is particularly important given the introduction of new social security payments, the forecast scale of additional spending resulting from these payments and the interest from a wide range of stakeholders in these payments. The audit report for Social Security Scotland highlighted “a significant gap in resource” and that “the programme found it difficult to recruit the range of skills and experience it needs”.¹¹ Social Security Scotland further informed us of their constraints to deliver the data required due to limited resources.

Box 2.3: Recommendation 3

Social Security Scotland to receive sufficient resources to enable them to produce the necessary data.

¹⁰ See a few select publications for more information and examples:

European Parliament (2013) Discrimination Generated by the Intersection of Gender and Disability ([link](#));
United Nations Population Fund, Wellesley Centers for Women (2008) Disability Rights, Gender, and Development A
Resource Tool for Action ([link](#))

UNESDOC Digital Library (2003) Education for All: a gender and disability perspective ([link](#))

Department for Education (2014) The Equality Act 2010 and schools. Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities ([link](#))

¹¹ Audit Scotland (2019) Social security: Implementing the devolved powers ([link](#))

- 2.42 We are only one of the organisations that use Social Security Scotland data. Many other organisations and data users also use Social Security Scotland data including the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament, think tanks, academics and third sector organisations.
- 2.43 We engage with Social Security Scotland on a regular basis to discuss our data needs. We are also aware that Social Security Scotland engages separately with other data users. However, it would be more beneficial to bring these discussions to an open user group forum. This will aid the transparency and accountability of the conversation between Social Security Scotland and data users.

Box 2.4: Recommendation 4

Social Security Scotland to set up a user group to ensure a wide range of views can identify the data requirements of users.

Other Scottish payments

- 2.44 Since 2018, several new Scottish payments have launched. These include Scottish Child Payment (SCP), Best Start Grant (BSG), Best Start Foods (BSF), and Funeral Support Payment (FSP).
- 2.45 At each forecast event we have received unpublished management information on BSG payments split by the child's month of birth, BSF by payment type, and FSP by age of claimant and month of death. This unpublished information provides us with the information we require for our forecasts.
- 2.46 We have a longstanding interest in data on eligibility for BSG, BSF, and SCP. Social Security Scotland currently receive operational data from DWP and HRMC to enable processing of applications. We are supportive of the ongoing work to extract data on the number of eligible children from these data received by Social Security Scotland.

Future replacement payments

- 2.47 As newly devolved payments transfer from being administered by DWP to Social Security Scotland, data consistency and continuity are very important. These payments include Pension Age Disability Payment (PADP), Low Income Winter Heating Assistance (LIWHA), Scottish Carer's Assistance (SCA) and Employment Injury Assistance (EIA).
- 2.48 LIWHA replaces Cold Weather Payment in winter 2022-23. We have had early engagement with the Scottish Government and discussed our data requirements for these payments. These have included the number of people automatically eligible for payment each year, those who have to manually apply, and spending data. We would also welcome statistics on the proportion of LIWHA clients broken down by their qualifying benefit and potentially the eligibility criteria they meet.
- 2.49 SCA replaces Carer's Allowance and Carer's Allowance Supplement with a national launch in spring 2024 and case transfer due to complete by the end of 2024.¹² We would like early engagement with the Scottish Government on data requirements for these payments. This is to allow sufficient time for the system to be designed and set up to meet the data needs of the external users, such as us, for production and evaluation of spending forecasts, as well as internal users, such as the Scottish Government, for policy assessments.

¹² Scottish Government (2022) Ministerial Foreword – Scottish Carer's Assistance: consultation ([link](#))

- 2.50 Regular data releases by DWP on disability and carer's payments through Stat-Xplore provide a wide range of detailed breakdowns. Additionally, DWP regularly provide unpublished data on the number of people receiving carers' payments broken down by the qualifying benefit received by the person being cared for. Social Security Scotland publish data on Carer's Allowance Supplement that provide similar breakdowns to the data published on Stat-Xplore. To continue producing forecasts when Scottish Carer's Assistance is launched, we will need the data on number of people receiving Scottish Carer's Assistance, which qualifying benefit they receive this for, whether they care for one person or multiple people and their weekly earnings (after relevant deductions). For evaluation and policy costings, we will need data on number of people qualifying through adding hours of care to multiple people and if the carer is in full-time education.
- 2.51 We are aware that Social Security Scotland is currently working on developing a new strategy for data management, and relevant tools and systems to support this. We strongly recommend that Social Security Scotland develops a tool similar to Stat-Xplore to match the quality of data dissemination in terms of coverage, frequency, and detail of the published data.

Box 2.5: Recommendation 5

Social Security Scotland to develop an online tool similar to Stat-Xplore that would allow stakeholders to access the specific data they require.

Department for Work and Pensions

- 2.52 We have a constructive working relationship with DWP. We regularly engage with the policy and finance officials and analysts to discuss the underlying trends in the data published by DWP, the different assumptions and forecasting approaches used in our forecasts.
- 2.53 In our Forecast Evaluation Report 2022, we discuss the implications on our Personal Independence Payment (PIP) forecast of not having incorporated a group of clients categorised as 'reassessed' from DLA.¹³ This group were not directly transferred to PIP from DLA by DWP, but applied to PIP as a new applicant after having previously been on DLA. We request that DWP provides better clarity on their published statistics, specifically on the definition of reassessed payments for PIP, as this may lead to misinterpretation.
- 2.54 We require DWP to supply the data on Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2020 and 2021. The data have not been published for these dates due to delays.
- 2.55 We also have a request relating to outturn spending for PIP in Scotland compared to the rest of the UK. Since PIP was devolved, the gap between the spending reported in financial data and the amount implied by statistical data has been wider in Scotland than in England and Wales. We estimate that spending in Scotland was 8 per cent higher than is implied by the statistical data on caseload and average awards in 2021-22. The corresponding gap for England and Wales was approximately 5.5 per cent. This is not easily explained by greater backlogs in Scotland, so we ask DWP and Social Security Scotland to support us in exploring this issue in more detail and provide more information on the accounting treatment of PIP, both in Scotland and the rest of the UK. This is something that has only recently come to our attention, and we look forward to working collaboratively with DWP and Social Security Scotland to understand this issue.

¹³ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2022) Forecast Evaluation Report – August 2022 ([link](#))

Chapter 3

Public Funding

Introduction

- 3.1 In our Statement of Data Needs in 2020, we set out how the Scottish Government could improve its provision of information around the Scottish Budget, which is becoming more complex over time.¹⁴ We published that Statement alongside our first Fiscal Update, which set out how the Scottish and UK Governments' responses to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had affected the Scottish Budget.
- 3.2 Since then, we have continued to publish Fiscal Updates with each Scottish fiscal event, setting out how the Scottish Budget has changed over time. We have expanded our analysis in each Scotland's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts (SEFF) report to explain the Scottish Government's net fiscal positions, plans for borrowing and the Scotland Reserve.
- 3.3 In the Statement of Data Needs in 2020, we made a general recommendation for Scottish Government to publish more information on how funding for the Scottish Budget changes throughout the year. The Scottish Government has been working with us to ensure we have the information we require for our Fiscal Updates alongside each fiscal event.
- 3.4 In this Statement of Data Needs, we identify and explain the specific areas of the Scottish Budget for which we require more information. We continue to work closely with analysts within the Scottish Government in each Budget, and these are smaller requests than we have made in previous publications.
- 3.5 We will also introduce our data needs for the upcoming Fiscal Sustainability Report, for which we will produce projections of Scottish Government spending for the first time. We set out our new data needs to support this publication.
- 3.6 Finally, we discuss the areas where we need data and information from the UK Government. Since our last Statement of Data Needs we have agreed a memorandum of understanding with HM Treasury which confirms arrangements for the Commission to access the information we need following UK Government fiscal events.

Scottish Budget analysis

Introduction

- 3.7 As we set out in our Statement of Data Needs in 2020, our main need at that time was for the Scottish Government to publish more information on how the Scottish Budget will change each year. This was a broad request for more information to support our work to explain changes to the Scottish Budget in our reports.

¹⁴ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2020) Statement of Data Needs ([link](#))

- 3.8 In this publication, we are making more detailed requests for the data we need around the Scottish Budget as we focus on areas of specific interests.

Funding assumptions

- 3.9 In recent SEFF reports, we have analysed the assumptions the Scottish Government has made around funding they will receive from the UK Government and other sources in future years.
- 3.10 To date, we consider these assumptions, which determine Scottish Government borrowing and reserve plans, have been broadly reasonable. The Scottish Government's most recent Resource Spending Review was based on a total level of funding from assumptions on number of sources, so that errors in any one assumption could be offset by another assumption. This means that these assumptions must be considered together to understand if the Scottish Government's plans are reasonable.
- 3.11 However, we would appreciate if the Scottish Government could set out these assumptions more clearly at each fiscal event. This would allow us to clearly assess both the Scottish Government's position and the risks around each individual assumption. We could then clearly set out how each assumption affects the Government's funding position, and what they mean for the reasonableness of their borrowing plans.

Box 3.1: Recommendation 6

Scottish Government to clearly include the assumptions they make to estimate funding for each Scottish Budget, so that we can assess how these affect the reasonableness of their borrowing plans.

Fiscal Sustainability Report

Introduction

- 3.12 As set out in our Approach to Fiscal Sustainability Consultation Paper, we are planning to publish our first Fiscal Sustainability Report (FSR) in 2023.¹⁵
- 3.13 This will require us to project Scottish Block Grant funding and all areas of Scottish Government spending over the next 50 years for the first time. We are about to begin work to model both these areas. Here, we set out what data we will need for these projection models.
- 3.14 We do not receive any specific requirements for data on the economy, devolved taxes or social security, beyond those we require for our five-year forecasts. We believe our current modelling has enough detail to understand each of those to form the basis for our 50-year projections. Our additional data needs therefore relate to funding and areas of Scottish Government spending which we do not currently model.

Scottish Government spending

- 3.15 To project Scottish Government spending, we need to understand both current spending, and any spending plans as set out in Scottish Government's budgets, medium-term financial strategies or

¹⁵ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2022) Approach to Fiscal Sustainability Consultation Paper ([link](#))

spending reviews. Scottish Government spending will determine fiscal sustainability pressures over the long-term, by comparing total funding to spending if current trends continue. Our plan is to hold current spending plans fixed over the 50-year horizon, based on the most recent fiscal event when we publish the FSR in 2023.

- 3.16 As we explain in the consultation paper, we will develop models to project Scottish Government spending in line with changes to the population.¹⁶ This approach is broadly in line with the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) approach for producing long-term projections of UK-wide spending for their Fiscal Risks and Sustainability report.¹⁷ This means that our projections for Scottish Government spending and funding will be on a similar basis, and so should accurately reflect the relevant populations and Governments' policies.
- 3.17 To project Scottish Government spending in the future, we need to understand current spending plans, and for this information to be comparable both between years and to UK Government spending projections produced by the OBR. The Scottish Government publishes spending plans for the coming year by portfolio area along with each Scottish Budget. However, as portfolios change over time, they do not provide a consistent basis for comparison over time or with the OBR's UK-wide projections. The Classification of Function of Government (COFOG) approach to publishing spending data would allow us to compare this over time, as spending changes at each Scottish Budget.
- 3.18 Scottish Government has already shared these data with us for the 2022-23 Budget, setting out spending plans for 2022-23 on a COFOG basis as well as by portfolio. Scottish Government has also agreed to share data on spending plans for 2023-24 after the 2023-24 Budget. We now request this information is published at each fiscal event, so that we can monitor trends in spending plans over time based on publicly available information.
- 3.19 We believe it would also be helpful for Scottish Government to share outturn spending by COFOG once that is available, so that we can understand how actual spending compares to each years' plans. We would also appreciate any historic outturn spending for previous years' Budgets, where that is available. For clarity, we also request these data to be published alongside each Budget, so that external stakeholders can understand Scottish Government spending.

Box 3.2: Recommendation 7

Scottish Government to publish Scottish Budget annual spending allocations on a COFOG basis at the time of each Budget or fiscal event. Scottish Government also to publish outturn spending by COFOG when that is available.

Information held by UK Government departments

- 3.20 As we set out in our Statement of Data Needs in 2020, our main need at that time was for access to information held by the UK Government, particularly where changes in UK Government policy affect our forecasts of revenue and spending. This request was most important for income tax, which is

¹⁶ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2022) Approach to Fiscal Sustainability Consultation Paper ([link](#))

¹⁷ Office for Budget Responsibility (2022) Fiscal Risks and Sustainability – July 2022 ([link](#))

administered by HMRC, as many aspects of the tax base are reserved to the UK Government, as well as the social security benefits administered by DWP. Since then, we have agreed a process with HM Treasury that enables us to better understand UK Government policy changes that directly affect our tax and social security forecasts.

- 3.21 We successfully trialled the new process for the UK Autumn Budget 2021. The arrangements are set out in a memorandum of understanding (MoU) published in August 2022.¹⁸
- 3.22 The outstanding recommendation from 2020 relates to a statutory right of access to information held by UK Government departments and public bodies. The review of the fiscal framework due to commence shortly should consider this recommendation from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and ourselves.
- 3.23 The OECD review in 2019 recommended that “the Scottish and UK Governments should take steps to give the SFC a statutory right to access data held by UK Government departments and public bodies.”¹⁹ The review also highlighted that “ensuring that the SFC has access to relevant information is essential to the fulfilment of its statutory duties. A key weakness relating to the SFC’s legal framework is that it only has a statutory right to information from the Scottish Government and relevant devolved public bodies, with access to UK data reliant on the provisions set out in the Scottish Government’s fiscal framework. A UK Government-wide statutory right to access data held by UK Government departments and public bodies would greatly support the SFC’s work.”
- 3.24 The OBR also produces forecasts of Scottish revenues and spending and has a statutory right of access to information held by Scottish public bodies. Providing us with a right of access to data and information held by UK departments would align our position with that of the OBR.

Box 3.3: Recommendation 8

The UK and Scottish Governments, as part of the wider review of the fiscal framework, to consider whether the Commission should be given a statutory right to access information held by UK Government departments and public bodies.

¹⁸ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2022) Memorandum of Understanding with HM Treasury ([link](#))

¹⁹ OECD (2019) Review of the Scottish Fiscal Commission ([link](#))

Chapter 4

Economy and Tax

Introduction

- 4.1 In previous years, we made multiple requests for specific developments to economy and tax data for Scotland. We are grateful to data providers for treating our data needs as a priority, and that many of our recommendations have been addressed.
- 4.2 On the economy side, we welcomed the publication – as part of the Scottish Government’s Quarterly National Accounts for Scotland – of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and its expenditure components in constant prices as well as more detailed breakdowns of household income, all of which are at the core of our economy model. We are also grateful for the significant developments made by HMRC to Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data, which are used in our employment and earnings forecasts. These were some of our highest priority requests and have been crucial to improving our economic and labour market forecasts.
- 4.3 Another welcomed development was the proactive publication of monthly GDP figures during the pandemic, as this helped to provide a much better understanding of current conditions in the economy.
- 4.4 We believe that organisations such as the Scottish Government, HMRC, and ONS continue to have an important role in driving further improvements to Scottish data, as discussed in the next sections. We also ask that data providers continue to engage constructively with us, for example by:
- Providing timelines for working on the Commission’s requests, including indicative targets for when developments may be delivered.
 - Providing regular updates on progress, for example, by holding user engagement events or more focussed meetings with key stakeholders.
 - Continuing to work with the Commission in developing their products to ensure they meet our needs.

Economy

Scottish wages and earnings

- 4.5 Earnings data are one of the most important parts of our economy forecast, particularly because of their importance for our income tax forecast. Significant progress has been made in this area since our previous Statement of Data Needs in 2020, and the recommendations from the 2020 statement have been fully or extensively addressed.²⁰ There is, however, scope for further developments.
- 4.6 Experimental estimates of employee mean pay from HMRC PAYE RTI are an important set of earnings data used in our economy forecast. The RTI publication, especially its regional dimension,

²⁰ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2020) Statement of Data Needs ([link](#))

has been improved substantially over the last couple of years. The monthly releases now include data at detailed geographical level (NUTS2 and NUTS3), as well as for Scotland (NUTS1).²¹ More granular data for Local Administrative Units, and breakdowns of NUTS1-level data by sector and age groups, are updated on a quarterly basis. The RTI regional tables are a rich and valuable source of data to feed into our economy model and inform our forecast. We continue to engage with HMRC to explore ways in which the RTI publication can be further developed in the near future to meet our data needs. For example, we would like HMRC to provide additional disaggregation of RTI data for Scotland by private and public sectors and by pay decile or percentile.

- 4.7 Other potential improvements we highlighted in the past, such as the development of a Scottish equivalent of Average Weekly Earnings from the Monthly Wages and Salaries Survey, are more ambitious and any progress, where possible, is likely to be seen over longer timescales.

Box 4.1: Recommendation 9

ONS and HMRC to continue to consider how to improve regional earnings data using RTI and other sources of information.

Public sector employment and earnings

- 4.8 Since January 2021, as part of our economy forecast, we have produced forecasts of employment and average earnings by private and public sectors, as well as for the whole economy, to feed into our income tax model. To do this, we draw upon historical breakdowns of employment and earnings on which to base our forecasts and, for the devolved part of our public sector forecasts, any available information from the Scottish Government about pay deals and, ideally, projected workforce levels or total staff paybill. While we already receive comprehensive and useful data from the Scottish Government on pay deals, the areas we would like to improve are the historical data we use in our model, our forecast of public sector employment, and the internal consistency among employment, pay and total spending.
- 4.9 For the historical period, we use Scottish Government Public Sector Employment Statistics for data on public sector employment, and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) to derive a split between private and public sectors of all the economy average earnings data in our model. We would be keen to use RTI as a source of historical data by private and public sectors, especially for earnings as ASHE is annual and only available with a lag. Such a breakdown of RTI data has not been produced so far, but we are discussing with HMRC the possibility of publishing it, as a one-off release initially and as a regular release in the medium to long term.

Box 4.2: Recommendation 10

HMRC to coordinate with the RTI Steering Group to publish a NUTS1 breakdown of RTI data (employees, mean pay, aggregate pay), as and when HMRC has the required capacity.

- 4.10 With regards to our forecasts of the public sector, employment is the main area for development in our modelling. Currently, our public sector employment forecast is broadly based on historical

²¹ Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) is a hierarchical classification of administrative areas, used across the European Union (EU) for statistical purposes. For more details, see ONS overview of UK geographies ([link](#)).

(pre-COVID) average growth, and so it is produced independently from pay. To ensure it is internally consistent, we check our implied forecast of the total paybill (employment multiplied by pay) against our general government expenditure forecast, which is based on Scottish and UK Government spending plans.

- 4.11 For the devolved public sector, a preferable approach would be one – similar to the OBR’s – where we can rely on projections of total paybill provided directly by the Scottish Government, as we already do for average pay, so that we can derive a forecast of public sector employment from these (total paybill divided by average pay). This would lead to an improved forecast of public sector employment and allow the triangulation among employment, pay, and total spending to be fully part of our modelling instead of being done as a diagnostic check. We are collaborating with the Scottish Government to assess what can be feasibly achieved.

Box 4.3: Recommendation 11

The Scottish Government to provide the Commission with additional information, where feasible, to improve forecasts of public sector employment and the internal consistency with our public sector earnings forecast and the overall government spending position.

Labour productivity

- 4.12 Labour productivity is the main driver of long-term GDP growth and an essential component of our economy forecast. The productivity measure we use is based on Scottish Government estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) estimates of total hours worked. Our approach is suited for measuring productivity at aggregate, all-economy level.
- 4.13 The Scottish Government started publishing official statistics on labour productivity for Scotland, including sectoral breakdowns, in 2014. These estimates are part of the pool of evidence we consider in our productivity assessment, but we do not directly use these statistics. The Scottish Government uses estimates of Gross Value Added (GVA) and ONS regional statistics for productivity jobs and hours worked. These estimates of hours are different from those directly available from the APS, which can lead to different estimates of productivity from those we use in our modelling.
- 4.14 The National Accounts team at the Scottish Government has an ongoing development programme for labour productivity and has indicated they are keen to improve the utility and public value of the statistics. One development we would like to be prioritised concerns the available options for jobs and hours worked data and whether it would be an improvement to switch from the ONS regional model for productivity jobs and hours worked, to data based more directly on the APS.
- 4.15 This development would bring the Scottish Government’s estimates more in line with our approach and that of OBR, although some small differences in definitions are likely to remain, such as around the use of GDP or GVA. We recognise that the merits of this change would need to be balanced against the likely implications for Scottish Government estimates such as the loss of comparability with ONS estimates for the UK. We would be keen to contribute to any consultation or user engagement in this area.

Box 4.4: Recommendation 12

The Scottish Government to work with the Commission and other users to explore the use of APS hours worked data in the Scottish Government's labour productivity statistics.

Regional inflation data and deflators

- 4.16 The lack of regional price indices is a long-standing issue for the economic statistics community, and one we raised in previous Statement of Data Needs publications. ONS has been doing a lot of work in this area over the years.²² As part of its current programme of transformation of consumer price statistics, ONS is introducing new data sources such as retail scanner and transaction data which can provide greater regional coverage of prices and expenditure, potentially allowing them to more readily produce regional price indices.²³ A pilot project is currently underway, looking at the feasibility of producing consumer prices for Northern Ireland, while subnational consumer prices for other nations and regions will be considered in the longer term dependent on the outcomes of the pilot and future funding.²⁴ We are grateful to ONS for its ongoing efforts and welcome further updates in future.
- 4.17 In the last year, there has been growing work in this area by various researchers such as at the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence, which in part was used to inform ONS work, and the Centre for Cities.²⁵ The National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) has been releasing regional inflation figures since November 2019, as part of its monthly CPI trackers.²⁶ We believe that having a single, official source of regional price indices would be widely beneficial and ONS is best placed to develop this.
- 4.18 As we emphasised in the past, the Commission's need for Scottish price data does not only refer to consumer prices so, over time, we would also like ONS and the Scottish Government to explore developing other regional price indices such as deflators.

Box 4.5: Recommendation 13

ONS to continue to pursue plans to produce regional consumer price statistics and keep users updated on progress. Longer term, ONS and the Scottish Government to also explore developing regional deflators.

²² ONS (2017) Feasibility study into producing CPIH consistent inflation rates for UK regions ([link](#)), ONS (2019) The development of regional CPIH: assessment of small area estimation for regional expenditure weights ([link](#)).

²³ ONS (2022) Transformation of consumer price statistics: April 2022 ([link](#)), ONS (2022) Consumer prices development plan: updated July 2022 ([link](#)), ONS (2021) Consumer prices development plan: updated March 2021 ([link](#)).

²⁴ GSS subnational data strategy (2022) Case study: Experimental subnational consumer prices pilot: Northern Ireland ([link](#))

²⁵ Kevin Connolly and Mairi Spowage (2021) Improving the quality of regional economic indicators ([link](#)), Centre for Cities (2022) Cost of living tracker ([link](#)).

²⁶ NIESR CPI Trackers ([link](#))

Tax

Income Tax

- 4.19 In year RTI PAYE data provide good and timely information on the PAYE element of income tax before official outturn figures are available. However, as people only need to file self-assessment (SA) returns in the January after the end of the tax year there is limited real time information available to monitor SA returns until the publication of income tax outturn data, and SA can be a significant source of error in our income tax forecasts. The Scottish Government is also keen for more information in this area, and we have already engaged in three-way discussions with the Scottish Government and HMRC about what further information could be provided. We strongly support HMRC exploring what additional and more timely information on self-assessment liabilities could be provided for Scotland.

Scottish Landfill Tax

Biodegradable Municipal Waste

- 4.20 We are seeking more timely data for the total tonnage that will be liable to the Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) ban. Currently, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) estimates these data on an intermittent basis.
- 4.21 These intermittent data are used to estimate the impact of a future BMW ban on Scottish Landfill Tax (SLfT) revenues. However, as we get closer to the start of the BMW ban in 2025 it becomes more important to receive regular and accurate figures.

Chapter 5

Summary

- 5.1 This statement covers a broad range of statistical needs, as our economic and fiscal forecasts use various types of analytical information in the underlying models and have different data requirements. The Commission's statistical needs are summarised in this chapter.
- 5.2 We will evaluate progress on each of these needs in our next Statement of Data Needs, which we expect to publish in September 2024.

Chapter	Forecast affected	Recommendations
Social Security		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Security Scotland to publish data comparable to DWP on a consistent basis and backdate the data to the launch of payments, avoiding any breaks in the data series. • Social Security Scotland to collect robust and reliable data on a consistent basis using the core application form with information on the characteristics of clients receiving payments, including sex or gender, age, award they receive, payment they receive, their condition, duration of claim and the outcomes of reviews and appeals. • Social Security Scotland to receive sufficient resources to enable them to produce the necessary data. • Social Security Scotland to set up a user group to ensure a wide range of views can identify the data requirements of users. • Social Security Scotland to develop an online tool similar to Stat-Xplore that would allow stakeholders to access the specific data they require.
Public Funding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government to clearly include the assumptions they make to estimate funding for each Scottish Budget, so that we can assess how these affect the reasonableness of their borrowing plans. • Scottish Government to publish Scottish Budget annual spending allocations on a COFOG basis at the time of each Budget or fiscal event. Scottish Government also to publish outturn spending by COFOG when that is available. • The UK and Scottish Governments, as part of the wider review of the fiscal framework, to consider whether the Commission should be given a statutory right to access information held by UK Government departments and public bodies.

Economy

- ONS and HMRC to continue to consider how to improve regional earnings data using RTI and other sources of information.
- HMRC to coordinate with the RTI Steering Group to publish a NUTS1 breakdown of RTI data (employees, mean pay, aggregate pay), as and when HMRC has the required capacity.
- The Scottish Government to provide the Commission with additional information, where feasible, to improve forecasts of public sector employment and the internal consistency of our public sector earnings forecast and the overall government spending position.
- The Scottish Government to work with the Commission and other users to explore the use of APS hours worked data in the Scottish Government's labour productivity statistics.
- The ONS to continue to pursue plans to produce regional consumer price statistics and keep users updated on progress. Longer term, the ONS and the Scottish Government to also explore developing regional deflators.

Annex A

Previous requests

A.1 This annex covers the progress on the issues we raised in our previous Statement of Data Needs.

Forecast affected	Improvement requested	Priority	Addressed to	Progress
Statement of Data Needs 2020				
Public Funding	Make information on fiscal framework publicly available in a timely manner.	High	Scottish Government (SG)	In progress
Public Funding	Memorandum of understanding between the two organisations to share information on the funding received by the SG.	High	HM Treasury / SFC	Closed – delivered
Public Funding	A defined process with UK Treasury and supporting government departments to share on a timely basis relevant policy information and analysis when there is a UK Government policy change that directly affects the Commission's tax and social security forecasts	High	HM Treasury / SFC	In progress
All	The UK and Scottish Governments should, as part of the wider review of the Fiscal Framework in 2021, consider whether the Scottish Fiscal Commission should be given a statutory right to access information held by UK Government departments and public bodies.	High	SG / UK Government	In progress
Social Security	Information and analysis on changes in UK Government policy that do not have a direct link to a tax or social security benefit in our remit, but could affect revenue or spending in Scotland.	High	SG	Closed – delivered
Economy	HMRC and the ONS should reinstate RTI mean earnings for the UK regions in future releases as soon as possible.	High	HMRC / ONS	Closed – delivered
Statement of Data Needs 2019				
Economy	More timely and detailed data on Scottish wages and earnings	High	ONS / HMRC / SG	In progress

Forecast affected	Improvement requested	Priority	Addressed to	Progress
Economy	Labour productivity statistics using jobs and hours worked data based more directly on the APS	High	SG	In progress
Economy	Developing price data and deflators for Scotland	High	SG / ONS	In progress
Economy	Addressing Scottish data gaps (long term economic time series, trade, business investment, capital stock)	Low	SG / ONS	In progress
Economy	QNAS breakdown of public sector expenditure by different levels of government	High	SG	In progress
Economy	Further Gross Disposable Household Income disaggregation in QNAS	High	SG	Closed – delivered
Economy	Publication of GDP by expenditure components in constant prices as part of QNAS	High	SG	Closed – delivered
Income tax	Evidence on how RTI liabilities data is compiled and divergences from outturn data	Low	HMRC	No progress
Income tax	Outturn data revision policy	Low	HMRC	Closed – clarified
VAT	Align publication of VAT assignment data to Scottish and UK fiscal events	Low	VAT Working Group (HMRC/SG/ HM Treasury)	In progress
VAT	Outturn data revision policy	Low	HMRC	In progress
Land and Buildings Transaction Tax	Pre-2003 property price and transactions data	Low	Registers of Scotland (ROS)	No progress
Land and Buildings Transaction Tax	Public sector shared access to Registers of Scotland records of properties	Low	SG	No progress
Scottish Landfill Tax	Sharing of unrounded Scottish Landfill Communities Fund payment figures	Low	Revenue Scotland	Closed – delivered
Scottish Landfill Tax	Align publication of statistics with the Commission forecast schedule	Low	Revenue Scotland	Closed – delivered
Social security	More granular breakdowns of some aspects of DWP published information that would help inform our forecasts of devolved social security spend	High	DWP	Closed – delivered
Social	Further evidence on operational and	High	SG/ Social Security	Closed – delivered

Forecast affected	Improvement requested	Priority	Addressed to	Progress
security	policy decisions taken when developing devolved social security benefits		Scotland	
Social security	Information on other factors that may affect our forecast such as legal challenges or welfare reform	High	DWP / SG / Social Security Scotland	Closed – delivered
Social security	Improvements to the statistics and information on the benefits administered by Social Security Scotland. This refers to the payment administered by Social Security Scotland before the transfer of executive competence for disability payments in April 2020.	Low	Social Security Scotland	Closed – delivered

Statement of Data Needs 2018 [1]

Income tax	HMRC to provide Scotland specific composite records in the PUT.	High	HMRC	Closed – delivered
Income tax	HMRC to develop an Official Statistics publication of Scottish outturn income tax liabilities.	High	HMRC	Closed – delivered
Income tax	HMRC to develop an Official Statistics publication of the PAYE RTI liabilities.	High	HMRC	Closed – delivered
Income tax	OBR to publish NSND income tax policy recastings which are significant in value.	Low	OBR	Closed – delivered
VAT	Detailed Assignment Outturn Model for VAT in Scotland, with clear timeline for updates.	High	VAT Working Group (HMRC/SG/ HM Treasury)	In progress
VAT	Publicly available version of the assignment model data to include our required variables for the latest year available and a five-year back series.	High	VAT Working Group (HMRC/SG/ HM Treasury)	Closed – partially delivered
VAT	Headline figures for Standard Rated Share model of household spending.	High	HMRC	Closed – delivered
VAT	Longer time series for VAT assignment and more up-to-date estimates.	Low	HMRC	Closed – delivered
VAT	Publication of the headline figures for the Standard Rated Share model.	Low	HMRC / OBR	No progress
VAT	More comprehensive breakdown of the proportion of expenditure assigned	Low	HMRC	Closed – delivered

Forecast affected	Improvement requested	Priority	Addressed to	Progress
	to Scotland.			
VAT	OBR to publish VAT policy recostings which are significant in value.	Low	OBR	In progress
Non-Domestic Rates	Data on properties claiming NDR reliefs to be made available sooner.	Low	SG via local authorities	Closed – delivered
Land and Buildings Transaction Tax	Data on LBTT reliefs including new relief for first-time buyers.	High	Revenue Scotland	Closed – delivered
Scottish Landfill Tax	SEPA to share a broader dataset with the Commission.	Low	SEPA	Closed – delivered
Social security	Memorandum of understanding with DWP.	High	DWP	Closed – delivered
Social security	DWP to make Scottish specific caseload, payment and expenditure figures (for the benefits which are not published on Stat-Xplore) available to the Commission.	High	DWP	Closed – delivered
Social security	SG to supplement their DHP statistics with further data on mitigation of the 'Bedroom Tax'.	Low	SG	No progress
Social security	SG to provide expenditure and caseload statistics for Carer's Allowance Supplement.	Low	SG	Closed – delivered

Additional information

Abbreviations

ASHE	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
BGA	Block Grant Adjustment
BMW	Biodegradable Municipal Waste
CA	Carer's Allowance
CAS	Carer's Allowance Supplement
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EIA	Employment Injury Assistance
EU	European Union
FSP	Funeral Support Payment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HMT	Her Majesty's Treasury
LBTT	Land and Buildings Transaction Tax
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NDR	Non-Domestic Rates
NIESR	National Institute of Economic and Social Research
NRS	National Records of Scotland
NUTS1	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics Level 1
NUTS2	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics Level 2
NUTS3	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics Level 3
OBR	Office for Budget Responsibility
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCAR	Online System for Central Accounting and Reporting
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PAYE	Pay As You Earn
PESA	Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses
PIP	Personal Independence Payment
QNAS	Quarterly National Accounts Scotland
RTI	Real Time Information
SEFF	Scotland's Economic and Fiscal Forecasts
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SFC	Scottish Fiscal Commission
SG	The Scottish Government
SLfT	Scottish Landfill Tax
STA	Short-Term Assistance

A full glossary of terms is available on our website:

<https://www.fiscalcommission.scot/explainers/glossary/>

Professional Standards

The Commission is committed to fulfilling our role as an Independent Fiscal Institution, in line with the principles set out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).²⁷

The Commission also seeks to adhere to the highest possible standards for analysis. While we do not produce official statistics, we voluntarily comply as far as possible with the UK Statistic Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics. Further details and our statement of voluntary compliance can be found on our website.²⁸

Correspondence and enquiries

We welcome comments from users about the content and format of our publications. If you have any feedback or general enquiries about this publication or the commission, please contact info@fiscalcommission.scot. Press enquiries should be sent to press@fiscalcommission.scot.

All charts and tables in this publication have also been made available in spreadsheet form on our website. For technical enquiries about the analysis and data presented in this paper please contact the responsible analyst:

Economy	Silvia Palombi	Silvia.Palombi@fiscalcommission.scot
Taxes	Will Jones	Will.Jones@fiscalcommission.scot
Public funding	Caroline Carney	Caroline.Carney@fiscalcommission.scot
Social security	Francisco Forner	Francisco.Forner@fiscalcommission.scot

For general enquiries about this publication or the commission and how we work please contact info@fiscalcommission.scot

²⁷ OECD (2014) Recommendation on Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions ([link](#))

²⁸ Scottish Fiscal Commission (2018) Compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics ([link](#))

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