

A solid orange right-angled triangle pointing towards the bottom-left corner.

Alastair McAlpine
Scotland's Chief Statistician

By email to ChiefStatistician@gov.scot

30 August 2022

Dear Alastair,

The Scottish Fiscal Commission has published today its latest Statement of Data Needs. This publication describes the main areas where we believe improvements are required in the data and information we use for forecasting to support the Scottish Budget.

The statement covers the progress made by Social Security Scotland to publish data since our last publication in 2020 and highlights our on-going data requirements.

We appreciate that the statistics team in Social Security Scotland has been working collaboratively with us to improve their statistical publications, but we also recognise that the limited resources in the team mean the capacity to meet our needs is constrained. Therefore, we have recommended that sufficient resources are allocated to this team to develop statistics key to future Scottish Budgets.

In the statement, we recommend Social Security Scotland sets up an open forum user group to ensure a wide range of views can be considered in the identification and prioritisation of the data requirements of users. We believe this approach will promote transparency and accountability of the conversation between Social Security Scotland and data users

We also emphasise the need for further improvements in data that you released on the new on disability payments so these fit our needs. To continue producing and revising our forecasts of spending as the payments launch, we require relevant data on applications, awards and cases transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions. We would welcome these data to be accessible via a client based browser allowing the creation and downloading of customised statistical tables similar to the Department for Work and Pensions' Stat-Xplore tool.

We appreciate the developments introduced by the Socials Security Scotland statisticians so far and look forward to continuing working with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G Roy".

Professor Graeme Roy
