

Applicant Information Pack for Appointment to the Scottish Commission on Social Security Board



The Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and Housing is seeking to appoint two Members to the Board of the Scottish Commission on Social Security Board.

The Cabinet Secretary values highly the benefits of having different points of view on the Board and welcomes applications from people from all walks of life.

The appointments process for these Board vacancies follows the [Code of Practice for Public Appointments](#) and is regulated by the [Ethical Standards Commissioner](#).

Key dates for this appointment round

Closing date	15 July 2026
Online Information Session	29 June 2026 – 1-2pm If you are interested in attending please contact Stephen.Herbert@socialsecuritycommission.scot
Sift of applications	12 August 2026
When applicants will hear about the outcome of their application	17 August 2026
Interviews	Interviews will take place online using MS Teams on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wednesday 30 September 2026• Thursday 1 October 2026 (AM only) <p>It is unlikely that we will be able to offer an alternative interview date.</p>
Ministerial decision	W/C 12 October 2026
Estimated start date	25 January 2027

Welcome Letter from the Chair of the Scottish Commission on Social Security Board:

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of the Scottish Commission on Social Security (SCoSS). As we enter the next phase of social security in Scotland this is an exciting opportunity to play a key, influential role in shaping the devolved Scottish social security system, a system based on principles of dignity, fairness and respect.

We provide independent scrutiny of the devolved social security system and through our work over the last 7 years we have made a major contribution to the development of the social security system in Scotland. Established under the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018, we are an advisory non-departmental public body appointed by the Scottish Government. We are now seeking to recruit two Members to help take forward this vital work.

We scrutinise most Scottish social security legislation, producing a report with recommendations that is delivered to the Scottish Parliament's Social Justice and Social Security Committee and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and Housing. Over the last seven years most of our recommendations having been accepted by the Scottish Government. The Scottish social security charter lays out what the people of Scotland can expect from the Scottish social security system. In addition to our scrutiny work we have an obligation to report on how well these expectations are being met. Our previous reports can be viewed online on our web pages.

All our work is informed by engagement with stakeholders and social security clients.

We are keen to have a wide range of applicants for these positions, including from those on low incomes or with personal experience of disability. The role is paid. If you are receiving a means tested benefit like Universal Credit this may impact on the level of benefit you receive, and you may want to get some advice on the impact it may have. We can also cover childcare costs and other expenses including any disability-related reasonable adjustments.

The information in this pack should hopefully answer any questions you have about our work and the Member roles. If you have any questions about the member roles, please contact Stephen Herbert at Stephen.Herbert@socialsecuritycommission.scot.

If you have any questions about the Public Appointments, for example in regard to your application, please contact Public.appointments@gov.scot.

Thank you again for your interest in applying to be a member of the SCoSS Board.

Yours sincerely,

Ed Pybus

Chair of the Scottish Commission on Social Security Board

Information about the role

Remuneration	<p>The Member role is remunerated at a daily fee of £225, based on a 7.5-hour day. This fee is set in accordance with the Scottish Government’s Public Sector Pay Policy for public appointments. The role is non-pensionable, meaning no employer pension contributions are paid</p> <p>Members will be reimbursed for reasonable travel and other expenses incurred in order to carry out their role, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any travel and subsistence costs • Reasonable childcare or carer expenses • Disability-related reasonable adjustments
Time Commitment	<p>Members devote 36 days per annum to performing your functions as and when required.</p> <p>You will be expected to attend meetings regularly, prepare in advance, and contribute fully to all aspects of the role.</p> <p>Board meetings are currently held online approximately once a month, with around one in-person meeting held annually.</p> <p>Additional ad hoc online meetings are scheduled as required.</p>
Length of Appointment Term	<p>This appointment will be for up to 4 years in the first instance. At the end of that period, you may be eligible for reappointment, subject to evidence of effective performance, satisfying the requirements of the person specification for the role at the time of reappointment and Ministerial approval. There is no automatic right to re-appointment. The combined total length of appointments cannot exceed 8 years.</p>
Location of Meetings	<p>SCoSS has a base at Scottish Government Victoria Quay in Edinburgh. This is where the Secretariat Team is located. However, the Board tend to hold the vast majority of meetings online via Teams. Meeting space can be found across Scotland if necessary.</p>

Disqualifications

The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 disqualifies someone from being appointed to the SCoSS if you are-

- a member of the Scottish Parliament
- a member of the House of Commons
- a member of the House of Lords
- a member of the National Assembly for Wales
- a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly
- a member of the European Parliament
- a councillor of any local authority
- a member of the Scottish Government
- a Minister of the Crown
- an office holder of the Crown in the right of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom
- an office-holder in the Scottish Administration
- a civil servant
- one of the members of the Scottish Tribunals as defined in section 13(3) of the Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014
- a judge, or other member, of the Upper Tribunal or First-tier Tribunal established by section 3 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007

Or have been-

- disqualified as a company director under the Companies Directors Disqualification Act 1986
- disqualified as a charity trustee under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
- the subject of a disqualification under a disqualification provision analogous to either of those mentioned above or anywhere in the world

A member of the Scottish Parliament cannot also hold a public appointment for public bodies listed in the schedule of [the Scottish Parliament \(Disqualification\) Order 2020](#).

Former ministers and senior crown servants (director general level and above) should seek advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOPA) before applying for this role.

The Board of the Scottish Commission on Social Security

The Scottish Commission on Social Security (SCoSS) was, established by the [Social Security \(Scotland\) Act 2018 \(the Act\)](#).

SCoSS is an independent body and is separate to Social Security Scotland. Social Security Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government which is responsible for delivering social security payments in Scotland.

SCoSS is a separate advisory non-departmental public body (NDPB) that reports directly to the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Ministers.

The Act defines the role of SCoSS in providing independent scrutiny in the devolved social security system, with functions to:

- Provide independent expert scrutiny of draft social security regulations, including preparing and publishing reports and making recommendations on these regulations to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament.
- Prepare reports on how the expectations of the [Social Security Charter](#) are being met and make recommendations for improvement. These reports are also published and submitted to the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament.
- Report on any matter relevant to social security at the request of the Scottish Government or Scottish Parliament.

In carrying out all of its functions, SCoSS has regard to the social security principles set out in the Act. This means that SCoSS plays an important role in ensuring that these principles, which are at the heart of the devolved system of social security, are applied in practice.

SCoSS has already produced many detailed and wide-ranging reports on regulations covering most of the devolved social security benefits introduced since 2018, including Young Carers Grant, Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment. Most of the recommendations in these reports have been accepted by the Scottish Government and have therefore led to significant improvements to legislation.

The Act requires SCoSS to have a Chair and at least two, but no more than four, other Members. Appointments to SCoSS are made by the Scottish Government in line with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in Scotland. The appointments are regulated by the Ethical Standards Commission.

In addition to the current Chair, Ed Pybus, there are currently four SCoSS Board members: Judith Paterson, Dr Mark Simpson, Dr Marilyn Howard and Adam Bennett. Judith and Mark will complete their appointments in January 2027. This recruitment round is looking to make two new appointments.

SCoSS is supported by a Secretariat of five civil servants employed by the Scottish Government who work directly for the SCoSS Board in line with arrangements set out in a Framework Document with the Scottish Government. There is a small sponsor team within the Scottish Government Social Security Directorate which engages with SCoSS on relevant governance matters, including the provision of resources.

You can read the framework document which outlines how SCoSS operates and defines key roles and responsibilities which underpin the relationship between SCoSS and Scottish Government at the following link: [Framework Document](#) (Please note that this document is currently under review).

You can find out more about the Board and the work that it has done on the SCoSS [webpage](#). This includes reports, information about the organisation and minutes of Board meetings.

The role of a Board Member

Board members are responsible for ensuring that SCoSS delivers the functions set out in the Act.

Member Role and Responsibilities

- Work collaboratively and effectively with the rest of the Board including ensuring that the social security principles inform the work of SCoSS.
- Attend scheduled and ad hoc Board meetings and other required events, and contribute by reading papers, participating in group discussion, and helping to reach a consensus view.
- Analyse and constructively challenge information and proposals, including draft regulations, and work with fellow Board members to produce high quality and timely reports.
- Analyse and identify strategic risks and opportunities and contribute to Board strategy, quality assurance and continuous improvement.
- Contribute to Board governance activity as required, for example, business planning and annual reporting, and oversight of use of resources.

The Board of SCoSS is a ‘working’ board, meaning all board members fully engage and get involved with the work required of it. This includes the discussions that enable it to properly execute its scrutiny function.

They also make sure that it operates in line with requirements on [Non Departmental Public Bodies](#). Members of SCoSS’s Board are also asked to agree to apply the nine Principles of Public Life in Scotland which are listed on page 15.

You can find more information on the role of Board Members on statutory bodies like SCoSS in the [On Board guide](#). The aim of this guide is to provide new Board Members with much of the basic information they will need to understand the role of a Board Member of a public body. It provides the principles of corporate governance, sets out the roles, responsibilities and relationships as well as the effective financial management and expected standards of behaviour. Please refer to the person specification below for the specifics of the role for SCoSS.

The Selection Panel

Panel Chair	Julie McKinney, Scottish Government, Head of Social Security Strategy, Welfare Fund and Winter Benefits
Panel Member	Ed Pybus, Chair of Scottish Commission on Social Security Board
Independent Panel Member	Kirsty Darwent OBE, Chair of Redress Scotland

Please note that applicants will be asked to declare if they know any members of the selection panel. The panel will also declare if they know any applicants. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be managed in line with the [Ethical Standards Commissioners Code of Practice for Public Appointments](#).

Person Specification

All Board members must play a full and effective part to ensure SCoSS delivers successfully and to consistently high standards. This section provides information on the skills, experience and personal qualities required of SCoSS Board members, and how these will be assessed in the appointment process.

Board members can include people from many different backgrounds who have developed their skills and personal qualities in a variety of settings. The required skills, experience and personal qualities may have been gained through paid employment, or may have been

gained through being active in the community, engaged in advocacy, in a voluntary capacity, and/or through personal life experience.

We are looking for new Members who can put their experience to good use on the Board. The table below sets out the skills, knowledge, experience and attributes that we are seeking and explains how the criteria will be tested.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate evidence of the Priority Criterion at application and at interview stage in order to be considered for appointment.

Applicants must demonstrate that they meet all of the Essential Criteria. Essential Criteria 1 and 2 will be assessed at both the application and interview stages, while Essential Criteria 3 and 4 will be assessed at the interview stage only.

The Priority Criterion is weighted as more significant than the Essential Criteria. Of the candidates who meet the Essential Criteria, those that provide the strongest evidence on the Priority Criterion will be considered most able to fulfil the role. In the event that candidates provide evidence of equal merit on the Priority Criterion, the panel will then take into account the strength of the evidence presented against the Essential Criteria in determining the candidates most able to fulfil the role. Finally, should candidates provide evidence of equal merit against the Essential Criteria, the panel will then take into account the strength of the evidence presented against the Desirable Criteria in determining the candidates most able to fulfil each role.

The Minister will appoint a combination of candidates as Board Members who together most closely meet the Priority Criterion in order to achieve the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience on the Board.

Priority Criterion	Example Indicators	Assessment
1. Good knowledge or experience of Social Security and the ability to interpret and apply this within the Scottish Social Security system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have good experience of the social security/welfare rights system from professional, voluntary or personal experience and can succinctly describe the key challenges or opportunities in these areas. • You are able to describe your experience in social security/welfare rights policy 	Application: Using no more than 300 words, please demonstrate how you meet this criterion in the box provided in the online application form.

	<p>development or analysis, including key outputs and achievements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have experience of developing or analysing legislation and can succinctly describe this experience and it's relevance to social security regulations/legislation. 	<p>Interview: You will be asked questions on this criterion at interview.</p>
Essential Criteria	Example Indicators	Assessment
<p>1. Analysing information and making recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can demonstrate ability to critically assess complex, technical information including where evidence may be incomplete, conflicting, or politically controversial, and come to sound evidence-based conclusions You can take account of the wider policy, operational and political context when making recommendations You can communicate conclusions and/or recommendations clearly and succinctly in written and oral communications. 	<p>Application: Using no more than 300 words, please demonstrate how you meet this criterion in the box provided in the online application form.</p> <p>Interview: You will be asked to complete a <u>practical exercise</u> and will be asked questions on this criterion at interview.</p>
<p>2. Working collaboratively, constructively and effectively with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can work collaboratively with colleagues and stakeholders to deliver results, showing respect for differing views. You can communicate effectively with a range of different audiences. 	<p>Application: Using no more than 300 words, please demonstrate how you meet this criterion in the box provided in the online application form.</p> <p>Interview: You will be asked questions on this criterion at interview.</p>
<p>3. Personal Commitment to progressing the Social Security Principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have a clear understanding of the Social Security Principles and a commitment to applying them in practice. You can demonstrate how you reflect these principles in your 	<p>Interview: You will be asked questions on this criterion at interview.</p>

	approach to work, including how you engage with others and make decisions.	
4. Challenging the views of others in a constructive and supportive way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can provide constructive challenge which is flexible and solution-focused. You can confidently challenge assumptions and proposals where appropriate. You can objectively express your views, even where they differ from others. You can encourage open discussion and support others to reflect on and refine their positions in a respectful, non-confrontational way. 	Interview: You will be asked questions on this criterion at interview.

The following criteria are desirable and are not required for appointment. Applicants who do not meet these criteria will not be disadvantaged unless candidates are otherwise assessed as being of equal. If you do not have evidence against either of the desirable criteria, please mark the relevant section as “N/A”.

Desirable Criteria	Example Indicators	Assessment
1. Lived experience of poverty, or a strong understanding of the impacts of poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can describe how your lived experience of poverty, or other relevant experience, has informed your perspective and shaped your approach to your work or decision-making. 	Application: If relevant , using no more than 300 words, please demonstrate how you meet this criterion in the box provided in the online application form.
2. Lived experience of disability, or a strong understanding of the impacts of disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can describe how lived experience of disability (either your own or through caring for or supporting someone else), or other relevant experience, has informed your understanding of disability. 	Application: If relevant , using no more than 300 words, please demonstrate how you meet this criterion in the box provided in the online application form.

Tailored Career History

In addition to providing evidence against the criteria assessed at application stage, you will also be asked to provide a tailored career history. This should include information from your professional, personal and voluntary experience which is relevant to this role. This should be no more than 500 words. You may wish to include:

- Dates
- Information about the organisation
- Information about your role and experience

How to apply online

- [Guidance on how to apply can be found here.](#)
- Find the role you wish to apply for on this [website](#), open the advert and click 'apply now'.

We strongly recommend that you draft your answers in a word document and check the word count / spelling and grammar before copying and pasting your answers in the relevant sections of the online application form.

Please note that you will not be able to update your answers or supporting documents once the online application is submitted. Late applications will not be accepted by the selection panel.

If you use assistive technology, please contact the Public Appointments Team for an accessible application form by email at public.appointments@gov.scot

The Assessment Process

The assessment process is detailed below:

1. The selection panel will assess all applications against the criteria for appointment (see the Person Specification in this Pack). Those who demonstrate evidence that most closely meet the criteria tested at this stage will be shortlisted for interview.
2. The selection panel will interview candidates and the questions asked will relate directly to the criteria for appointment. (Additionally, you will be asked to prepare a

presentation in response to a topic sent to you in advance of the interview. Further details will be shared with candidates who are shortlisted.)

3. The selection panel will also ask questions relevant to the fit and proper person test (see further down) which will include questions about the [Principles of Public Life](#).
4. The selection panel will review the evidence provided and agree on which candidates have most closely met the criteria for selection and should be recommended to the appointing Minister.
5. The appointing Minister will make a decision on whom to appoint based on evidence from the selection panel. The appointing Minister may request to meet with candidates before making a final decision.
6. Appointees will be asked to complete pre-appointment checks which will include a Disclosure Check (there is no charge for this). An appointment is conditional on satisfactory completion of these.

Guaranteed Interviews

This appointment round will provide guaranteed interviews for disabled people who meet the criteria for the role being tested at the application stage. The selection panel will not know which applicants have requested a guaranteed interview until the shortlisting is complete.

Fit and Proper Person Checks

In the context of public appointments, a fit and proper person is someone who is suitable because they meet the requirements of the role, and their past or present activities and behaviour means they are suitable. Tests are built into different stages of the appointment process to ensure that:

- Conduct to date has been compatible with the public appointment
- Membership is not barred by the body's constitution e.g., criminal record or bankruptcy (see disqualifications)
- There are no unmanageable conflicts of interest
- Political activity is declared
- There is agreement to abide by the [Principles of Public life in Scotland](#)
- There is confirmation that the time commitment required for the role can be met.

Social Media Checks - Candidates Invited to Interview

The selection panel may consider publicly available information about candidates which is posted by candidates on social media. Any findings that the selection panel agree are pertinent to the role or that may call into question suitability for the appointment, credibility of the appointments process or the public body will be discussed with candidates at interview. Consideration of any issues will take place openly and transparently to establish the facts. Candidates will be given an opportunity to respond to any concerns. This information will be handled in line with the Privacy Notice for public appointments.

Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018

Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 Scottish Government recognises the implications of the Supreme Court judgement dated 16 April 2025 for public appointments subject to the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018. The Supreme Court ruled that a person with a full gender recognition certificate (GRC) which recognises their gender as female, is not a “woman” for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 and consequently the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018. Revised statutory guidance on the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 (“2018 Act”) was published on 26th June 2025 following the Supreme Court Judgment dated 16 April 2025 on the definition of “Man”, “Woman” and “Sex” in the Equality Act 2010, and consequently in the 2018 Act.

In order to comply with the 2018 Act, Scottish Government must now request data on biological sex as registered at birth from all applicants for Public Appointments on Boards which are captured by the 2018 Act. Following your application you will receive a request from the Public Appointments Team to request this data from you. The Scottish Government is committed to dignity, fairness and respect for all and actively invites applications from all.

Frequently asked Questions and Answers

Who can I contact to speak about this role?	Please contact SCoSS secretariat, Stephen Herbert, at Stephen.Herbert@socialsecuritycommission.scot .
Who can I speak to about a disability related reasonable adjustment?	Please contact the Public Appointments Team Email: public.appointments@gov.scot Deaf, deafblind and BSL users can contact the team via contactSCOTLAND-BSL
I am having a problem with the application	Please contact the Public Appointments Team (see contact details above).

process who can I speak with?	
Do you have any advice for candidates attending interviews?	Yes. More information is provided here: Introduction - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
What does 'appointed on merit' mean?	Appointed on merit means that the people who are appointed most closely meet the criteria that is sought for the Board vacancy at a point in time. People are assessed on the evidence that they present in the appointments process and the findings of the fit and proper person test.
What role does the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC) have in the appointments process?	The ESC regulate and monitor the public appointments process . The Commissioner plays a role in ensuring appointments are made on merit and use fair methods. More information about the Commissioner's role is provided here: Public appointments Information leaflet Ethical Standards Commissioner
Can I apply if I am not a British citizen?	Yes. You can apply for and be appointed to the Boards of Public Bodies if you are not a British citizen however you must be legally entitled to work in the UK.
Would remuneration for a public appointment impact on my benefits?	Possibly. Taking up a remunerated public appointment may affect benefits payments. This will depend on individual circumstances and you should seek advice from your benefits provider. More information is provided here: Public appointments and welfare benefits: information - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Do the selection panel see information from the diversity monitoring form?	No. Diversity monitoring information provided by applicants is not shared with the selection panel. If applicants opt for a guaranteed interview this information will only be shared with the selection panel <u>after</u> scoring has been complete at the shortlisting stage. Information about a reasonable adjustment may be shared with the selection panel to ensure that requirements are met (e.g. if a BSL interpreter is required).
Do I need to provide an email address and contact	In order to meet the requirements of the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) the Scottish Government must be able to verify the credentials of

details at application stage?	applicants for public appointments should they be recommended for appointment. To ensure that this is possible all applicants must provide an address and contact details at application stage. If applicants do not provide this information their application will be rejected.
How will my personal information be handled?	All personal information will be handled with great care and in line with UK GDPR and data protection requirements. Further information can be found in the Privacy Notice .
Can I get feedback on my application or interview?	Yes. Feedback is available on request.
Is any training provided if I am offered and take up an appointment?	Yes. Each Board has their own induction process and training offer. New appointees are also invited to attend an induction day hosted by the Scottish Government.
Is it possible to hold more than one public appointment?	Yes. It is possible to have more than one public appointment. You should check that you can make the time commitment for an additional appointment and that there are no unmanageable conflicts of interest.
Are public appointments announced?	Yes. Every appointment is announced here: Public appointments: news releases - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) The Board may also announce new appointments on their own website and social media platforms. Information published will include a biography and details of any political activity within the last 5 years.
What standards are expected of Board members?	The conduct expected of Board members of Scottish public Boards is set out here: Members of devolved public bodies: model code of conduct - December 2021 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)(this includes the Principles of Public Life)
How can I complain about the public appointments process?	Further information about the complaints process for public appointments can be found here: How to apply - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) Anyone concerned about public appointments can raise a complaint and have it independently investigated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner. Investigation process public appointments Ethical Standards Commissioner

For further information

Please contact the Public Appointments Team, Scottish Government

Email: public.appointments@gov.scot

Deaf, deafblind and BSL users can contact the team via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)

