In this section, we would like you to consider how we should deliver social security in Scotland. In the report which we published in March\(^{19}\), we said that:

“The social security system in Scotland can be seen to have a number of levels of delivery. This ranges from the governance of the entire system, the ‘back room’ delivery functions which will process applications and arrange for payments to be made etc. to the user interface where customers will interact with the system. This system is in the process of being appraised over two stages.”

The paper went on to report on our initial high level appraisal around the governance of social security in Scotland and the strategic case for change. It found that the governance body should have close links to Scottish Ministers and be flexible enough to respond as the social security landscape in Scotland unfolds.

Flexibility means having the capacity to expand and take on new work as well as being able to change to doing things in a different way. For example, in the event that further social security powers are devolved to Scotland sometime in the future, the agency will need to increase its resource and expand its services to take on these new responsibilities. A central agency with access to the wider resources of the Scottish Government family was seen as being able to deliver this flexibility. So, it seemed best for social security in Scotland to sit within the Scottish Government family in order that it might be able to draw upon the strengths and resources of the parent organisation, when needed.

On the basis of the evidence we gathered, the then Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners Rights, Alex Neil MSP, announced to the Parliament in a debate on 1 March that, “we intend, after having examined all the available options, to set up a new social security agency for Scotland\(^{20}\).” We now need to determine precisely what this agency does and how it works with existing public and third sector organisations in Scotland.

In time, our new social security system, operating as a single cohesive whole, with the agency at its heart, will deliver the outcomes which we described in the previous section. This means that, in the future, we will evaluate how well our Scottish social security system is working based on (for example) its ability to ensure that people receiving Scottish benefits are treated with dignity and respect as well as the other outcomes. This section seeks your views on the best way to deliver these outcomes.


\(^{20}\) Scottish Parliament; Official Report, Meeting of the Parliament 1 March, col. 42
The Scottish Government has carried out a series of workshops with internal and external stakeholders. These workshops generated a list of core capabilities which must form part of the social security system in order to deliver the outcomes. (For example, the system must have the capability to make payments to claimants.)

However, the overall system, with the agency and these core capabilities embedded, could still deliver the outcomes in different ways. At one end of the possible spectrum, the system could be configured with the agency at the centre delivering all benefits, at the other end, the role of existing Scottish public sector organisations could be extended, where possible, to take on responsibility for social security.

To help us design the appropriate configuration for our Scottish social security system, we would like you to consider a Scottish social security system, with a new agency at its heart and then answer the series of questions set out below. These questions seek to gather evidence on people’s preferences, in terms of the different ways in which the overall system could be configured.

Responses to this section will be used in of the second Stage of our appraisal of the options for delivery of social security in Scotland. Stage 2 of our options appraisal is on-going in parallel with this consultation exercise. A report on the outcome of this Stage 2 appraisal is expected to be published in early 2017, following the consultation. In that report, the Scottish Government will set out the evidence which it has gathered, on the most appropriate configuration for our Scottish social security agency and the wider system.

Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should the social security agency administer all social security benefits in Scotland?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please explain you answer.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Should the social security agency in Scotland be responsible for providing benefits in cash only or offer a choice of goods and cash?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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Please explain you answer.

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<tr>
<th>How best can we harness digital services for social security delivery in Scotland?</th>
</tr>
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| Should social security in Scotland make some provision for face to face |
contact?
Yes                                No

Please explain you answer.

Who should deliver social security medical assessments for disability related benefits?

Should we, as much as possible, aim to deliver social security through already available public sector services and organisations?
Yes                                No

Please explain you answer.

Should any aspect of social security be delivered by others such as the 3rd sector, not for profit organisations, social enterprises or the private sector?
Yes                                No

If yes, which aspects?