

## Benefits administration

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### **Benefits administration – the gross administration cost per council tax or housing benefit application (£)**

The indicator shows the average administration cost in each council for dealing with Housing and Council Tax Benefit cases.

A council may choose to provide a high level of advice and counselling to claimants. The costs of such services will add to the cost to be reported in this indicator.

#### **Points to bear in mind**

Benefit claims may be more complicated in areas where:

- more people reside at different addresses for short periods of time
- there are more in privately rented accommodation, where the application process is more complex
- there are more people in shared accommodation.

Consequently, the time taken to collect all the information needed to process a claim may be longer and the costs of providing the service, higher.

Eighteen councils have implemented the Department for Work and Pensions verification framework. In addition to the eight councils (Aberdeenshire, Argyll & Bute, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries & Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Falkirk, Inverclyde, Midlothian, Moray, North Lanarkshire, Orkney Islands, Perth & Kinross, Scottish Borders, Shetland Islands, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire and Stirling) that implemented the framework in previous years, a further four councils (Aberdeenshire, Falkirk, Scottish Borders and Stirling) implemented the framework in 2000/2001. Councils that are less well prepared to meet the minimum standards of the framework may experience higher benefits administration costs.

The information from 2001/2002 is not comparable with benefits costs in previous years. The indicator was changed to allow costs to be more directly comparable by weighting the caseload mix using the housing and council tax benefit administration subsidy distribution formula. The change allows the data to be directly compared with council benefit costs in England.

## Benefits administration

### Administration costs - the overall gross administration cost (£) per council tax or housing benefit application

Council	Rank in 01/02		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 99/00		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	99/00	00/01	01/02	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	21		-	-	48.82			
Aberdeenshire	3	✓	-	-	29.11			
Angus	23		-	-	53.02			
Argyll & Bute	11		-	-	37.68			
Clackmannanshire	7	✓	-	-	35.15			
Dumfries & Galloway	12		-	-	37.71			
Dundee City	26	✗	-	-	57.63			
East Ayrshire	19		-	-	47.11			
East Dunbartonshire	15		-	-	39.33			
East Lothian	25	✗	-	-	57.56			
East Renfrewshire	20		-	-	48.10			
City of Edinburgh	29	✗	-	-	61.47			
Falkirk	1	✓	-	-	19.13			
Fife	17		-	-	43.05			
Glasgow City	9		-	-	36.60			
Highland	24		-	-	57.44			
Inverclyde	14		-	-	37.90			
Midlothian	28	✗	-	-	61.37			
Moray	30	✗	-	-	62.00			
North Ayrshire	5	✓	-	-	32.56			
North Lanarkshire	4	✓	-	-	31.14			
Orkney Islands	13		-	-	37.79			
Perth & Kinross	18		-	-	46.46			
Renfrewshire	10		-	-	37.47			
Scottish Borders	22		-	-	52.83			
Shetland Islands	31	✗	-	-	101.55			
South Ayrshire	16		-	-	41.94			
South Lanarkshire	2	✓	-	-	27.43			
Stirling	27	✗	-	-	57.85			
West Dunbartonshire	6	✓	-	-	34.55			
West Lothian	8	✓	-	-	35.84			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			-	-	41.89			

Ranked performance	99/00	00/01	01/02
Highest ranked performance	-	-	19.13
Upper quartile	-	-	36.22
Median	-	-	41.94
Lower quartile	-	-	55.23
Lowest ranked performance	-	-	101.55

Data features	Symbol	99/00	00/01	01/02
PI not applicable	(-)	32	32	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing material change since 1999/00	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

#### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2001/02

Council	99/00	00/01	01/02
Eilean Siar	-	-	<u>53.68</u>

#### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

## Benefits administration

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### **Benefits administration – the average time (days) taken to process new claims**

This indicator measures the efficiency of the council in processing Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit applications.

A 'new claim' means:

- any claim for Housing Benefit (HB) or Council Tax Benefit (CTB) when Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based) stops
- any claim following from a change of address
- any claim that fixes the start date of a benefit period, except when there is no break in entitlement from the previous claim.

The time taken for each claim to be processed is counted in calendar days from (and including) the day on which the application is physically received at the designated local authority office to (and including) the day on which that claim is determined. The time includes any non-working days.

The indicator from 2001/2002 is not comparable with processing times in previous years. The indicator was changed to provide consistency with information reported by councils to the DWP

The DWP has set targets for processing times as a guide to performance levels that councils should hope to achieve or exceed. The target is based on the top quarter of all performance figures reported to the Department by councils across the UK.

- Processing times for new claims – 36 days

### **Points to bear in mind**

The average overall time for dealing with applications is important from the applicant's perspective since it is the elapsed time experienced by them. The major factors influencing the processing time will be the management and level of resources given to the task.

Benefit claims may be more complicated in areas where:

- more people reside at different addresses for short periods of time
- there are more people in privately rented accommodation, where the application process is more complex
- there are more people in shared accommodation.

Consequently, the time taken to collect all the information needed to process a claim may be longer and the costs of providing the service, higher.

## Benefits administration

### New claims - the average time (days) taken to process new claims

Council	Rank in 01/02		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 99/00		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	99/00	00/01	01/02	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	17		-	-	48			
Angus	15		-	-	46			
Argyll & Bute	12		-	-	42			
Clackmannanshire	10		-	-	33			
Dumfries & Galloway	16		-	-	48			
Dundee City	19		-	-	55			
East Ayrshire	22		-	-	71			
East Dunbartonshire	18		-	-	49			
East Lothian	25	✗	-	-	80			
East Renfrewshire	6	✓	-	-	26			
City of Edinburgh	21		-	-	68			
Eilean Siar	26	✗	-	-	80			
Falkirk	13		-	-	42			
Highland	11		-	-	37			
Midlothian	22		-	-	71			
Moray	24		-	-	76			
North Ayrshire	27	✗	-	-	93			
North Lanarkshire	14		-	-	44			
Orkney Islands	1	✓	-	-	17			
Perth & Kinross	2	✓	-	-	18			
Renfrewshire	8	✓	-	-	29			
Scottish Borders	7	✓	-	-	28			
Shetland Islands	3	✓	-	-	23			
South Ayrshire	20		-	-	61			
South Lanarkshire	4	✓	-	-	25			
Stirling	5	✓	-	-	26			
West Dunbartonshire	28	✗	-	-	106			
West Lothian	9		-	-	31			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			-	-	51			

Ranked performance	99/00	00/01	01/02
Highest ranked performance	-	-	17
Upper quartile	-	-	28
Median	-	-	44
Lower quartile	-	-	69
Lowest ranked performance	-	-	106

Data features	Symbol	99/00	00/01	01/02
PI not applicable	( - )	32	32	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing material change since 1999/00	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2001/02

Council	99/00	00/01	01/02
Aberdeenshire	-	-	<u>64</u>
Fife	-	-	<u>52</u>
Glasgow City	-	-	<u>36</u>
Inverclyde	-	-	<u>69</u>

### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

## Benefits administration

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### **Benefits administration – the average time (days) taken to process notifications of changes of circumstances**

This indicator measures the efficiency of the council in processing Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) applications.

A 'change of circumstances' means any notice, given in writing, of a change in the claimant's circumstances which affects:

- the claimant's right to HB or CTB
- the amount of HB or CTB to which the claimant is entitled
- the claimant's right to receive HB or CTB.

Claims made on the cessation of Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based) are counted as 'new claims' regardless of whether or not they result in there being continuous entitlement to HB/CTB. Claims made on change of address are counted as 'new claims' or, exceptionally, where the benefit period continues, as 'changes of circumstance' regardless of whether or not they result in there being continuous entitlement to HB/CTB.

The time taken for each claim to be processed is counted in calendar days from (and including) the day on which the application is physically received at the designated local authority office to (and including) the day on which that claim is determined. The time includes any non-working days.

The indicator from 2001/2002 is not comparable with processing times in previous years. The indicator was changed to provide consistency with information reported by councils to the DWP

The DWP has set targets for processing times as a guide to performance levels that councils should hope to achieve or exceed. The target is based on the top quarter of all performance figures reported to the Department by councils across the UK.

- Processing times for changes of circumstances – 9 days

### **Points to bear in mind**

The average overall time for dealing with applications is important from the applicant's perspective since it is the elapsed time experienced by them. The major factors influencing the processing time will be the management and level of resources given to the task.

Benefit claims may be more complicated in areas where:

- more people reside at different addresses for short periods of time
- there are more in privately rented accommodation, where the application process is more complex
- there are more people in shared accommodation.

Consequently, the time taken to collect all the information needed to process a claim may be longer and the costs of providing the service, higher.

## Benefits administration

### Changes of circumstances - the average time (days) taken to process notifications of changes of circumstances

Council	Rank in 01/02		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 99/00		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	99/00	00/01	01/02	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	21		-	-	19			
Angus	17		-	-	15			
Argyll & Bute	6	✓	-	-	9			
Clackmannanshire	23		-	-	20			
Dumfries & Galloway	15		-	-	14			
East Ayrshire	28	✗	-	-	49			
East Dunbartonshire	12		-	-	12			
East Lothian	13		-	-	13			
East Renfrewshire	5	✓	-	-	9			
City of Edinburgh	25	✗	-	-	22			
Eilean Siar	27	✗	-	-	33			
Falkirk	16		-	-	15			
Fife	18		-	-	18			
Highland	3	✓	-	-	6			
Midlothian	26	✗	-	-	33			
Moray	24		-	-	21			
North Ayrshire	22		-	-	20			
North Lanarkshire	9		-	-	11			
Orkney Islands	1	✓	-	-	3			
Perth & Kinross	20		-	-	19			
Renfrewshire	19		-	-	19			
Scottish Borders	8	✓	-	-	10			
Shetland Islands	2	✓	-	-	3			
South Ayrshire	11		-	-	11			
South Lanarkshire	4	✓	-	-	9			
Stirling	7	✓	-	-	10			
West Dunbartonshire	14		-	-	14			
West Lothian	10		-	-	11			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			-	-	16			

Ranked performance	99/00	00/01	01/02
Highest ranked performance	-	-	3
Upper quartile	-	-	10
Median	-	-	14
Lower quartile	-	-	19
Lowest ranked performance	-	-	49

Data features	Symbol	99/00	00/01	01/02
PI not applicable	(-)	32	32	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing material change since 1999/00	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

#### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2001/02

Council	99/00	00/01	01/02
Aberdeenshire	-	-	<u>11</u>
Dundee City	-	-	<u>16</u>
Glasgow City	-	-	<u>21</u>
Inverclyde	-	-	<u>10</u>

#### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

## Benefits administration

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### **Benefits administration – the percentage of renewal claims processed on time**

This indicator measures the efficiency of the council in processing Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) applications.

A 'renewal claim' means any claim made, other than when Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based) stops and other than on a change of address, where there is no break in entitlement following the end of an existing benefit period, including claims made in response to the council follow-up action at the end of an existing benefit period.

Claims made on the cessation of Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based) are counted as 'new claims' regardless of whether or not they result in there being continuous entitlement to HB/CTB. Claims made on change of address are counted as 'new claims' or, exceptionally, where the benefit period continues, as 'changes of circumstance' regardless of whether or not they result in there being continuous entitlement to HB/CTB.

The time taken for each claim to be processed is counted in calendar days from (and including) the date on which the application is physically received at the designated local authority office to (and including) the day on which that claim is determined. The time includes any non-working days.

The indicator from 2001/2002 is not comparable with processing times in previous years. The indicator was changed to provide consistency with information reported by councils to the DWP

The DWP has set targets for processing times as a guide to performance levels that councils should hope to achieve or exceed. The target is based on the top quarter of all performance figures reported to the Department by councils across the UK.

- Percentage of renewal claims processed on time – 83%.

### **Points to bear in mind**

The average overall time for dealing with applications is important from the applicant's perspective since it is the elapsed time experienced by them. The major factors influencing the processing time will be the management and level of resources given to the task.

Benefit claims may be more complicated in areas where:

- more people reside at different addresses for short periods of time
- there are more in privately rented accommodation, where the application process is more complex
- there are more people in shared accommodation.

Consequently, the time taken to collect all the information needed to process a claim may be longer and the costs of providing the service, higher.

## Benefits administration

### Renewal claims - the percentage of renewal claims processed on time

Council	Rank in 01/02		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 99/00		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	99/00	00/01	01/02	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	14		-	-	75.5			
Angus	20		-	-	69.5			
Argyll & Bute	26	✗	-	-	48.1			
Clackmannanshire	3	✓	-	-	99.3			
Dumfries & Galloway	16		-	-	72.0			
Dundee City	17		-	-	71.9			
East Ayrshire	7	✓	-	-	93.6			
East Dunbartonshire	13		-	-	76.9			
East Lothian	29	✗	-	-	36.1			
East Renfrewshire	2	✓	-	-	99.4			
City of Edinburgh	25	✗	-	-	52.8			
Eilean Siar	30	✗	-	-	25.9			
Falkirk	15		-	-	75.2			
Fife	5	✓	-	-	99.1			
Highland	21		-	-	68.7			
Inverclyde	18		-	-	69.6			
Midlothian	27	✗	-	-	45.2			
Moray	28	✗	-	-	40.4			
North Ayrshire	24		-	-	60.5			
North Lanarkshire	22		-	-	67.2			
Orkney Islands	8	✓	-	-	91.5			
Perth & Kinross	1	✓	-	-	99.5			
Renfrewshire	12		-	-	77.1			
Scottish Borders	10		-	-	80.8			
Shetland Islands	6	✓	-	-	98.0			
South Ayrshire	11		-	-	79.6			
South Lanarkshire	3	✓	-	-	99.3			
Stirling	22		-	-	67.2			
West Dunbartonshire	18		-	-	71.6			
West Lothian	9		-	-	84.7			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			-	-	73.1			

Ranked performance	99/00	00/01	01/02
Highest ranked performance	-	-	99.5
Upper quartile	-	-	89.8
Median	-	-	73.6
Lower quartile	-	-	67.2
Lowest ranked performance	-	-	25.9

Data features	Symbol	99/00	00/01	01/02
PI not applicable	(-)	32	32	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing material change since 1999/00	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

#### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2001/02

Council	99/00	00/01	01/02
Aberdeenshire	-	-	<u>81.2</u>
Glasgow City	-	-	<u>80.3</u>

#### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

## **Benefits administration**

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### **Benefits administration – the percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that was recovered in the year**

The indicator shows the extent to which councils have overpaid housing benefit since April 2000, and the proportion of these overpayments that were recovered in 2001/2002.

As at 1 April each year, the balance of any recoverable overpayments identified in the period 1 April to date which remains unrecovered (and has not been written off as unrecoverable) should be carried forward to the current year. Payments received in the current year against any of that outstanding debt will count in the current year.

### **Points to bear in mind**

Benefit overpayments can occur for a range of reasons, and include fraudulent claims, claimant errors, council errors, and DWP errors. Overpayments are defined in Article 18 of the Income-related Benefits (Subsidy to Authorities) Order 1998.

## Benefits administration

Recoverable overpayments - the percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year

Council	Rank in 01/02		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 99/00		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	99/00	00/01	01/02	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	5	✓	-	<u>30.4</u>	59.6			
Angus	9		-	77.0	55.7			
Argyll & Bute	4	✓	-	95.9	62.3			
Clackmannanshire	14		-	FTR	47.0			
Dumfries & Galloway	3	✓	-	52.0	64.0			
East Ayrshire	16		-	36.0	41.7			
East Dunbartonshire	5	✓	-	54.2	57.9			
East Renfrewshire	18		-	25.4	38.4			
City of Edinburgh	20		-	65.2	34.7			
Eilean Siar	1	✓	-	FTR	89.0			
Falkirk	17		-	48.7	39.6			
Highland	2	✓	-	69.6	86.0			
Inverclyde	21		-	24.6	32.7			
Midlothian	13		-	66.4	50.2			
North Ayrshire	15		-	57.0	42.2			
North Lanarkshire	24		-	13.6	21.3			
Orkney Islands	7	✓	-	76.1	56.7			
Perth & Kinross	11		-	49.4	51.6			
Renfrewshire	18		-	52.3	39.2			
Shetland Islands	12		-	FTR	50.7			
South Ayrshire	22		-	21.3	29.1			
South Lanarkshire	8	✓	-	37.0	56.3			
Stirling	10		-	49.2	52.2			
West Dunbartonshire	25	✗	-	38.6	21.0			
West Lothian	23		-	41.5	22.3			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			-	50.3	45.6			

Ranked performance	99/00	00/01	01/02
Highest ranked performance	-	95.9	89.0
Upper quartile	-	63.2	56.7
Median	-	49.3	50.2
Lower quartile	-	36.3	38.4
Lowest ranked performance	-	13.6	21.0

Data features	Symbol	99/00	00/01	01/02
PI not applicable	(-)	32	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing material change since 1999/00	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2001/02

Council	99/00	00/01	01/02
East Lothian	-	FTR	<u>43.7</u>
Glasgow City	-	<u>66.5</u>	<u>73.3</u>
Aberdeenshire	-	FTR	FTR
Dundee City	-	FTR	FTR
Fife	-	49.2	FTR
Moray	-	FTR	FTR
Scottish Borders	-	FTR	FTR

### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.