

## 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.

The indicator from 2001/2002 is not comparable with processing times in previous years.

Nineteen councils comply fully with the Department for Works and Pensions framework. They are Aberdeenshire, Angus, 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.

Six further councils (East Renfrewshire, Eilean Siar, Fife, Highland, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian) are partially compliant with the framework.

Councils that are less well prepared to meet the minimum standards of the framework may experience higher benefits administration costs.

## Benefits administration

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

Council	Rank in 02/03		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse X since 00/01		
	1-32	✓1-8 X 25-32	00/01	01/02	02/03	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	21		-	48.82	52.60			
Aberdeenshire	12		-	29.11	46.41			
Angus	29	X	-	53.02	70.61			
Argyll & Bute	10		-	37.68	45.12			
Clackmannanshire	6	✓	-	35.15	35.40			
Dumfries & Galloway	9		-	37.71	40.65			
Dundee City	26	X	-	57.63	64.30			
East Ayrshire	16		-	47.11	49.91			
East Dunbartonshire	20		-	39.33	51.95			
East Lothian	24		-	57.56	58.02			
East Renfrewshire	14		-	48.10	47.01			
City of Edinburgh	25	X	-	61.47	62.31			
Eilean Siar	30	X	-	<u>53.68</u>	83.33			
Falkirk	4	✓	-	19.13	31.94			
Fife	11		-	43.05	46.08			
Highland	28	X	-	57.44	70.54			
Inverclyde	7	✓	-	37.90	37.40			
Midlothian	23		-	61.37	56.84			
Moray	27	X	-	62.00	68.94			
North Ayrshire	15		-	32.56	47.96			
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	-	31.14	29.02			
Orkney Islands	19		-	37.79	50.70			
Perth & Kinross	18		-	46.46	50.40			
Renfrewshire	3	✓	-	37.47	30.18			
Scottish Borders	17		-	52.83	49.99			
Shetland Islands	31	X	-	101.55	109.86			
South Ayrshire	13		-	41.94	46.75			
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	-	27.43	27.99			
Stirling	22		-	57.85	55.52			
West Dunbartonshire	5	✓	-	34.55	35.20			
West Lothian	8	✓	-	35.84	39.41			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			-	41.89	47.27			

Ranked performance	00/01	01/02	02/03
Highest ranked performance	-	19.13	27.99
Upper quartile	-	36.66	40.03
Median	-	43.05	49.91
Lower quartile	-	55.56	57.43
Lowest ranked performance	-	101.55	109.86

Data features	Symbol	00/01	01/02	02/03
PI not applicable	(-)	31	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2000/01	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2002/03

Council	00/01	01/02	02/03
Glasgow City	-	36.60	<u>39.14</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.

Nineteen councils comply fully with the Department for Works and Pensions framework. They are Aberdeenshire, Angus, 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.

Six further councils (East Renfrewshire, Eilean Siar, Fife, Highland, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian) are partially compliant with the framework.

Councils that are less well prepared to meet the minimum standards of the framework may experience higher benefits administration costs.

## Benefits administration

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

Council	Rank in 02/03		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 00/01		
	1-32	✓ 1-8 ✗ 25-32	00/01	01/02	02/03	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	17		-	48	51			
Aberdeenshire	14		-	<u>64</u>	44			
Angus	26	✗	-	46	79			
Argyll & Bute	10		-	42	33			
Clackmannanshire	5	✓	-	33	29			
Dumfries & Galloway	13		-	48	40			
Dundee City	23		-	55	60			
East Ayrshire	20		-	71	59			
East Dunbartonshire	16		-	49	47			
East Lothian	18		-	80	53			
East Renfrewshire	7	✓	-	26	32			
City of Edinburgh	20		-	68	59			
Eilean Siar	20		-	80	59			
Falkirk	7	✓	-	42	32			
Highland	14		-	37	44			
Inverclyde	25	✗	-	<u>69</u>	65			
Midlothian	24		-	71	64			
Moray	28	✗	-	76	102			
North Ayrshire	29	✗	-	93	111			
North Lanarkshire	4	✓	-	44	26			
Perth & Kinross	3	✓	-	18	25			
Renfrewshire	12		-	29	39			
Scottish Borders	6	✓	-	28	31			
Shetland Islands	7	✓	-	23	32			
South Ayrshire	19		-	61	57			
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	-	25	19			
Stirling	2	✓	-	26	23			
West Dunbartonshire	27	✗	-	106	84			
West Lothian	11		-	31	35			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			-	51	49			

Ranked performance	00/01	01/02	02/03
Highest ranked performance	-	18	19
Upper quartile	-	31	32
Median	-	48	44
Lower quartile	-	69	59
Lowest ranked performance	-	106	111

Data features	Symbol	00/01	01/02	02/03
PI not applicable	(-)	29	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2000/01	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2002/03

Council	00/01	01/02	02/03
Fife	-	<u>52</u>	<u>58</u>
Glasgow City	-	<u>36</u>	<u>42</u>
Orkney Islands	-	17	<u>19</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.

Nineteen councils comply fully with the Department for Works and Pensions framework. They are Aberdeenshire, Angus, 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.

Six further councils (East Renfrewshire, Eilean Siar, Fife, Highland, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian) are partially compliant with the framework.

Councils that are less well prepared to meet the minimum standards of the framework may experience higher benefits administration costs.

## Benefits administration

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

Council	Rank in 02/03		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 00/01		
	1-32	✓ 1-8 ✗ 25-32	00/01	01/02	02/03	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	27	✗	-	19	26			
Aberdeenshire	4	✓	-	<u>11</u>	6			
Angus	21		-	15	18			
Argyll & Bute	1	✓	-	9	5			
Clackmannanshire	17		-	20	15			
Dumfries & Galloway	12		-	14	11			
Dundee City	25	✗	-	<u>16</u>	22			
East Ayrshire	15		-	49	12			
East Dunbartonshire	10		-	12	10			
East Lothian	12		-	13	11			
East Renfrewshire	9		-	9	9			
City of Edinburgh	22		-	22	19			
Eilean Siar	17		-	33	15			
Falkirk	16		-	15	13			
Fife	26	✗	-	18	24			
Highland	1	✓	-	6	5			
Inverclyde	5	✓	-	<u>10</u>	7			
Midlothian	29	✗	-	33	33			
Moray	30	✗	-	21	42			
North Ayrshire	28	✗	-	20	30			
North Lanarkshire	5	✓	-	11	7			
Perth & Kinross	17		-	19	15			
Renfrewshire	23		-	19	21			
Scottish Borders	23		-	10	21			
Shetland Islands	1	✓	-	3	5			
South Ayrshire	20		-	11	16			
South Lanarkshire	8	✓	-	9	8			
Stirling	5	✓	-	10	7			
West Dunbartonshire	10		-	14	10			
West Lothian	12		-	11	11			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			-	16	15			

Ranked performance	00/01	01/02	02/03
Highest ranked performance	-	3	5
Upper quartile	-	10	8
Median	-	14	13
Lower quartile	-	19	21
Lowest ranked performance	-	49	42

Data features	Symbol	00/01	01/02	02/03
PI not applicable	(-)	30	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2000/01	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

#### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2002/03

Council	00/01	01/02	02/03
Glasgow City	-	<u>21</u>	<u>18</u>
Orkney Islands	-	3	<u>3</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.

Nineteen councils comply fully with the Department for Works and Pensions framework. They are Aberdeenshire, Angus, 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.

Six further councils (East Renfrewshire, Eilean Siar, Fife, Highland, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian) are partially compliant with the framework.

Councils that are less well prepared to meet the minimum standards of the framework may experience higher benefits administration costs.

## Benefits administration

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

Council	Rank in 02/03		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 00/01		
	1-32	✓ 1-8 ✗ 25-32	00/01	01/02	02/03	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	19		-	75.5	73.9			
Aberdeenshire	7	✓	-	<u>81.2</u>	88.1			
Angus	29	✗	-	69.5	48.6			
Argyll & Bute	26	✗	-	48.1	59.9			
Clackmannanshire	3	✓	-	99.3	92.6			
Dumfries & Galloway	5	✓	-	72.0	90.9			
Dundee City	17		-	71.9	76.0			
East Ayrshire	13		-	93.6	80.2			
East Dunbartonshire	20		-	76.9	72.3			
East Lothian	22		-	36.1	68.5			
East Renfrewshire	18		-	99.4	75.2			
City of Edinburgh	27	✗	-	52.8	58.7			
Eilean Siar	28	✗	-	25.9	56.3			
Falkirk	14		-	75.2	78.9			
Fife	8	✓	-	99.1	88.0			
Glasgow City	11		-	<u>80.3</u>	84.9			
Highland	25	✗	-	68.7	64.3			
Inverclyde	16		-	69.6	77.4			
Midlothian	30	✗	-	45.2	44.4			
Moray	31	✗	-	40.4	3.6			
North Ayrshire	21		-	60.5	70.9			
North Lanarkshire	10		-	67.2	86.1			
Perth & Kinross	1	✓	-	99.5	99.5			
Renfrewshire	23		-	77.1	68.2			
Scottish Borders	9		-	80.8	86.8			
Shetland Islands	1	✓	-	98.0	99.5			
South Ayrshire	12		-	79.6	80.3			
South Lanarkshire	4	✓	-	99.3	92.5			
Stirling	15		-	67.2	78.5			
West Dunbartonshire	24		-	71.6	67.7			
West Lothian	6	✓	-	84.7	90.5			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			-	73.1	76.9			

Ranked performance	00/01	01/02	02/03
Highest ranked performance	-	99.5	99.5
Upper quartile	-	83.0	87.4
Median	-	75.2	77.4
Lower quartile	-	67.2	68.0
Lowest ranked performance	-	25.9	3.6

Data features	Symbol	00/01	01/02	02/03
PI not applicable	(-)	31	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2000/01	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

#### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2002/03

Council	00/01	01/02	02/03
Orkney Islands	-	91.5	<u>91.4</u>

#### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.