

## Benefits administration

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### **Administration costs - the overall 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 03/04		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 01/02		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	01/02	02/03	03/04	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	25	✗	48.82	52.60	68.12			✗
Aberdeenshire	24		29.11	46.41	62.93			✗
Angus	28	✗	53.02	70.61	78.80			✗
Argyll & Bute	17		37.68	45.12	54.42			✗
Clackmannanshire	4	✓	35.15	35.40	33.67			
Dumfries & Galloway	15		37.71	40.65	52.44			✗
Dundee City	31	✗	69.51	64.30	86.09			✗
East Ayrshire	11		47.11	49.91	49.77	✗		
East Dunbartonshire	22		39.33	51.95	56.29			✗
East Lothian	23		57.56	58.02	57.68			
East Renfrewshire	9		48.10	47.01	47.74			
City of Edinburgh	26	✗	61.47	62.31	69.88		✗	
Eilean Siar	30	✗	<u>53.68</u>	83.33	85.88			
Falkirk	3	✓	19.13	31.94	32.40			✗
Fife	8	✓	43.05	46.08	46.93	✗		
Glasgow City	5	✓	36.60	<u>34.61</u>	34.50	✓		
Highland	29	✗	57.44	70.54	84.47			✗
Inverclyde	7	✓	37.90	37.40	44.31			✗
Midlothian	21		61.37	56.84	55.83	✓		
Moray	27	✗	62.00	68.94	72.61			✗
North Ayrshire	14		32.56	47.96	52.01			✗
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	31.14	29.02	32.07			
Orkney Islands	12		37.79	50.70	49.86			✗
Perth & Kinross	20		46.46	50.40	55.21			✗
Renfrewshire	13		37.47	30.18	51.14			✗
Scottish Borders	16		52.83	49.99	54.27			
Shetland Islands	32	✗	101.55	109.86	98.52			
South Ayrshire	19		41.94	46.75	54.98			✗
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	27.43	27.99	14.73			✓
Stirling	18		57.85	55.52	54.51	✓		
West Dunbartonshire	10		34.55	35.20	47.94			✗
West Lothian	6	✓	35.84	39.41	41.85			✗
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			42.27	47.27	47.96			

Ranked performance	01/02	02/03	03/04
Highest ranked performance	19.13	27.99	14.73
Upper quartile	36.41	38.91	47.54
Median	42.50	48.94	54.35
Lower quartile	54.62	57.14	64.23
Lowest ranked performance	101.55	109.86	98.52

Data features	Symbol	01/02	02/03	03/04
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2001/02	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	3
10-14%	-
>15%	1
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	2
10-14%	1
>15%	18

### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

## Benefits administration

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

The following councils were ranked 25th or below in 2001/02:

Dundee City  
East Lothian  
City of Edinburgh  
Midlothian  
Moray  
Shetland Islands  
Stirling

The following councils did not make any material improvement in their performance by 2003/04:

Dundee City  
East Lothian  
City of Edinburgh  
Moray  
Shetland Islands

## Benefits administration

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### **New claims - 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 03/04		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 01/02		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	01/02	02/03	03/04	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	13		48	51	44	✓		
Aberdeenshire	18		<u>64</u>	44	49			
Angus	30	✗	46	79	77			✗
Argyll & Bute	15		42	33	46	✗		
Clackmannanshire	6	✓	33	29	33			
Dumfries & Galloway	15		48	40	46			
East Ayrshire	11		71	59	40			✓
East Dunbartonshire	25	✗	49	47	62			✗
East Lothian	17		80	53	48			✓
East Renfrewshire	11		26	32	40			✗
City of Edinburgh	21		68	59	56			✓
Eilean Siar	27	✗	80	59	67			✓
Falkirk	6	✓	42	32	33			✓
Fife	18		<u>52</u>	<u>58</u>	49			
Glasgow City	13		<u>36</u>	<u>42</u>	44			
Highland	20		37	44	50			✗
Inverclyde	29	✗	<u>69</u>	65	71			
Midlothian	10		71	64	38			✓
Moray	28	✗	76	102	69	✓		
North Ayrshire	31	✗	93	111	117			✗
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	44	26	19			✓
Orkney Islands	4	✓	17	<u>19</u>	25			✗
Perth & Kinross	21		18	25	56			✗
Renfrewshire	26	✗	29	39	64			✗
Scottish Borders	9		28	31	37			✗
Shetland Islands	5	✓	23	32	31			✗
South Ayrshire	21		61	57	56	✓		
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	25	19	14			✓
Stirling	3	✓	26	23	21			✓
West Dunbartonshire	24		106	84	57			✓
West Lothian	8	✓	31	35	36			✗
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			51	49	47			

Ranked performance	01/02	02/03	03/04
Highest ranked performance	17	19	14
Upper quartile	30	32	37
Median	46	44	46
Lower quartile	69	59	57
Lowest ranked performance	106	111	117

Data features	Symbol	01/02	02/03	03/04
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2001/02		
<b>Improvement</b>		
5-9%	3	
10-14%	-	
>15%	10	
<b>Decline</b>		
5-9%	1	
10-14%	-	
>15%	11	

#### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2003/04

Council		01/02	02/03	03/04
Dundee City		55	60	<u>83</u>

#### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

## Benefits administration

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

The following councils were ranked 25th or below in 2001/02:

East Lothian  
Eilean Siar  
North Ayrshire  
West Dunbartonshire

The following councils did not make any material improvement in their performance by 2003/04:

North Ayrshire

## Benefits administration

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### **Changes of circumstances - 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 03/04		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 01/02		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	01/02	02/03	03/04	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	26	✗	19	26	19			
Aberdeenshire	7	✓	<u>11</u>	6	7			
Angus	26	✗	15	18	19			✗
Argyll & Bute	5	✓	9	5	6			✓
Clackmannanshire	20		20	15	14			✓
Dumfries & Galloway	13		14	11	11			✓
East Ayrshire	10		49	12	9			✓
East Dunbartonshire	13		12	10	11	✓		
East Lothian	10		13	11	9			✓
East Renfrewshire	16		9	9	12			✗
City of Edinburgh	28	✗	22	19	21			
Eilean Siar	24		33	15	18			✓
Falkirk	13		15	13	11			✓
Fife	24		18	24	18			
Glasgow City	19		<u>21</u>	<u>18</u>	13			
Highland	9		6	5	8			✗
Inverclyde	12		<u>10</u>	7	10			
Midlothian	21		33	33	15			✓
Moray	29	✗	21	42	27			✗
North Ayrshire	29	✗	20	30	27			✗
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	11	7	4			✓
Orkney Islands	2	✓	3	<u>3</u>	4			✗
Perth & Kinross	21		19	15	15			✓
Scottish Borders	23		10	21	17			✗
Shetland Islands	1	✓	3	5	3			
South Ayrshire	16		11	16	12	✗		
South Lanarkshire	7	✓	9	8	7			✓
Stirling	4	✓	10	7	5			✓
West Dunbartonshire	5	✓	14	10	6			✓
West Lothian	16		11	11	12	✗		
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			16	15	12			

Ranked performance	01/02	02/03	03/04
Highest ranked performance	3	3	3
Upper quartile	10	7	7
Median	14	12	12
Lower quartile	20	18	17
Lowest ranked performance	49	42	27

Data features	Symbol	01/02	02/03	03/04
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2001/02	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	1
10-14%	-
>15%	13
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	2
10-14%	-
>15%	7

#### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2003/04

Council	01/02	02/03	03/04
Dundee City	<u>16</u>	22	<u>26</u>
Renfrewshire	19	21	<u>20</u>

#### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

## Benefits administration

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

The following councils were ranked 25th or below in 2001/02:

East Ayrshire  
City of Edinburgh  
Eilean Siar  
Midlothian

The following councils did not make any material improvement in their performance by 2003/04:

City of Edinburgh

## Benefits administration

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### **Accuracy and security of processing - percentage of cases for which the calculation of benefit due was correct**

This indicator aims to drive forward improvements in HB/CTB service delivery by encouraging councils to provide a faster, more accurate, more secure service which is better integrated with other social security benefits administered by the Benefits Agency and Employment Service.

In accordance with guidance from the Department of Work & pensions, this indicator measures a sample of cases to determine the accuracy with which they are calculated.

The aim is to provide an overall picture of the accuracy of benefit determinations in each council.

## Benefits administration

Accuracy and security of processing - percentage of cases for which the calculation of benefit due was correct.

Council	Rank in 03/04		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 01/02		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	01/02	02/03	03/04	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	2	✓	99.2	99.4	99.8			
Angus	15		97.6	97.4	96.8			
Argyll & Bute	10		96.6	94.8	98.2			
Clackmannanshire	7	✓	98.6	98.6	98.7			
Dumfries & Galloway	16		98.2	95.4	96.6			
Dundee City	19		FTR	<u>96.8</u>	95.8			
East Ayrshire	18		96.0	96.4	96.0			
East Dunbartonshire	24		<u>87.4</u>	93.2	93.6			
East Lothian	23		<u>95.3</u>	98.2	93.8			
East Renfrewshire	6	✓	99.8	99.0	99.2			
City of Edinburgh	10		98.2	97.4	98.2			
Eilean Siar	12		97.0	98.9	98.0			
Falkirk	25	✗	95.1	94.6	93.2			
Fife	4	✓	97.3	97.3	99.4			
Glasgow City	27	✗	<u>90.4</u>	95.3	92.8			
Highland	14		95.6	99.2	97.4			
Inverclyde	31	✗	92.7	89.7	91.0			
Midlothian	26	✗	93.4	93.4	93.0			
Moray	17		93.4	94.4	96.4			
North Ayrshire	20		95.9	96.8	95.5			
North Lanarkshire	1	✓	96.3	99.0	100.0			
Orkney Islands	7	✓	98.5	98.9	98.7			
Perth & Kinross	29	✗	93.6	95.2	92.0			
Renfrewshire	30	✗	96.0	90.8	91.6			
Scottish Borders	28	✗	99.0	97.7	92.4	✗		
Shetland Islands	3	✓	99.8	100.0	99.5			
South Ayrshire	12		90.2	96.8	98.0	✓		
South Lanarkshire	22		98.3	93.2	94.4			
Stirling	9		96.8	98.2	98.6			
West Dunbartonshire	4	✓	97.4	98.4	99.4			
West Lothian	21		90.9	94.2	94.8			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			95.5	96.1	96.3			

Ranked performance	01/02	02/03	03/04
Highest ranked performance	99.8	100.0	100.0
Upper quartile	98.2	98.5	98.7
Median	96.5	96.8	96.6
Lower quartile	94.0	94.7	93.7
Lowest ranked performance	87.4	89.7	91.0

Data features	Symbol	01/02	02/03	03/04
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2001/02	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	1
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	1
10-14%	-
>15%	-

### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2003/04

Council	01/02	02/03	03/04
Aberdeenshire	91.2	FTR	<u>94.6</u>

### Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

## Benefits administration

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### Accuracy and security of processing - percentage of cases for which the calculation of benefit due was correct.

The following councils were ranked 25th or below in 2001/02:

Aberdeenshire  
Inverclyde  
South Ayrshire  
West Lothian

The following councils did not make any material improvement in their performance by 2003/04:

Aberdeenshire (unreliable in 2003/2004)  
Inverclyde  
West Lothian