

## 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.

City of Edinburgh Council and Renfrewshire Council are the only councils that do not yet comply with the Department of Work and Pensions standards framework for benefits administration.

## Benefits administration

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

Council	Rank in 04/05		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 02/03		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	02/03	03/04	04/05	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	23		52.60	68.12	65.22			✗
Aberdeenshire	25	✗	46.41	62.93	66.08			✗
Angus	27	✗	70.61	78.80	77.72		✗	
Argyll & Bute	17		45.12	54.42	53.49			✗
Clackmannanshire	4	✓	35.40	33.67	33.56	✓		
Dumfries & Galloway	7	✓	40.65	52.44	41.65			
Dundee City	31	✗	64.30	86.09	88.06			✗
East Ayrshire	11		49.91	49.77	48.44			
East Dunbartonshire	14		51.95	56.29	50.35			
East Lothian	21		58.02	57.68	59.01			
East Renfrewshire	22		47.01	47.74	63.61			✗
City of Edinburgh	26	✗	62.31	69.88	66.90	✗		
Eilean Siar	32	✗	83.33	85.88	90.45	✗		
Falkirk	3	✓	31.94	32.40	33.41			
Fife	12		46.08	46.93	49.48	✗		
Glasgow City	5	✓	<u>34.61</u>	34.50	35.97			
Highland	29	✗	70.54	84.47	83.85			✗
Inverclyde	10		37.40	44.31	45.71			✗
Midlothian	19		56.84	55.83	56.51			
Moray	28	✗	68.94	72.61	80.18			✗
North Ayrshire	15		47.96	52.01	50.51	✗		
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	29.02	32.07	31.94		✗	
Orkney Islands	24		50.70	49.86	65.83			✗
Perth & Kinross	16		50.40	55.21	52.34			
Renfrewshire	9		30.18	51.14	45.56			✗
Scottish Borders	20		49.99	54.27	56.96		✗	
Shetland Islands	30	✗	109.86	98.52	87.07			✓
South Ayrshire	18		46.75	54.98	54.71			✗
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	27.99	14.73	17.42			✓
Stirling	13		55.52	54.51	49.58		✓	
West Dunbartonshire	8	✓	35.20	47.94	42.48			✗
West Lothian	6	✓	39.41	41.85	40.30			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			47.27	47.96	48.22			

Ranked performance	02/03	03/04	04/05
Highest ranked performance	27.99	14.73	17.42
Upper quartile	38.91	47.54	44.79
Median	48.94	54.35	52.92
Lower quartile	57.14	64.23	65.89
Lowest ranked performance	109.86	98.52	90.45

Data features	Symbol	02/03	03/04	04/05
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2002/03	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	1
10-14%	1
>15%	2
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	4
10-14%	3
>15%	12

### 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 2002/03:

Angus  
Dundee City  
City of Edinburgh  
Eilean Siar  
Highland  
Moray  
Shetland Islands

The following councils did not make any material improvement in their performance by 2004/05:

Angus  
Dundee City  
City of Edinburgh  
Eilean Siar  
Highland  
Moray

## 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 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.

- Target processing time 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.

City of Edinburgh Council and Renfrewshire Council are the only councils that do not yet comply with the Department of Work and Pensions standards framework for benefits administration.

## Benefits administration

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

Council	Rank in 04/05		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse X since 02/03		
	1-32	✓1-8 X 25-32	02/03	03/04	04/05	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	9		51	44	30			✓
Aberdeenshire	26	X	44	49	54			X
Angus	25	X	79	77	53			✓
Argyll & Bute	18		33	46	40			X
Clackmannanshire	7	✓	29	33	28			
Dumfries & Galloway	18		40	46	40			
Dundee City	30	X	60	<u>83</u>	57	✓		
East Ayrshire	6	✓	59	40	27			✓
East Lothian	8	✓	53	48	29			✓
East Renfrewshire	11		32	40	32			
City of Edinburgh	31	X	59	56	75			X
Eilean Siar	22		59	67	47			✓
Falkirk	3	✓	32	33	24			✓
Fife	15		<u>58</u>	49	37			
Glasgow City	4	✓	<u>42</u>	44	25			
Highland	21		44	50	45			
Inverclyde	29	X	65	71	56		✓	
Midlothian	12		64	38	34			✓
Moray	23		102	69	48			✓
North Ayrshire	27	X	111	117	55			✓
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	26	19	18			✓
Orkney Islands	10		<u>19</u>	25	31			
Perth & Kinross	23		25	56	48			X
Renfrewshire	16		39	64	39			
Scottish Borders	16		31	37	39			X
Shetland Islands	13		32	31	36		X	
South Ayrshire	27	X	57	56	55			
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	19	14	15			✓
Stirling	4	✓	23	21	25	X		
West Dunbartonshire	20		84	57	42			✓
West Lothian	13		35	36	36			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			49	47	42			

Ranked performance	02/03	03/04	04/05
Highest ranked performance	19	14	15
Upper quartile	32	37	30
Median	44	46	39
Lower quartile	59	57	48
Lowest ranked performance	111	117	75

Data features	Symbol	02/03	03/04	04/05
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2002/03	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	1
10-14%	1
>15%	12
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	1
10-14%	1
>15%	5

#### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2004/05

Council	02/03	03/04	04/05
East Dunbartonshire	47	62	<u>78</u>

#### Reason for Unreliable Determination in 2004/05

**East Dunbartonshire** - The benefits computer system was not correctly recognising when staff were processing a change of circumstances and these were often wrongly recorded as new claims.

#### 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 2002/03:

Angus  
Inverclyde  
Moray  
North Ayrshire  
West Dunbartonshire

The following councils did not make any material improvement in their performance by 2004/05:

None

## 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 04/05		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 02/03		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	02/03	03/04	04/05	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	3	✓	99.4	99.8	99.6			
Aberdeenshire	26	✗	FTR	<u>94.6</u>	93.4			
Angus	15		97.4	96.8	97.6			
Argyll & Bute	1	✓	94.8	98.2	99.8	✓		
Clackmannanshire	6	✓	98.6	98.7	99.0			
Dumfries & Galloway	13		95.4	96.6	98.2			
Dundee City	20		<u>96.8</u>	95.8	96.4			
East Ayrshire	17		96.4	96.0	97.4			
East Dunbartonshire	22		93.2	93.6	95.8			
East Lothian	18		98.2	93.8	96.8			
East Renfrewshire	5	✓	99.0	99.2	99.2			
City of Edinburgh	8	✓	97.4	98.2	98.8			
Falkirk	27	✗	94.6	93.2	92.8			
Fife	4	✓	97.3	99.4	99.3			
Glasgow City	19		95.3	92.8	96.6			
Highland	12		99.2	97.4	98.6			
Midlothian	29	✗	93.4	93.0	89.2			
Moray	28	✗	94.4	96.4	92.0			
North Ayrshire	21		96.8	95.5	96.0			
North Lanarkshire	6	✓	99.0	100.0	99.0			
Orkney Islands	11		98.9	98.7	98.7			
Perth & Kinross	24		95.2	92.0	93.6			
Renfrewshire	14		90.8	91.6	97.8	✓		
Scottish Borders	30	✗	97.7	92.4	87.5		✗	
Shetland Islands	1	✓	100.0	99.5	99.8			
South Ayrshire	15		96.8	98.0	97.6			
South Lanarkshire	24		93.2	94.4	93.6			
Stirling	8	✓	98.2	98.6	98.8			
West Dunbartonshire	8	✓	98.4	99.4	98.8			
West Lothian	23		94.2	94.8	94.4			
			<b>Scotland</b>					
			96.1	96.3	96.6			

Ranked performance	02/03	03/04	04/05
Highest ranked performance	100.0	100.0	99.8
Upper quartile	98.4	98.7	98.8
Median	96.8	96.5	97.6
Lower quartile	94.8	94.0	94.8
Lowest ranked performance	90.8	91.6	87.5

Data features	Symbol	02/03	03/04	04/05
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2002/03	
<b>Improvement</b>	
5-9%	2
10-14%	-
>15%	-
<b>Decline</b>	
5-9%	-
10-14%	1
>15%	-

### Unreliable/Unreported Data in 2004/05

Council	02/03	03/04	04/05
Eilean Siar	98.9	98.0	<u>97.5</u>
Inverclyde	89.7	91.0	<u>93.6</u>

### Reason for Unreliable Determination in 2004/05

**Eilean Siar** - Sample too small - system rechecking same cases.

**Inverclyde** - The Council was not sampling in accordance with the DWP methodology and also had not performed the final quarter's sample.

### 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 2002/03:

East Dunbartonshire  
Inverclyde  
Midlothian  
Renfrewshire  
South Lanarkshire  
West Lothian

The following councils did not make any material improvement in their performance by 2004/05:

East Dunbartonshire  
Inverclyde (unreliable in 2004/2005)  
Midlothian  
South Lanarkshire  
West Lothian