

Benefits administration

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.

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

Council	Rank in 07/08		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 05/06		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	05/06	06/07	07/08	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	12		-	44.85	44.59			
Aberdeenshire	25	✗	-	56.34	62.13			
Angus	24		-	55.93	61.51			
Argyll & Bute	19		-	43.74	53.17			
Clackmannanshire	8	✓	-	33.84	40.99			
Dumfries & Galloway	7	✓	-	38.69	40.68			
Dundee City	32	✗	-	74.25	72.19			
East Ayrshire	16		-	47.83	46.63			
East Dunbartonshire	4	✓	-	37.75	33.57			
East Lothian	22		-	50.21	57.61			
East Renfrewshire	27	✗	-	61.55	63.92			
City of Edinburgh	15		-	43.06	45.86			
Eilean Siar	31	✗	-	73.38	72.16			
Falkirk	3	✓	-	31.66	31.08			
Fife	18		-	52.10	52.03			
Glasgow City	9		-	40.62	42.23			
Highland	28	✗	-	68.60	65.12			
Inverclyde	10		-	41.09	43.33			
Midlothian	20		-	50.90	53.19			
Moray	29	✗	-	61.45	66.27			
North Ayrshire	14		-	40.55	44.86			
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	-	27.50	26.92			
Orkney Islands	23		-	53.59	58.80			
Perth & Kinross	21		-	49.33	54.24			
Renfrewshire	13		-	43.01	44.81			
Scottish Borders	26	✗	-	59.28	62.84			
Shetland Islands	30	✗	-	65.53	69.80			
South Ayrshire	17		-	45.56	46.74			
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	-	13.86	14.45			
Stirling	5	✓	-	36.05	36.87			
West Dunbartonshire	6	✓	-	39.37	37.41			
West Lothian	11		-	41.18	43.53			
			Scotland					
			-	43.28	44.75			

Ranked performance	05/06	06/07	07/08
Highest ranked performance	-	13.86	14.45
Upper quartile	-	40.26	41.92
Median	-	45.21	46.69
Lower quartile	-	56.03	61.67
Lowest ranked performance	-	74.25	72.19

Data features	Symbol	05/06	06/07	07/08
PI not applicable	(-)	32	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2005/06	
Improvement	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
Decline	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

Benefits administration

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.

Benefits administration

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

Council	Rank in 07/08		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 05/06		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	05/06	06/07	07/08	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	9		27.8	25.9	23.6			✓
Aberdeenshire	25	✗	33.3	33.8	29.6		✓	
Angus	12		42.9	30.4	26.2			✓
Argyll & Bute	27	✗	33.9	26.2	31.6	✓		
Clackmannanshire	7	✓	31.5	44.0	23.2			✓
Dumfries & Galloway	29	✗	39.1	42.3	36.0	✓		
Dundee City	19		31.0	31.7	28.0	✓		
East Ayrshire	18		30.7	36.2	27.9	✓		
East Dunbartonshire	20		42.9	37.1	28.2			✓
East Lothian	23		34.3	33.3	29.2		✓	
East Renfrewshire	30	✗	35.7	34.1	37.3			
City of Edinburgh	21		28.7	23.9	28.7			
Eilean Siar	26	✗	38.4	34.4	30.9			✓
Falkirk	15		27.8	29.8	26.8			
Fife	17		52.3	42.0	27.7			✓
Glasgow City	10		38.3	37.8	25.3			✓
Highland	31	✗	32.8	28.7	38.4			✗
Inverclyde	8	✓	32.6	28.4	23.5			✓
Midlothian	32	✗	46.5	46.7	38.6			✓
Moray	28	✗	42.9	39.7	34.5			✓
North Ayrshire	6	✓	33.5	22.6	21.7			✓
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	18.0	18.0	16.9	✓		
Orkney Islands	16		27.5	25.8	27.5			
Perth & Kinross	14		40.2	37.8	26.4			✓
Renfrewshire	22		28.5	25.9	28.9			
Scottish Borders	12		28.7	25.3	26.2	✓		
Shetland Islands	23		31.9	32.1	29.2	✓		
South Ayrshire	4	✓	31.1	27.7	20.3			✓
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	15.3	17.2	13.5		✓	
Stirling	3	✓	25.1	24.7	19.9			✓
West Dunbartonshire	5	✓	34.2	28.5	20.8			✓
West Lothian	10		30.8	31.7	25.3			✓
			Scotland					
			31.7	30.4	25.8			

Ranked performance	05/06	06/07	07/08
Highest ranked performance	15.3	17.2	13.5
Upper quartile	28.7	25.9	23.6
Median	32.7	31.1	27.6
Lower quartile	38.3	36.4	29.3
Lowest ranked performance	52.3	46.7	38.6

Data features	Symbol	05/06	06/07	07/08
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2005/06	
Improvement	
5-9%	7
10-14%	3
>15%	16
Decline	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	1

Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

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

The following councils were ranked 25th or below in 2005/06:

Angus
Dumfries & Galloway
East Dunbartonshire
Eilian Siar
Fife
Midlothian
Moray
Perth & Kinross

The following councils did not make any material improvement in their performance by 2007/08:

None