

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2001/2002

Environmental and regulatory services

Comparing the performance of Scottish councils



Introduction

Each year, councils publish a range of information to show people how well they are providing their services and how they compare with other councils.

This leaflet contains information on seven indicators relating to the councils' management of environmental and regulatory services and how they compare with other councils. They are:

- refuse collection and disposal costs
- methods of household waste disposal
- the time to deal with applications for building warrants and completion certificates
- the proportion of food hygiene inspections undertaken within target time
- the proportion of trading standards complaints and enquiries undertaken within time
- the proportion of planning applications processed within target time
- the time taken to repair faulty street lights and faulty traffic lights.

Other pamphlets published by the Commission cover:

Benefits, finance and corporate issues
Cultural and community services
Education services
Housing and social work services
Fire and Police services

Audit Scotland will also be providing on its website¹:

- a comprehensive compendium of the information for all the services for which there are performance indicators
- council profiles analysing indicators on a council-by-council basis.

Using the information

For each activity we have set out why some of the differences in performance may have arisen. We also highlight particular features of the information – for example, the range in performance achieved by different councils or the overall change in councils' performance over time.

Several factors affect the way a council performs its activities. You need to be aware of these in order to understand why results may vary. Some of these factors are outwith the control of a council – for example, population size and density, geographical area, and the mix between urban and rural settlements. Others may be specific to a particular service or the groups of people it serves. These local factors may mean that a council with a performance which, at first sight, appears to be worse than that of another has, in fact, done better given the circumstances it faces.

In this pamphlet we have shown information for councils for 2001/2002 and where appropriate made comparison with previous years. However, for some indicators, councils have submitted data that their auditors have identified as unreliable because of doubts about the reliability of the arrangements for producing the information (see Key below). In such cases we have shown the information separately and have not included it in the calculation of any overall Scottish averages, although such information was included in previous years.

Some services were disrupted during 2001/2002 by the foot and mouth outbreak. The following councils have indicated that, for the indicators discussed in this pamphlet, their performance may have been affected.

Building Control

Dumfries & Galloway

Environmental Health

Argyll & Bute, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries & Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Highland, Moray, North Lanarkshire, Shetland Islands, South Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire

Environmental Services

Argyll & Bute, Dumfries & Galloway, South Ayrshire

Planning

Dumfries & Galloway

Roads & Lighting

Dumfries & Galloway

Trading Standards

Dumfries & Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Falkirk, Midlothian, Scottish Borders, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire, West Lothian

Key

Auditors appointed by the Accounts Commission have reviewed authorities' arrangements for producing the performance information. In the tables shown in this pamphlet, an asterisk (*) against a council's name indicates that the auditor expressed doubts about the reliability of its arrangements for producing the information.

¹ www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/performance

Indicator 1

Refuse collection and disposal costs

The average cost of refuse collection per premise was £46.94. The cost varied widely from £33 in Aberdeenshire to £86 in Eilean Siar.

The average disposal cost per premise was £49.53, a 10% increase compared with the previous year. Costs varied widely from £33 in Scottish Borders to £120 in Argyll & Bute.

Indicator 2

Methods of household waste disposal

Across Scotland, 90% of household, commercial and industrial waste was used for landfill. Slightly over 7% was recycled, and the remainder was used for the recovery of heat, power or other energy sources. The Scottish Executive has set councils a target of recycling 25% of waste by 2006.

Indicator 3

Building warrants and completion certificates

The average time taken by councils to process a request for a building warrant was 13 days. The time taken to process warrants, ranged from six days in Moray to 44 days in Falkirk.

The average time taken to respond to a request for a completion certificate was three days. The time to respond to a request varied among councils from two days in eight councils to nine days in Aberdeen City and Eilean Siar.

Indicator 4

Food hygiene inspections

Within the two highest risk categories for food hygiene inspections, almost 96% of inspections were carried out within time. The percentage of inspections carried out within time varied from 81.5% in Angus to 100% in East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire.

Indicator 5

Trading standards complaints and business advice requests

Across Scotland, 82% of consumer complaints were processed within 14 days. These ranged from 38% in East Dunbartonshire to 97% in Dundee City.

Overall, councils continue to deal with a high proportion (almost 98%) of business advice requests within 14 days.

Indicator 6

Planning applications

Across Scotland, almost 65% of all applications were dealt with within two months. These ranged from 49% in Glasgow City to 86% in Clackmannanshire (the only council to meet the national target of determining 80% within two months).

Five councils (Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Moray, Perth & Kinross and Shetland Islands) met the national target of dealing with 90% or more of householder applications within two months. This is half the number of councils that achieved the target compared with the previous year.

The proportion of non-householder applications dealt with within two months was 51%, the same as the previous year.

Indicator 7

Time to repair faulty street and traffic lights

Across Scotland, councils undertook 91% of street light repairs within seven days. The proportion varied among councils from 72% in Aberdeenshire to 99% in Perth & Kinross and South Lanarkshire.

Overall, 87% of repairs to traffic lights were carried out within 48 hours. Twenty-two councils carried out at least nine in every ten repairs within target time.

Indicator 1: Cost of refuse collection and disposal

The gross cost of refuse collection and disposal per property.

The indicator shows the overall cost to the council of collecting and disposing of refuse per property, including both domestic and commercial premises. It includes both the direct costs (eg, depots, vehicles and the wages of the crews involved) and the indirect costs (eg, the cost of the service management offices). It also includes the cost of undertaking special uplifts of bulky items from domestic premises, which are not usually uplifted as part of the normal waste collection round.

Refuse disposal commences when a council's collection vehicle discharges the waste collected at either a transfer station, a treatment plant, a material recycling facility or at landfill.

The Commission's report '*Benchmarking refuse collection*' (April 2000), arranged local authorities into family groups based on population dispersal, which measures the degree to which the population is spread across the council's area, and the number of properties served. Councils have been divided into three groups – urban, mixed urban/rural and rural – to allow more like-for-like comparison to be made. These groupings have been used for the purposes of this indicator.

Points to bear in mind

The majority of councils collect domestic refuse once a week, though a small number operate a twice-weekly uplift – mainly for tenement and high rise flats. Generally, commercial uplifts are carried out two or three times a week. Some councils undertake separate collections of garden refuse and waste paper.

Most councils use the wheeled bin method of collection. Alternative methods are the uplift of static bins or sacks from either backdoor or kerbside.

A council that has a population which is scattered over a wide geographical area is likely to incur a higher cost of refuse collection than one where the population is relatively concentrated. However, in urban areas the impact of traffic congestion and restricted access to collection points can affect costs.

The costs of waste disposal (eg, landfill management, recycling plant and landfill tax) are included in the refuse disposal indicator.

The allocation of overheads costs to this function, should follow CIPFA guidance, but may vary among councils.

Commentary

Refuse collection

The average cost of refuse collection per premise was £46.94, a slight increase (almost 3%) compared with the previous year. **The cost varied widely from £33 in Aberdeenshire to £86 in Eilean Siar** (Table 1a). Twenty-nine councils (ie, excluding Dumfries & Galloway, Fife and Glasgow) reported reliable information for this indicator.

Nine councils reduced costs compared with the previous year. Three councils (Clackmannanshire, East Ayrshire and Renfrewshire) have reduced collection costs year-on-year since 1999/2000.

The cost of refuse collection per premise has increased considerably (over 18%) compared with the previous year, at Argyll & Bute (18%), Eilean Siar (20%), Angus (23%), and Shetland Islands (51%).

Five councils, three fewer than the previous year, reported gross costs per premise of less than £40. Argyll & Bute, Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands and Stirling, one more council than the previous year, all reported gross costs per premise of more than £60.

Refuse disposal

Across the 30 councils that reported reliable information (ie, excluding Dumfries & Galloway and Glasgow City) **the average disposal cost per premise was £49.53, an increase of £4.90 (10%) per premise compared with the previous year. Costs varied widely between councils from £33 in Scottish Borders to £120 in Argyll & Bute** (Table 1b).

Five councils (Clackmannanshire, Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands) reduced their gross costs per premise, for disposal. Five councils, Argyll & Bute (96%), Angus (36%), North Lanarkshire (31%), Eilean Siar (30%), and West Dunbartonshire (30%), reported the highest increases in their gross disposal cost per premise.

Table 1a: Gross cost of refuse collection per premise

	Refuse collection (£)		
	2001/2002	2000/2001	1999/2000
RURAL COUNCILS			
Aberdeenshire	33.63	31.16	34.58
Argyll & Bute	66.58	56.32	53.61
Eilean Siar	86.57	71.94	72.17
Highland	51.55	49.21	46.02
Orkney Islands	67.65	67.30	65.13
Perth & Kinross	53.58	51.81	49.43
Scottish Borders	38.56	38.70	37.00
Shetland Islands	59.75	39.49	48.38
MIXED COUNCILS			
Angus	44.46	36.19	35.97
Clackmannanshire	52.11	55.37	60.44
East Ayrshire	49.16	51.73	52.38
East Lothian	43.94	47.70	42.95
East Renfrewshire	42.23	40.54	41.88
Inverclyde	43.55	44.65	43.62
Midlothian	40.93	39.57	37.69
Moray	35.26	46.94	39.66
North Ayrshire	46.19	45.28	43.64
South Ayrshire	45.00	39.85	37.11
South Lanarkshire	39.79	46.19	43.42
Stirling	62.52	62.56	61.47
West Lothian	48.57	46.43	41.68
URBAN COUNCILS			
Aberdeen City	41.98	41.30	42.41
Dundee City	47.65	46.98	53.22
East Dunbartonshire	46.20	45.46	42.90
Edinburgh, City of	54.41	49.04	48.29
Falkirk	37.60	35.29	34.15
North Lanarkshire	49.11	46.80	47.37
Renfrewshire	45.93	46.54	47.41
West Dunbartonshire	41.58	41.47	45.27
Scotland	46.94	45.63	45.23
UNRELIABLE DATA			
Dumfries & Galloway	*45.12	49.88	43.21
Fife	*38.03	36.82	42.73
Glasgow City	*49.95	49.42	48.22

Councils that reported unreliable information are excluded from the Scotland figure for 2001/2002.

Table 1b: Gross cost of refuse disposal per premise

	Refuse disposal (£)	
	2001/2002	2000/2001
RURAL COUNCILS		
Aberdeenshire	65.56	64.46
Argyll & Bute	119.99	61.09
Eilean Siar	84.58	65.18
Highland	43.15	45.24
Orkney Islands	98.77	101.87
Perth & Kinross	72.57	65.16
Scottish Borders	33.88	32.72
Shetland Islands	63.90	76.53
MIXED COUNCILS		
Angus	50.58	37.16
Clackmannanshire	42.52	52.81
East Ayrshire	51.07	50.03
East Lothian	46.30	44.95
East Renfrewshire	45.94	42.28
Fife	50.75	45.33
Inverclyde	36.26	36.23
Midlothian	37.23	35.31
Moray	48.74	58.41
North Ayrshire	36.22	31.03
South Ayrshire	42.42	39.88
South Lanarkshire	37.68	36.50
Stirling	47.00	42.20
West Lothian	43.20	41.32
URBAN COUNCILS		
Aberdeen City	50.87	41.37
Dundee City	68.34	60.31
East Dunbartonshire	47.27	44.45
Edinburgh, City of	43.91	38.38
Falkirk	49.87	46.13
North Lanarkshire	41.06	31.36
Renfrewshire	44.66	37.19
West Dunbartonshire	40.73	31.45
Scotland	49.53	44.63
UNRELIABLE DATA		
Dumfries & Galloway	*50.80	28.17
Glasgow City	*52.29	52.33

Councils that reported unreliable information are excluded from the Scotland figure for 2001/2002.

Indicator 2: Waste disposal

The methods of disposal of household, commercial and industrial waste and the proportion that was recycled.

The indicator shows the methods adopted by councils for disposing of household, commercial and industrial waste and the percentage of waste, per premise, disposed of by a range of methods.

Recycling and recovery methods include waste used for recovery of heat, power and other energy sources, composting, and the reuse of ash following waste incineration.

Points to bear in mind

The European Commission landfill directive (July 2002) sets targets for the amount of biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill. The first of these targets is that by 2006 the amount of biodegradable municipal waste that a council sends to landfill must be reduced to three quarters of its 1995 level. Therefore, councils will require to find alternative methods of disposing of refuse, and recycling will become a higher priority.

The Scottish Executive has set two targets for local authorities:

- to increase the amount of waste that is recycled or composted to 25% by 2006.
- to reduce landfilling of biodegradable waste to 1.5 million tonnes by 2006.

Targets on the amount of waste being used for landfill will be available for each council in 2003.

In some cases councils estimate the weight of waste because they have no direct weighing facility.

This is the first year that information has been reported by the Commission for commercial and industrial waste. In previous years the information has related to household waste only.

Commentary

Local authorities collect around 3 million tonnes of waste, of which 2.3 million tonnes is household waste. On average, each household produces around one tonne of refuse per year, while each trade and commercial premise produces 8.6 tonnes per year.

Thirty-one councils (ie, excluding Dumfries & Galloway) reported reliable information for this indicator. For those councils that provided reliable information, **90% of household, commercial and industrial waste was used for landfill. Slightly over 7% was recycled and the remainder was used for the recovery of heat, power or other energy sources.**

Landfill

Biodegradable waste accounts for around 60% (1.8 million tonnes) of the total refuse disposed of by councils. Overall, councils require to reduce the amount that is sent to landfill to 1.5 million tonnes (ie, by 300,000 tonnes) by 2006 to meet the Scottish Executive target.

Ten councils (City of Edinburgh, Clackmannanshire, East Ayrshire, Eilean Siar, Fife, Glasgow City, Highland, Inverclyde, Midlothian and Renfrewshire) reported that 95% or more of their waste goes to landfill sites (Table 2).

Recycling

Councils are recycling more household waste. Compared with the previous year, councils increased the amount of household waste that was recycled from 6% to 8% in 2001/2002.

The level of recycling varies widely, ranging from 1.9% in Eilean Siar to 21.1% in Dundee City. Five councils (Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Orkney Islands) recycled more than 15% of their waste. Three councils, Eilean Siar, Highland and Fife reported recycling less than 3% of their waste.

Twenty-two councils collect green waste which is composted centrally. Aberdeenshire and Perth & Kinross dispose of over 10% of green waste by this method. Angus (5%) and Dundee City (9%) recycle ash following incineration of their waste. All councils recycle or recover a range of other refuse, eg, glass and paper. The proportions varied from 1.9% in Eilean Siar and Highland to 12.0% in Scottish Borders.

Five councils (Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands) dispose of refuse at incineration plants which recover heat, power or other energy sources. Orkney Islands ship their waste to the Shetland incineration plant. Angus use the Dundee City plant, as do Perth & Kinross for a small amount of their refuse.

Table 2: The percentage and methods of household, commercial and industrial waste disposal – 2001/2002

	Total tonnes collected (000s)	Landfill	Recovery of heat, power and other energy sources	% waste recycled			Total Recycling
				Other recycling or recovery methods	Composted by the authority	Ash from incineration which is recycled	
RURAL COUNCILS							
Aberdeenshire	132	82.9		6.5	10.5		17.0
Argyll & Bute	71	92.3		7.7			7.7
Eilean Siar	29	98.1		1.9			1.9
Highland	128	98.1		1.9	0.1		2.0
Orkney Islands	12	13.8	70.2	9.7	6.3		16.0
Perth & Kinross	96	83.1	1.1	5.1	10.7		15.8
Scottish Borders	59	86.4		12.0	1.6		13.6
Shetland Islands	12	19.2	70.5	10.3			10.3
MIXED COUNCILS							
Angus	58	49.1	30.7	9.2	5.7	5.4	20.3
Clackmannanshire	31	95.6		4.4			4.4
East Ayrshire	57	96.0		4.0			4.0
East Lothian	58	94.4		4.2	1.4		5.6
East Renfrewshire	57	87.8		11.4	0.8		12.2
Fife	248	97.8		2.0	0.2		2.2
Inverclyde	36	96.0		4.0			4.0
Midlothian	53	96.2		3.8			3.8
Moray	72	93.4		4.0	2.6		6.6
North Ayrshire	85	94.2		2.4	3.4		5.8
South Ayrshire	77	94.9		5.1			5.1
South Lanarkshire	142	88.9		5.8	5.3		11.1
Stirling	65	91.6		6.4	2.0		8.4
West Lothian	102	94.3		4.4	1.4		5.8
URBAN COUNCILS							
Aberdeen City	120	94.3		5.6	0.1		5.7
Dundee City	98	40.9	38.1	8.2	3.8	9.1	21.1
East Dunbartonshire	70	92.4		6.4	1.3		7.7
Edinburgh, City of	252	95.1		4.0	1.0		5.0
Falkirk	97	94.4		3.8	1.8		5.6
Glasgow City	331	95.2		2.9	1.9		4.8
North Lanarkshire	178	92.7		7.3			7.3
Renfrewshire	95	95.0		3.1	1.9		5.0
West Dunbartonshire	60	93.9		5.7	0.4		6.1
Scotland	2,980	90.2	2.4	4.9	2.1	0.4	7.4
UNRELIABLE DATA							
Dumfries & Galloway	*81.0	*96.5		*3.5			*3.5

Dumfries & Galloway's unreliable information has been excluded from the Scotland figures.

Indicator 3: Building warrants and completion certificates

The average times for processing applications for building warrants and completion certificates.

The indicator shows the time that it takes to:

- process a request for a building warrant
- respond to a request for a completion certificate.

The processing time is the period from receipt of an application for a building warrant until a response is provided to the applicant from the council.

The time to respond to a completion certificate is from receipt of an application until the council has carried out an inspection.

Commentary

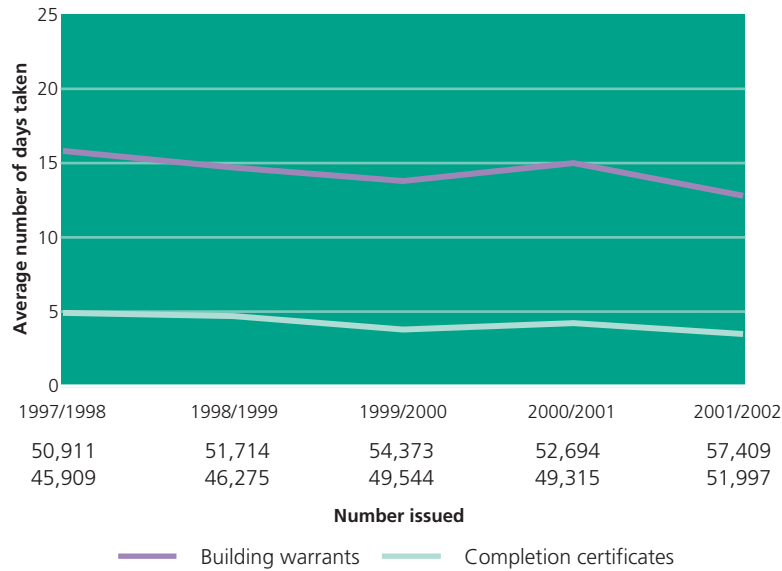
Building warrants

Thirty-one councils (ie, excluding Orkney Islands) reported reliable information for this indicator. These councils processed over 57,000 building warrant applications, 5,000 more than the previous year.

The average time taken by councils to process a request for a building warrant was 13 days, an improvement of two days on the previous year. Since the indicator was introduced in 1997/98 the average time to process requests has reduced from 16 days to 13 days (Figure 3).

There is wide variation among councils in the time taken to process warrants, ranging from six days in Moray to 44 days in Falkirk. Twenty-one councils (five more than the previous year) reported taking 14 days or less to process warrants (Table 3a).

Figure 3: Average time taken to process requests for building warrants and completion certificates



Orkney Islands figures are excluded from the 2001/2002 figures.

Completion certificates

Slightly under 52,000 completion certificates were dealt with by councils. Since 1997/1998 when the indicator was first introduced, there has been an increase of over 6,000 (13%) completion certificates.

The average time taken to respond to a request for a completion certificate was three days, a reduction of one day compared with the previous year. **The time to respond to a request varied among councils from two days in eight councils to nine days in Aberdeen City and Eilean Siar.**

Fifteen councils reported improved performance compared with the previous year (Table 3b).

Table 3a: The average time to process a request for a building warrant

	Number of building warrant applications	Average number of days taken to process a request for a building warrant				
		2001/2002	2000/2001	1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998
Aberdeen City	2,281	16	15	16	18	22
Aberdeenshire	3,325	12	12	12	*13	11
Angus	1,513	8	9	6	7	12
Argyll & Bute	1,724	8	10	10	10	17
Clackmannanshire	552	16	11	14	19	17
Dumfries & Galloway	2,160	16	20	24	24	20
Dundee City	1,204	9	9	8	12	*23
East Ayrshire	997	12	16	8	12	11
East Dunbartonshire	1,192	15	18	20	21	22
East Lothian	1,143	16	20	20	9	8
East Renfrewshire	1,034	10	16	17	15	11
Edinburgh, City of	7,468	12	22	13	*16	16
Eilean Siar	622	14	18	16	28	23
Falkirk	1,182	44	33	19	18	20
Fife	4,170	11	14	12	11	9
Glasgow City	3,880	8	10	9	9	10
Highland	3,503	13	14	13	14	*14
Inverclyde	493	18	*13	13	13	17
Midlothian	908	24	19	18	18	23
Moray	1,208	6	7	14	*15	16
North Ayrshire	1,368	13	17	13	9	9
North Lanarkshire	2,401	11	12	12	13	*15
Perth & Kinross	2,375	18	18	*16	16	15
Renfrewshire	1,282	10	12	11	13	16
Scottish Borders	1,909	14	22	26	26	*27
Shetland Islands	407	14	12	4	2	2
South Ayrshire	1,376	13	12	15	16	17
South Lanarkshire	2,401	8	7	12	18	21
Stirling	961	13	16	14	18	23
West Dunbartonshire	593	19	20	18	18	12
West Lothian	1,777	9	12	11	14	20
Scotland	57,409	13	15	14	15	16
UNRELIABLE DATA						
Orkney Islands	*287	*25	*25	*35	25	25

Orkney Islands' unreliable information has been excluded from the Scotland figures for 2001/2002.

Table 3b: The average time to respond to a request for a completion certificate

	Number of completion certificate applications	Average number of days taken to respond to a request for a completion certificate				
		2001/2002	2000/2001	1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998
Aberdeen City	1,967	9	6	7	9	10
Aberdeenshire	2,897	3	3	3	*3	4
Angus	1,220	2	2	2	3	3
Argyll & Bute	922	2	3	4	5	4
Clackmannanshire	426	4	4	5	6	7
Dumfries & Galloway	1,400	5	6	6	6	4
Dundee City	1,671	2	2	3	4	*6
East Ayrshire	1,094	3	4	2	2	3
East Dunbartonshire	823	4	4	3	4	8
East Lothian	843	3	9	13	7	4
East Renfrewshire	870	3	4	3	4	4
Edinburgh, City of	6,953	2	5	1	*9	4
Eilean Siar	463	9	10	9	9	11
Falkirk	471	5	4	4	2	3
Fife	3,349	3	3	3	4	6
Glasgow City	6,028	2	3	3	3	3
Highland	2,420	6	5	5	5	*7
Inverclyde	688	5	*6	4	5	7
Midlothian	599	5	3	3	3	3
Moray	985	4	5	7	*6	7
North Ayrshire	1,154	6	7	5	4	5
North Lanarkshire	2,464	2	3	2	2	*4
Perth & Kinross	1,663	8	9	*9	7	4
Renfrewshire	1,627	2	2	2	2	3
Scottish Borders	1,481	3	4	4	4	*5
Shetland Islands	249	5	4	6	3	3
South Ayrshire	1,116	5	4	5	5	6
South Lanarkshire	2,122	2	2	4	7	5
Stirling	971	5	6	5	4	4
West Dunbartonshire	531	3	3	3	4	3
West Lothian	2,530	3	3	3	3	5
Scotland	51,997	3	4	4	5	5
UNRELIABLE DATA						
Orkney Islands	*294	*7	*7	*7	7	7

Orkney Islands' unreliable information has been excluded from the Scotland figures for 2001/2002.

Indicator 4: Food hygiene inspections

The number of establishments in the two highest risk categories requiring inspections during the year, and the percentage of inspections which were undertaken within the prescribed period.

Food hygiene inspections confirm that the processing, cooking, handling and storage of food at business premises meet the requirements of the 'Food Safety Act 1990' and identify potential risks to the health of the public.

Business premises dealing in food are categorised according to the frequency with which they should be inspected, depending on their level of risk to food safety. The higher the level of risk, the more often inspections should be carried out.

The indicator specifies two categories of premises according to the target time between inspections:

- within six months – premises with the highest risk of food hygiene problems, requiring the most frequent inspection visits
- between six and 12 months – premises with an intermediate level of risk.

The indicator reports councils' planned food hygiene inspection workload and their success in achieving their inspection targets.

Points to bear in mind

Factors that influence a council's decision on the required number of inspections are:

- the likely risk according to the type of food
- the extent to which food is handled, and the risk of cross-contamination where a process involves both raw and cooked food
- the method of processing – particularly where conditions may favour the growth of food poisoning organisms, eg, canning, vacuum packing and any process where temperature is a controlling factor
- the number of consumers likely to be put at risk if there is a failure in food hygiene and safety procedures
- the cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation and structural condition of the premises
- the attitude and technical knowledge of the management on hygiene and safety matters.

Some premises, particularly those in the ‘within six months’ risk category, may be visited more frequently due to their high level of risk but these additional visits are not reflected in the indicator.

The Food Standards Agency revised its Code of Practice in relation to the Food Safety Act 1990 in December 2000. The revision allowed councils a degree of flexibility when undertaking inspections. As long as inspections are undertaken within a two week period of the target date, premises are considered as meeting the minimum frequency of inspection.

Commentary

Slightly over 11,000 premises were subject to food hygiene inspections in 2001/2002 for the two highest risk categories, a reduction of 1,500 (12%) compared with the previous year (Table 4a). *‘The Pennington report (1997)’* required councils to reassess the risk categories of premises and this resulted in a significant increase in the number of premises in the high risk category in 1998/1999. Since then councils have worked closely with businesses, and as a consequence there has been a significant reduction (from 5,706 to 1,995) in the number of premises that fall within the highest risk ‘within six months’ category. The number of premises requiring inspection in the six to 12 months category has increased slightly (5%) over the same period.

Within the two highest risk categories, almost 96% of inspections were carried out within time for the 30 councils that reported reliable information (ie, excluding Scottish Borders and Orkney Islands). **The percentage of inspections carried out within time varied from 81.5% in Angus to 100% in East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire.**

Twenty-two councils carried out at least nine in every ten inspections within time, while 23 councils improved the percentage of inspections carried out within time compared with the previous year (Table 4b).

Five councils, (Inverclyde (25%), Shetland Islands (28%), Falkirk (33%), West Lothian (41%), and Stirling (99%) reported significant increases in the number of premises requiring inspection in the two highest risk categories.

Table 4a: The number of premises requiring food hygiene inspections

	Number of premises in each risk category		
	Within 6 months	Between 6-12 months	Total
2001/2002	1,995	9,056	11,051
2000/2001	3,273	9,300	12,573
1999/2000	4,175	8,764	12,939
1998/1999	5,706	8,637	14,343
1997/1998	3,049	8,068	11,117
1996/1997	2,332	10,249	12,581

Table 4b: The proportion of inspections conducted within the target time of 12 months

	Number of premises			% of inspections made within target		
	2001/2002	2000/2001	1999/2000	2001/2002	2000/2001	1999/2000
Aberdeen City	245	306	342	99.6	97.3	95.2
Aberdeenshire	552	554	521	93.0	87.2	77.9
Angus	270	333	381	81.5	67.8	76.8
Argyll & Bute	304	372	381	95.2	85.0	71.8
Clackmannanshire	80	77	83	88.0	41.8	76.9
Dumfries & Galloway	283	370	466	87.9	81.3	85.8
Dundee City	231	230	237	88.4	95.8	98.3
East Ayrshire	139	153	155	95.8	97.8	98.7
East Dunbartonshire	195	221	219	98.7	96.5	93.2
East Lothian	239	247	302	92.8	63.8	86.4
East Renfrewshire	216	306	244	100.0	100.0	99.5
Edinburgh, City of	1,435	1,472	1,292	98.4	99.0	99.3
Eilean Siar	72	80	87	98.9	75.3	69.8
Falkirk	126	95	96	89.9	75.8	88.0
Fife	185	234	373	89.6	87.3	86.8
Glasgow City	2,376	2,580	2,507	97.0	94.6	87.3
Highland	394	492	554	96.8	98.0	99.5
Inverclyde	91	73	311	100.0	96.1	97.5
Midlothian	102	102	111	94.8	97.5	99.3
Moray	282	279	226	89.2	68.8	71.2
North Ayrshire	560	615	603	98.3	92.4	91.1
North Lanarkshire	641	802	852	94.8	99.0	96.1
Perth & Kinross	156	204	177	92.1	60.8	94.0
Renfrewshire	531	521	515	100.0	93.7	90.1
Shetland Islands	32	25	36	91.2	15.2	41.0
South Ayrshire	194	245	250	90.8	74.0	70.3
South Lanarkshire	648	693	623	98.9	98.2	96.7
Stirling	133	67	134	85.1	90.4	91.9
West Dunbartonshire	143	199	206	89.8	57.4	43.8
West Lothian	196	139	152	98.3	96.0	97.1
Scotland	11,051	12,573	12,939	95.5	89.9	88.5
UNRELIABLE/UNREPORTED DATA						
Scottish Borders	*439	383	418	*91.0	74.7	74.9
Orkney Islands	Not reported	104	85	Not reported	79.5	83.2

Scottish Borders' unreliable information has been excluded from the Scotland figures for 2001/2002.

Indicator 5: Trading standards complaints and business advice requests

The percentage of trading standards complaints and business advice requests completed within 14 days.

Dealing with complaints and business advice requests is one of the most significant of the trading standards services provided by councils. This assistance is provided to two separate groups – consumers (ie, the general public) and businesses.

Complaints are requests to the council to investigate the activities of a trader or traders. Complaints relate to goods or services which the consumer suspects or believes have been poor, unfair or based on illegal trading practice by a trader, for example, selling faulty, dangerous or wrongly described goods, or setting unreasonable conditions of sale.

Business advice is given in response to enquiries by individual businesses. It includes approaches made in person and enquiries received by letter and telephone, but excludes advice given as part of a routine inspection of trading premises.

The time taken covers the period between:

- the date the council receives all the information necessary to allow action (eg, advice or investigation) to commence
- the date on which the council's contact with the consumer and/or the trader concerned finished, ie, the council provided the information requested, or the outcome of an investigation was reported to the consumer or business making the complaint.

Points to bear in mind

The indicator does not provide information on the quality of any advice or investigation, or on its usefulness to the consumer or business.

The number, complexity and investigative work involved in complaints will affect the indicator.

A report on the performance of trading standards services in Scotland, *Made to Measure – an overview of Trading Standards Services in Scotland*, (October 2002) was published by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission.

The report recommends that councils review their trading standards services in light of the DTI's new National Performance Framework and to consider options for establishing joined-up trading standards services (eg, through local consortia arrangements among neighbouring councils).

Commentary

Consumer complaints

Overall, councils dealt with slightly over 72,000 consumer complaints, an increase of almost 10,500 compared with the previous year (Table 5a). Twenty-two councils reported increases in the number of complaints. Glasgow City reported a significant increase (5,500) in the number of complaints processed – over half of the total increase.

Across Scotland, 82% of consumer complaints were processed within 14 days. These ranged from 38% in East Dunbartonshire to 97% in Dundee City. Eight councils processed 90% of complaints within 14 days. Six councils (East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, North Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire) processed less than 70% of complaints within 14 days (Table 5b).

Business advice requests

There were just over 16,500 business advice requests in 2001/2002, an increase of slightly over 6,000 compared with the previous year. However, two councils, Dumfries & Galloway (almost 4,400) and Stirling (almost 1,200) accounted for the majority of the increase. The foot and mouth outbreak was the principal reason for the increase at both these councils. **Overall, councils continue to deal with a high proportion (almost 98%) of business advice requests within 14 days.** Inverclyde and South Lanarkshire processed the lowest proportion (under 90%) of business advice requests within 14 days.

Table 5a: The overall processing of consumer complaints and business advice requests

	Customer complaints		Business advice requests	
	Number	% dealt with within 14 days	Number	% dealt with within 14 days
2001/2002	72,024	81.7	16,529	97.8
2000/2001	61,599	78.0	10,321	96.6
1999/2000	59,828	76.6	8,052	95.7
1998/1999	42,617	70.9	11,522	96.7
1997/1998	45,942	70.1	9,968	93.5

Table 5b: The processing of complaints and business advice requests, 2001/2002

	Consumer complaints		Business advice requests	
	Number	% dealt with within 14 days	Number	% dealt with within 14 days
Aberdeen City	2,516	92.7	281	94.7
Aberdeenshire	1,734	77.9	228	94.7
Angus	787	78.5	160	94.4
Argyll & Bute	1,215	84.9	278	98.6
Clackmannanshire	669	81.2	59	100.0
Dumfries & Galloway	2,711	83.3	5,023	98.8
Dundee City	2,933	97.0	384	98.7
East Ayrshire	1,032	43.5	150	99.3
East Dunbartonshire	518	37.8	316	98.7
East Lothian	655	94.8	982	98.7
East Renfrewshire	743	68.8	627	99.4
Edinburgh, City of	4,707	86.7	908	97.2
Eilean Siar	266	83.5	8	100.0
Falkirk	2,169	76.4	296	100.0
Fife	6,520	93.4	331	97.3
Glasgow City	11,650	83.7	492	90.4
Highland	3,515	85.6	333	94.3
Inverclyde	1,480	82.6	98	89.8
Midlothian	667	86.4	142	100.0
Moray	1,871	92.5	290	96.6
North Ayrshire	2,301	80.1	125	99.2
North Lanarkshire	2,693	66.1	750	98.9
Orkney Islands	522	84.7	273	94.5
Perth & Kinross	1,326	96.2	323	99.4
Renfrewshire	2,696	89.6	193	100.0
Scottish Borders	814	72.4	668	98.8
Shetland Islands	115	90.4	39	94.9
South Ayrshire	2,925	56.6	755	94.3
South Lanarkshire	4,980	62.1	139	89.2
Stirling	1,707	87.1	1,637	99.4
West Dunbartonshire	1,164	76.8	32	96.9
West Lothian	2,423	90.9	209	97.1
Scotland	72,024	81.7	16,529	97.8

Indicator 6: Planning applications

The percentage of planning applications dealt with within two months.

The indicator provides information on how long it takes each council to deal with planning applications by:

- householders – seeking approval to build extensions to their homes, or to make other alterations to their properties which need permission
- non-householders such as developers – seeking approval for a wide range of generally larger developments.

In dealing with planning applications, councils:

- take a number of steps to consult on and assess the application
- decide whether to approve the application
- notify the applicant of the decision.

Points to bear in mind

Householders have to notify their neighbours that they have submitted an application and councils are usually required to carry out only limited consultations before a decision is reached. Many of these applications are straightforward and result in permission being granted. However, applications other than those by householders are generally more complex and the time to deal with them may require to be extended where:

- the council needs to undertake an analysis of the impact on either the environment or the local economy
- an application requires an agreement between the council and the applicant, regulating the future use of the land or development
- an application is contrary to the approved local or structure plan.

The time taken to deal with an application will be affected by:

- the extent to which councillors delegate responsibility for approving applications to staff (greater delegation will generally allow applications to be processed more quickly)
- whether there are any objections to the application (eg, from neighbouring property owners)
- the proportion of cases where an applicant needs to submit amended plans before the planning officer feels able to recommend approval.

Some cases, particularly those in conservation areas or affecting listed buildings, may take longer to deal with because of the need for additional advertising and consultation. The proportion of such applications varies between councils.

In 2000, the Scottish Executive published a National Planning Policy Guideline NPPG 1 (revised) in which it established that:

- 80% of all planning applications should be determined within two months
- 90% of householder planning applications should be determined within two months.

Commentary

There were almost 45,000 planning applications determined by the 31 councils (ie, excluding Argyll & Bute) that provided reliable information for this indicator. Slightly under 19,700 were householder planning applications and almost 25,300 were non-householder applications.

All planning applications²

Clackmannanshire was the only council to meet the national target for determining at least 80% of applications within two months. **Across Scotland, almost 65% of all applications were dealt with within two months. These ranged from 49% in Glasgow City to 86% in Clackmannanshire** (Table 6).

Householder applications

Five councils (Clackmannanshire, East Lothian, Moray, Perth & Kinross and Shetland Islands) met the national target of dealing with 90% or more of householder applications within two months. This is half the number of councils that achieved the target compared with the previous year. The proportion of applications dealt with within two months was 82%, a slight increase compared with the previous year. Four councils (Aberdeen City, City of Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire and Orkney Islands) dealt with fewer than 75% of householder applications within two months. Fifteen councils improved their performance compared with the previous year.

Non-householder applications

For the 31 councils that reported reliable information for this indicator (ie, excluding Argyll & Bute) **the proportion of applications dealt with within two months was 51%** – the same as the previous year. There was wide variation in performance ranging from slightly under 36% of applications processed in Aberdeen City to 77% in Clackmannanshire.

² Information provided by the Scottish Executive Planning Services Audit Unit indicates that in 2001/2002, the proportion of listed building and conservation area determinations expressed as a proportion of all determinations (ie, in relation to non-householder as well as householder applications) ranged from 1% to 16%. Dundee City, East Lothian, City of Edinburgh, Glasgow City and Scottish Borders were all above 10%.

Table 6: The processing of planning applications – 2001/2002

	Householder applications		Non-householder applications		All applications
	Number of applications	% dealt with within two months	Number of applications	% dealt with within two months	% dealt with within two months
Aberdeen City	1,435	67.6	833	35.9	56.0
Aberdeenshire	1,434	88.1	1,952	52.6	67.6
Angus	597	89.3	620	57.4	73.0
Clackmannanshire	149	98.0	211	77.3	85.8
Dumfries & Galloway	654	78.6	1,117	49.3	60.1
Dundee City	266	81.6	393	48.3	61.8
East Ayrshire	299	76.9	448	50.4	61.0
East Dunbartonshire	720	80.4	191	36.1	71.1
East Lothian	669	90.9	494	56.3	76.2
East Renfrewshire	592	79.6	199	41.7	70.0
Edinburgh, City of	1,911	70.3	2,567	46.5	56.7
Eilean Siar	100	88.0	255	71.8	76.3
Falkirk	334	88.9	478	43.7	62.3
Fife	1,566	89.0	1,765	62.8	75.1
Glasgow City	680	76.6	2,380	40.8	48.7
Highland	1,080	80.7	2,481	50.5	59.7
Inverclyde	171	86.5	190	56.3	70.6
Midlothian	454	81.7	324	38.3	63.6
Moray	440	92.5	639	64.8	76.1
North Ayrshire	332	79.5	434	45.9	60.4
North Lanarkshire	658	68.1	882	40.7	52.4
Orkney Islands	99	73.7	191	65.4	68.3
Perth & Kinross	744	91.1	953	60.1	73.7
Renfrewshire	481	83.8	669	58.6	69.1
Scottish Borders	706	83.0	1,092	54.0	65.4
Shetland Islands	119	92.4	222	60.4	71.6
South Ayrshire	551	80.8	788	52.0	63.9
South Lanarkshire	884	89.0	977	50.6	68.8
Stirling	463	80.1	607	41.4	58.1
West Dunbartonshire	173	76.3	241	57.7	65.5
West Lothian	473	87.9	680	67.1	75.6
Scotland	19,681	81.7	25,273	51.1	64.5
UNRELIABLE DATA					
Argyll & Bute	447	89.9	*995	*55.0	*65.8

Argyll & Bute's unreliable information is not included in the Scotland figures.

Indicator 7: Time taken to repair faulty street lights and faulty traffic lights

The percentage of repairs to street lights completed within seven days and the percentage of traffic light repairs completed within 48 hours.

The indicator shows the percentage of repairs to street lights which are undertaken within seven calendar days, and repairs to traffic lights which are carried out within 48 hours. It covers a range of different problems including such things as lamp failure, control box failure, accident damage, vandalism, shade damage and supply failure.

Points to bear in mind

The indicator captures the time taken for the full range of activity, from notification of the fault to the completion of the repair. The actual repair work is often carried out by a contractor, and in such cases it is the contractor's performance which is, in part, being measured. However, it is the council's responsibility as the client, to ensure that the contractor's performance is satisfactory.

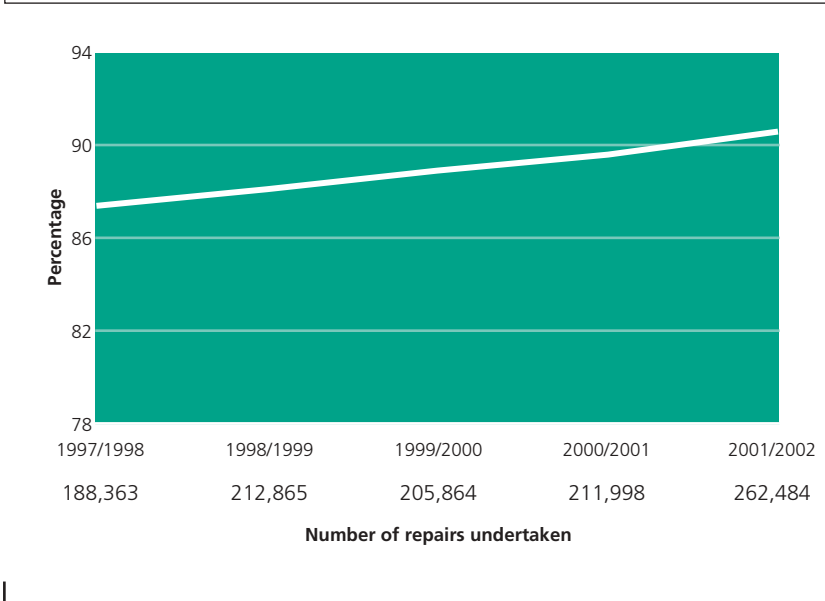
Commentary

Street lights

Across Scotland, councils carried out almost 262,500 repairs to street lights, a significant increase (over 50,000 or 24%) compared with 212,000 the previous year. Glasgow City (additional 16,000), and South Lanarkshire (additional 6,000) accounted for almost half of the all Scotland increase (Figure 7a).

In 2001/2002, councils undertook 91% of street light repairs within seven days. The percentage of repairs undertaken within seven days has improved year-on-year since 1997/1998. The proportion of repairs carried out within time varied among councils from 72% in Aberdeenshire to 99% in Perth & Kinross and South Lanarkshire. Twenty-one councils reported that nine in every ten repairs were undertaken within target time, three more councils than the previous year. For those councils where comparison could be made, 16 councils improved performance compared with the previous year (Table 7a).

Figure 7a: Percentage of all street lighting repairs undertaken within seven days



Traffic lights

Overall, councils carried out almost 21,000 repairs to traffic lights, an increase of just over 2,000 compared with the previous year (Figure 7b).

Across Scotland, 87% of repairs to traffic lights were carried out within 48 hours, which is a year-on-year improvement since 1998/99. Twenty-two councils reported that they carried out at least nine in every ten repairs within target time. With the exception of North Lanarkshire (63%), all other councils carried out eight in every ten repairs within the target time (Table 7b).

Figure 7b: The overall proportion of traffic light repairs undertaken within 48 hours

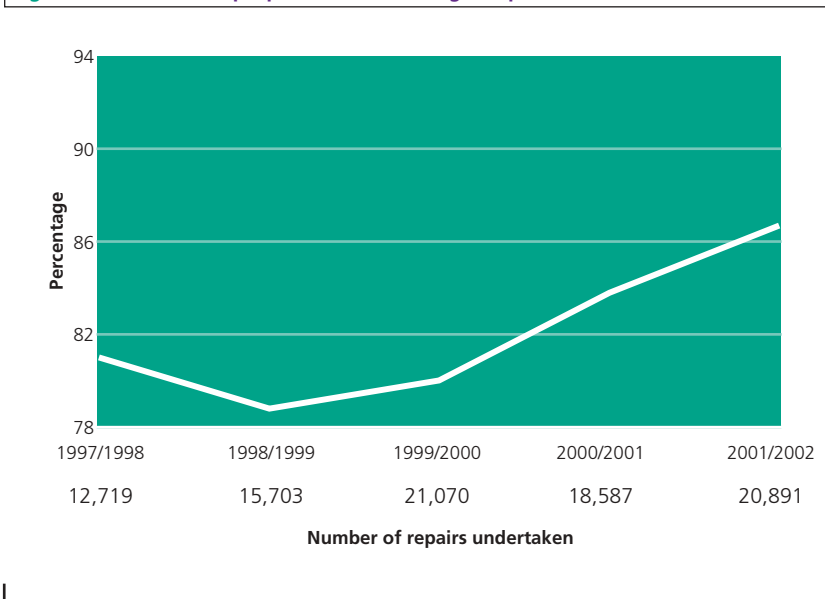


Table 7a: Percentage of all street light repairs completed within seven days

	Total repairs	Percentage of all street light repairs completed within 7 days				
	2001/2002	2001/2002	2000/2001	1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998
Aberdeen City	12,691	91	84	73	77	89
Aberdeenshire	8,452	72	88	82	66	75
Angus	5,885	90	96	91	90	91
Argyll & Bute	3,242	80	*90	87	74	82
Clackmannanshire	1,809	90	80	75	88	84
Dumfries & Galloway	7,189	81	87	82	90	98
Dundee City	9,595	98	97	93	87	91
East Ayrshire	5,386	94	97	96	98	95
East Dunbartonshire	3,903	95	97	90	88	96
East Lothian	2,477	77	Not reported	Not reported	* 88	* 94
East Renfrewshire	4,478	96	100	97	96	97
Edinburgh, City of	27,287	85	*77	*87	* 80	* 83
Eilean Siar	196	93	Not reported	84	94	98
Falkirk	6,349	97	98	96	96	97
Fife	21,377	91	91	84	89	91
Glasgow City	35,707	95	90	95	90	* 67
Highland	8,971	98	98	97	98	97
Inverclyde	3,925	80	71	71	85	93
Midlothian	2,061	87	82	93	89	* 93
Moray	4,523	97	96	98	93	95
North Ayrshire	6,508	90	96	94	78	98
North Lanarkshire	20,211	81	83	93	96	* 88
Orkney Islands	674	82	80	78	82	80
Perth & Kinross	6,185	99	98	98	98	99
Renfrewshire	11,781	90	87	87	83	99
Scottish Borders	7,243	93	92	92	91	90
Shetland Islands	130	80	77	86	80	81
South Ayrshire	1,295	93	94	93	90	Not reported
South Lanarkshire	14,722	99	98	99	99	97
Stirling	1,316	89	85	79	80	* 66
West Dunbartonshire	3,309	94	98	91	85	66
West Lothian	13,607	95	93	79	84	89
Scotland	262,484	91	90	89	88	87

Table 7b: Percentage of all traffic lights repaired within 48 hours

	Total repairs	Percentage of traffic lights repaired within 48 hours				
	2001/2002	2001/2002	2000/2001	1999/2000	1998/1999	1997/1998
Aberdeen City	1,085	94	98	96	93	82
Aberdeenshire	81	99	98	92	100	84
Angus	186	96	96	87	89	93
Argyll & Bute	30	90	*95	*74	95	100
Clackmannanshire	31	94	100	100	100	100
Dumfries & Galloway	292	86	80	72	91	97
Dundee City	335	99	100	100	91	84
East Ayrshire	257	90	71	54	68	86
East Dunbartonshire	510	85	86	55	37	41
East Lothian	67	99	100	94	97	92
East Renfrewshire	217	87	90	79	57	66
Edinburgh, City of	1,806	97	97	88	*99	*99
Eilean Siar	22	100	83	100	100	100
Falkirk	83	92	97	95	65	54
Fife	604	93	91	72	85	88
Glasgow City	10,799	85	79	77	75	79
Highland	306	100	96	97	99	99
Inverclyde	25	92	100	100	93	86
Midlothian	120	98	100	98	99	100
Moray	27	100	88	49	59	55
North Ayrshire	96	87	81	81	89	91
North Lanarkshire	1,431	63	69	75	97	*96
Perth & Kinross	352	91	87	79	71	96
Renfrewshire	507	91	91	93	74	74
Scottish Borders	19	95	97	85	93	92
Shetland Islands	15	87	87	93	90	95
South Ayrshire	255	94	84	81	71	*86
South Lanarkshire	886	88	86	88	84	78
Stirling	32	94	94	100	99	83
West Dunbartonshire	242	81	83	80	84	74
West Lothian	173	93	98	94	92	93
Scotland	20,891	87	84	80	79	81

Orkney Islands do not provide this service.

Contacts

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