

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.

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 05/06		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 03/04		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	03/04	04/05	05/06	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	22		68.12	65.22	62.38	✓		
Aberdeenshire	26	✗	62.93	66.08	70.40		✗	
Angus	28	✗	78.80	77.72	77.19			
Argyll & Bute	18		54.42	53.49	55.98			
Clackmannanshire	3	✓	33.67	33.56	39.09			✗
Dumfries & Galloway	7	✓	52.44	41.65	44.59		✓	
Dundee City	30	✗	86.09	88.06	88.01			
East Ayrshire	14		49.77	48.44	51.61			
East Dunbartonshire	13		56.29	50.35	50.51		✓	
East Lothian	19		57.68	59.01	57.12			
East Renfrewshire	24		47.74	63.61	65.79			✗
City of Edinburgh	12		69.88	66.90	49.92			✓
Eilean Siar	32	✗	85.88	90.45	91.86	✗		
Falkirk	6	✓	32.40	33.41	44.45			✗
Fife	20		46.93	49.48	61.85			✗
Glasgow City	4	✓	34.50	35.97	40.00			✗
Highland	31	✗	84.47	83.85	88.74	✗		
Inverclyde	9		44.31	45.71	47.21	✗		
Midlothian	21		55.83	56.51	61.97		✗	
Moray	27	✗	72.61	80.18	76.45	✗		
North Ayrshire	15		52.01	50.51	52.03			
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	32.07	31.94	32.32			
Orkney Islands	23		49.86	65.83	64.14			✗
Perth & Kinross	16		55.21	52.34	54.29			
Renfrewshire	11		51.14	45.56	48.98			
Scottish Borders	25	✗	54.27	56.96	69.21			✗
Shetland Islands	29	✗	98.52	87.07	82.49			✓
South Ayrshire	17		54.98	54.71	54.60			
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	14.73	17.42	17.67			✗
Stirling	10		54.51	49.58	48.90		✓	
West Dunbartonshire	8	✓	47.94	42.48	45.82			
West Lothian	5	✓	41.85	40.30	42.73			
			Scotland					
			47.96	48.22	50.13			

Ranked performance	03/04	04/05	05/06
Highest ranked performance	14.73	17.42	17.67
Upper quartile	47.54	44.79	46.86
Median	54.35	52.92	54.45
Lower quartile	64.23	65.89	66.65
Lowest ranked performance	98.52	90.45	91.86

Data features	Symbol	03/04	04/05	05/06
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2003/04	
Improvement	
5-9%	1
10-14%	3
>15%	2
Decline	
5-9%	4
10-14%	2
>15%	8

Notes

An underlined PI measurement indicates unreliable data.

Benefits administration

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

The following councils were ranked 25th or below in 2003/04:

Aberdeen City
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 2005/06:

Angus
Dundee City
Eilean Siar
Highland
Moray

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.

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 05/06		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 03/04		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	03/04	04/05	05/06	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	5	✓	-	-	27.8			
Aberdeenshire	18		-	-	33.3			
Angus	28	✗	-	-	42.9			
Argyll & Bute	20		-	-	33.9			
Clackmannanshire	14		-	-	31.5			
Dumfries & Galloway	26	✗	-	-	39.1			
Dundee City	12		-	-	31.0			
East Ayrshire	10		-	-	30.7			
East Dunbartonshire	28	✗	-	-	42.9			
East Lothian	22		-	-	34.3			
East Renfrewshire	23		-	-	35.7			
City of Edinburgh	8	✓	-	-	28.7			
Eilean Siar	25	✗	-	-	38.4			
Falkirk	5	✓	-	-	27.8			
Fife	32	✗	-	-	52.3			
Glasgow City	24		-	-	38.3			
Highland	17		-	-	32.8			
Inverclyde	16		-	-	32.6			
Midlothian	31	✗	-	-	46.5			
Moray	28	✗	-	-	42.9			
North Ayrshire	19		-	-	33.5			
North Lanarkshire	2	✓	-	-	18.0			
Orkney Islands	4	✓	-	-	27.5			
Perth & Kinross	27	✗	-	-	40.2			
Renfrewshire	7	✓	-	-	28.5			
Scottish Borders	8	✓	-	-	28.7			
Shetland Islands	15		-	-	31.9			
South Ayrshire	13		-	-	31.1			
South Lanarkshire	1	✓	-	-	15.3			
Stirling	3	✓	-	-	25.1			
West Dunbartonshire	21		-	-	34.2			
West Lothian	11		-	-	30.8			
			Scotland					
			-	-	31.7			

Ranked performance	03/04	04/05	05/06
Highest ranked performance	-	-	15.3
Upper quartile	-	-	28.7
Median	-	-	32.7
Lower quartile	-	-	38.3
Lowest ranked performance	-	-	52.3

Data features	Symbol	03/04	04/05	05/06
PI not applicable	(-)	32	32	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2003/04	
Improvement	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-
Decline	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

Notes

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Benefits administration

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 05/06		PI measurement			Better ✓ or worse ✗ since 03/04		
	1-32	✓1-8 ✗ 25-32	03/04	04/05	05/06	5-9%	10-14%	>15%
Aberdeen City	6	✓	99.8	99.6	99.0			
Aberdeenshire	28	✗	<u>94.6</u>	93.4	95.0			
Angus	6	✓	96.8	97.6	99.0			
Argyll & Bute	2	✓	98.2	99.8	99.8			
Clackmannanshire	17		98.7	99.0	97.6			
Dumfries & Galloway	24		96.6	98.2	96.6			
Dundee City	22		95.8	96.4	97.2			
East Ayrshire	20		96.0	97.4	97.4			
East Dunbartonshire	17		93.6	95.8	97.6			
East Lothian	14		93.8	96.8	98.2			
East Renfrewshire	2	✓	99.2	99.2	99.8			
City of Edinburgh	4	✓	98.2	98.8	99.6			
Eilean Siar	6	✓	98.0	<u>97.5</u>	99.0			
Falkirk	30	✗	93.2	92.8	94.0			
Fife	6	✓	99.4	99.3	99.0			
Glasgow City	16		92.8	96.6	97.8	✓		
Highland	12		97.4	98.6	98.6			
Inverclyde	15		91.0	<u>93.6</u>	98.1	✓		
Midlothian	24		93.0	89.2	96.6			
Moray	29	✗	96.4	92.0	94.6			
North Ayrshire	23		95.5	96.0	96.8			
North Lanarkshire	10		100.0	99.0	98.8			
Orkney Islands	17		98.7	98.7	97.6			
Perth & Kinross	32	✗	92.0	93.6	89.2			
Renfrewshire	5	✓	91.6	97.8	99.2	✓		
Scottish Borders	30	✗	92.4	87.5	94.0			
Shetland Islands	1	✓	99.5	99.8	100.0			
South Ayrshire	20		98.0	97.6	97.4			
South Lanarkshire	27	✗	94.4	93.6	95.8			
Stirling	10		98.6	98.8	98.8			
West Dunbartonshire	12		99.4	98.8	98.6			
West Lothian	26	✗	94.8	94.4	96.2			
			Scotland					
			96.3	96.6	97.4			

Ranked performance	03/04	04/05	05/06
Highest ranked performance	100.0	99.8	100.0
Upper quartile	98.6	98.8	99.0
Median	96.5	97.6	97.7
Lower quartile	93.8	94.2	96.6
Lowest ranked performance	91.0	87.5	89.2

Data features	Symbol	03/04	04/05	05/06
PI not applicable	(-)	0	0	0
No service	(NS)	0	0	0

Count of councils showing significant change since 2003/04	
Improvement	
5-9%	3
10-14%	-
>15%	-
Decline	
5-9%	-
10-14%	-
>15%	-

Notes

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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 2003/04:

Falkirk
Glasgow City
Inverclyde
Midlothian
Perth & Kinross
Renfrewshire
Scottish Borders

The following councils did not make any material improvement in their performance by 2005/06:

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Midlothian
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