

First Release

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Coverage: Great Britain

Theme: People and Places

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Speed of Processing: January 2012 to March 2012 and 2011/12

This Statistical First Release contains Official Statistics produced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on Speed of Processing (SoP) of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims..

These show the average time taken to process new claims and changes of circumstances for Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) in calendar days for each local authority, rounded to the nearest day.

These statistics were released on 24 July 2012 according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority and contain new statistics relating to quarter 4 2011/12 (*January 2012 to March 2012*) and a roll-up of the 2011/12 financial year.

These statistics are Official Statistics. See:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/types-of-official-statistics>.

Key Findings

- Across the financial year 2011/12, the time taken to process new HB/CTB claims was 24 calendar days (23 calendar days in 2010/11). The average time taken to process changes of circumstances was 9 days (10 days in 2010/11).
- The average time taken to process new HB/CTB claims for quarter 4 2011/12 is 24 calendar days, compared with 22 calendar days in quarter 4 of 2010/11.
- The average time taken to process changes of circumstances for HB/CTB claims is 7 calendar days for quarter 4 2011/12, compared with 6 calendar days in quarter 4 of 2010/11.

Further information and detailed tables, including a breakdown by local authority, can be viewed at:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/sop/index.php?page=sop>

If you have any comments or requests regarding this publication, please contact DWP via stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.



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Next publication:

23rd October 2012
(See Notes section)

HB/CTB Speed of Processing

HB and CTB are income related benefits. Speed of processing relates to the average time taken to process new claims and changes of circumstances for these benefits. The average time is measured in calendar days, rounded to the nearest day.

Table 1 Average Speed of Processing for quarter 4, 2011/12:

Average number of days to process (Great Britain)

	New Claims	Change of Circumstances
Quarter 4		
January	25	12
February	23	6
March	23	5

Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)

Table 2: Average Speed of Processing for quarter 4, 2011/12 broken down by benefit (Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit):

Average number of days to process (Great Britain)

	New Claims		Change of Circumstances	
	HB	CTB	HB	CTB
Quarter 4				
January	25	25	12	12
February	22	23	5	8
March	23	23	4	8

Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)

In February and March of each year, most local authorities perform change of circumstance processing to account for increasing rents in the social sector. Similar changes occur where Council Tax levels have changed. As these changes are relatively straightforward and can sometimes be performed automatically, the average "change of circumstance" processing time for February and March is considerably lower than January (and the rest of 2011/12).

Notes:

Further information on Speed of Processing data sources and methodology is available at http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/sop/sop_rti_overview.pdf

Latest statistical breakdowns are available at: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/sop/index.php?page=sop>

NOTES

1. Related Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit statistics

a) The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) also publish Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit monthly caseload National Statistics – the statistics detail the number of people in receipt of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and the amount of benefit received. They also include breakdowns by local authority, tenancy type, passported benefits, family type and age group. See <http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=hbctb>

b) The historical Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit Claims Administration Quarterly Performance Data which is available to 2007/08 are based on clerical returns made by individual local authorities.

Breakdowns of new claims and changes processing times are available historically, and the new claims processing times are broadly comparable over time. However, a change in definition for changes of circumstances between 2007/08 and 2009/10 means that direct comparison of this element with Speed of Processing statistics is not meaningful. See http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/hb_ctb/performance/index.php?page=performance

c) Access to previously reported Right Time Indicator statistics is available via the following page: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=rti>

d) In addition, users can find links to DWP additional statistical analyses that have not been included in our standard publications at http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=adhoc_analysis.

2. National Statistics Code of Practice

DWP complies with the National Statistics Code of Practice and supporting Principles. Detailed policy statements and statement of compliance with the pre-release access to official statistics order 2008 are available via the link below:

[DWP policy statements](#)

DWP would like to hear your views on our statistical publications. If you use any of our statistics publications, we would be interested in hearing what you use them for and how well they meet your requirements. Please email DWP at stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk. If you would like to receive occasional e-mails from DWP to directly inform you of documents seeking the views of users, please email general.statistics@dwp.gsi.gov.uk giving details of the DWP publications you use.

3. Known Issues, Changes and Revisions to SoP statistics

- Quality assurance processes identified problems with quarter 4 data for 4 local authorities. In keeping with UKSA protocols we did not publish data for these local authorities for quarter 4 2011/12. Analysis indicates that these omissions should not significantly bias the headline Great Britain estimates for the average speed of processing for new claims and changes of circumstance.
- Unfortunately, we have not been able to improve the commentary and time series in the First Release for this quarterly release. We will aim to do this in the next release.
- Financial year numbers for 2011/12 are included in the quarter 4 table pack.
- Figures for Birmingham and Halton have been included in a revised release of quarter 2 and 3 tables. DWP had originally omitted these numbers in error.

4. Notification of future changes to SoP statistics

The next publication (for quarter1 of 2012/13) set for 23rd October 2012 will contain the following changes:

- Additions to the First Release document to show time series and better commentary on the numbers.