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Next publication:

23rd July 2013
(See Notes section)

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Speed of Processing: October 2012 to December 2012

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 23 April 2013 according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority and contain new statistics relating to quarter 3 2012/13 (*October 2012 to December 2012*).

These statistics are Official Statistics. See:

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

Key Findings

- The average time taken to process new HB/CTB claims for quarter 3 2012/13 is 23 calendar days, compared with 23 calendar days in quarter 3 of 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process changes of circumstances for HB/CTB claims is 12 calendar days for quarter 3 2012/13, compared with 12 calendar days in quarter 3 of 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process new HB claims for quarter 3 2012/13 is 23 calendar days, compared with 23 calendar days in quarter 3 of 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process changes of circumstances for HB claims is 12 calendar days for quarter 3 2012/13, compared with 11 calendar days in quarter 3 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process new CTB claims for quarter 3 2012/13 is 24 calendar days, compared with 23 calendar days in quarter 3 of 2011/12.
- The average time taken to process changes of circumstances for CTB claims is 12 calendar days for quarter 3 2012/13, compared with 12 calendar days in quarter 3 of 2011/12.

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.

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 3, 2012/13:

Average number of days to process (Great Britain)

	New Claims	Change of Circumstances
Quarter 2		
October	24	12
November	23	12
December	23	11

Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)

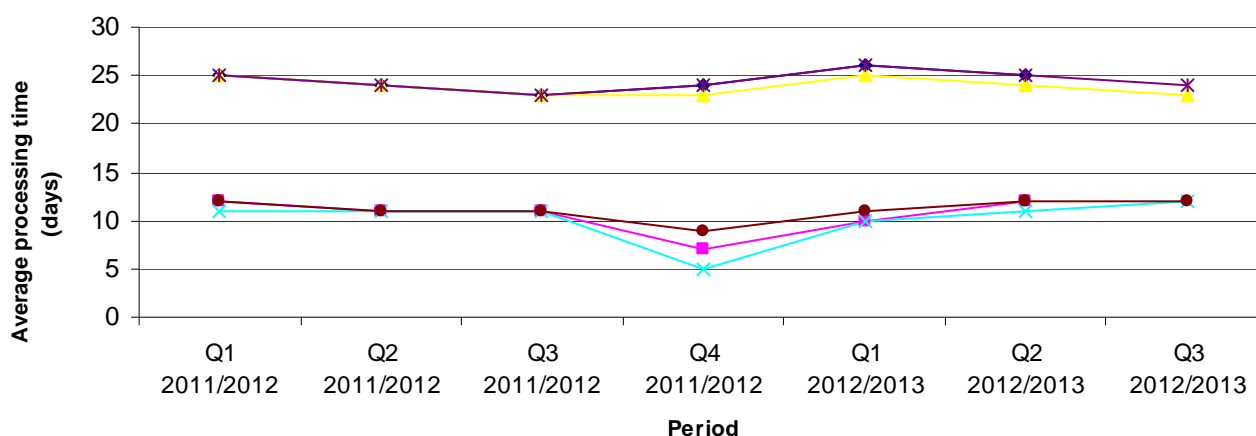
Table 2: Average Speed of Processing for quarter 3, 2012/13 broken down by benefit (Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit):

Average number of days to process (Great Britain)

	New Claims		Change of Circumstances	
	HB	CTB	HB	CTB
Quarter 2				
October	24	24	12	12
November	23	23	12	12
December	22	23	11	12

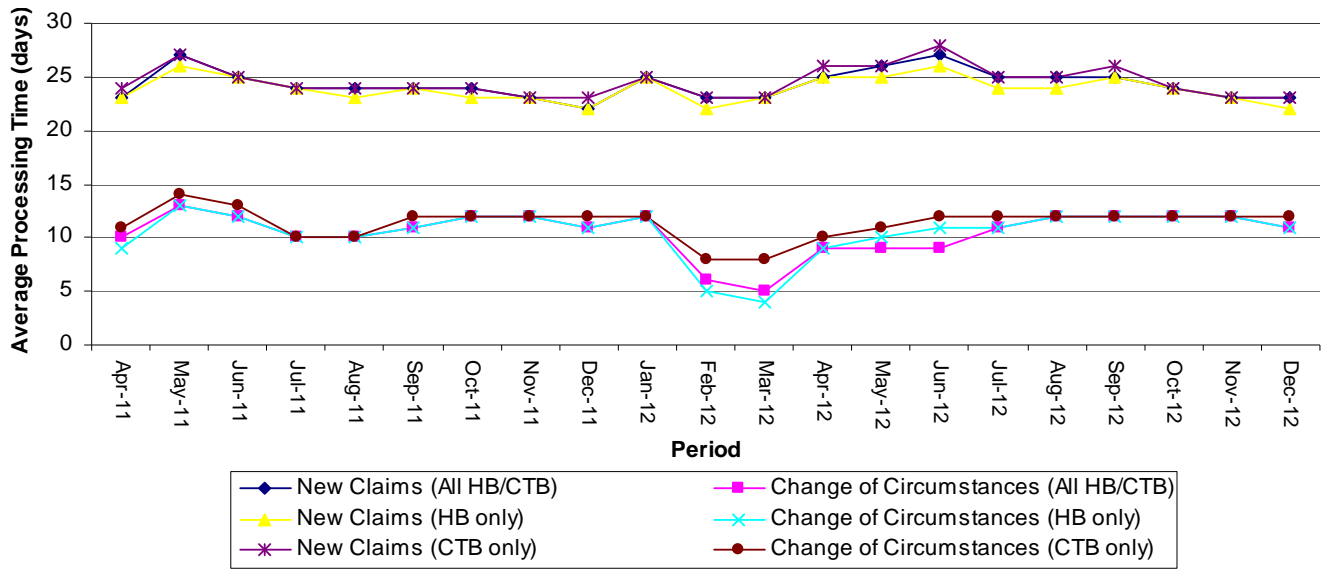
Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)

Average Processing Time per Quarter



◆ New Claims (All HB/CTB) ◆ Change of Circumstances (All HB/CTB) ◆ New Claims (HB only)
 ◆ Change of Circumstances (HB only) ◆ New Claims (CTB only) ◆ Change of Circumstances (CTB only)

Average Processing Time per Month



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 3 data for 7 local authorities. In keeping with UKSA protocols we did not publish data for these local authorities for quarter 3 2012/13. 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.

As always with these statistics, genuine variations between months can occur at a Local Authority level. Some of these are caused by time limited issues or localised changes in operational policy. Hence, figures for individual authorities should be interpreted with care.

4. Notification of future changes to SoP statistics

There are no changes planned for the next publication (for quarter 4 data of 2012/13) due to be released on 23rd July 2013

Council Tax Benefit was abolished in April 2013 and replaced by a system of localised support. In England, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) will be responsible for statistics. The Scottish and Welsh Governments have similar responsibility. The next release of this publication will report the last set of Council Tax Benefit speed of processing statistics. The Housing Benefit series will continue.